

Culture Wars: Sex and Gender

A Biblical Perspective on Gender

Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 19:3-6

March 13, 2022 a.m.

HDBC

For much of human history the very first announcement made immediately after the birth of the child was his or her gender. **It's a boy! It's a girl!** What determines the announcement? Anatomy. One look at the baby settles it! In our culture that announcement is rarely needed anymore at birth. Most couples already know. **The gender reveal party** has taken its place. Couples have come up with all kinds of creative ways to do so. How do they know? Same way, anatomy. The baby can be seen through ultrasound technology. There are other significant biological differences as well. DNA, reproductive organs, hormones, etc.

In a typical swimming pool, there is a place where the shallow end merges in to the deep end. You can be walking along and at a point the floor begins to slope downward? Sometimes those slopes are rather steep and you can suddenly find yourself in over your head. If I were to try to sort out this topic from every perspective, I'd not only be in the deep end of a pool, but would be in the deep end of the ocean. Thankfully, that is not my assignment. My role is to teach the Bible and see how it leads us to respond to life, in general, and this culture war, in particular. **We are in a culture war.**

As I've said, there are some who want to lead us in a new direction, down a new road, toward a new and dangerous destination. To go down this road requires a **repudiation of God's Word**, a **radical deviation from thousands of years of human history** and a **rejection of belief in absolute truth**. **I choose not to embrace this new direction.** I hope you will join with me in remaining anchored to God's Word, regardless of the prevailing winds of our time.

One of the goals the cultural revolutionaries is the deconstruction of the Biblical understanding of sex and gender. To that end, they are targeting young adults, teens and even children. We may not win the war, but if by lovingly and clearly proclaiming the truth, we can rescue some, it will be worth it. My heart aches for those who are distressed, confused and struggling with gender and sex issues.

Keira Bell was fourteen when she first began identifying as a boy. Two years later, she was prescribed puberty blockers and testosterone. At twenty, she underwent a double-mastectomy to remove both breasts. Now, at 23, she identifies again with her biological sex and recently won a lawsuit against the doctors who allowed her to go down this path at such a young age.

At the time, Keira believed that these treatments would help her “achieve happiness.” She said, “I was stuck in severe depression and anxiety. I felt extremely out of place in the world. I was really struggling with my sexuality and I had no one to talk these things through with.”

When she sought medical help, she was given the impression that the doctors and therapists would be neutral, but that wasn’t the case. “Once I arrived [at the gender identity clinic], I was not challenged in any sense and I was affirmed [as a boy] from the beginning.”

“When I was questioning my identity there was nowhere to find support that didn’t affirm the delusion of being in the ‘wrong body.’ No organizations existed that might be able to tell me that it was okay to be a girl who didn’t like stereotypically ‘girly’ things, and that I was no less female because I am same-sex attracted.”

Keira began questioning the ideology behind her transition when she found herself upset about the case of a white college professor who identified as black. “I couldn’t come up with a reason why being transgender was ‘more valid’ than transracial. It was the start of a slow wake-up call. ... I had finished my physical transition and my health was beginning to decline. It was at that point I realized I didn’t want to live a lie and that it was really important to be myself.”

Keira looks back on her transition with sadness. Her treatments have left her with permanent facial hair and a lower voice. “There was nothing wrong with my body, I was just lost and without proper support. I should have been challenged on the proposals or the claims that I was making for myself. I think that would have made a big difference. If I was just challenged on the things I was saying.”

In December 2020, a British court ruled in Keira Bell’s favor that teenagers under 16 are unable to give informed consent about puberty-blockers, and that it may be necessary even for older teenagers to require the court’s decision in prescribing these treatments.

This is just one illustration of why it is important that we lovingly, speak truth from God's word. The Bible offers clarity and hope. Four things.

1. Transgender perspective on sex and gender

Let me first acknowledge that I am not an expert on this topic. Transgenderism involves an extremely wide range of issues and people define the words in different ways. But I want to share the basics of what I think the transgender community is saying. At the heart they are saying three things.

1) Biological sex and gender are separate things

Biological sex, or sometimes just the word sex, refers to the physical, biological, genetic characteristics that determine whether a person is considered to be male or female. Anatomy, DNA, physical characteristics.

Gender, on the other hand, is how one perceives his or her own gender. How one feels in terms of being male or female. Maybe think of this in more psychological terms. My psyche tells me I am male or female regardless of what my DNA or physical characteristics declare. They see a distinction between the physical and the psychological.

2) One's biological sex and perceived gender can be in conflict.

One's biological, physical and genetic makeup may indicate male while they perceive themselves to be female, or vice versa. In other words, those two are not always in sync with each other. This conflict is often described as **gender dysphoria, gender confusion** or **gender disorientation**. I acknowledge that this is real for some people. **Product of the fall.**

3) Gender is more important than biology

One's perceived gender is a more accurate reflection of who a person is than biological makeup. In other words, gender is more important than biological sex, in terms of determining whether they are male or female. Because of this, when there is a conflict, the most important thing is the change the biology rather than the perception.

Changes in **clothing, personal appearance** as well as **hormone therapy** and even **sex reassignment surgery**. All are attempts to force biology to line up with perception. These are the foundational in understanding this movement and what the transgender community are thinking and saying.

2. Biblical perspective on sex and gender (Summary only)

Genesis 1:26-28 (Four realities)

1) All persons are created in the image of God. (26)

All humans have a dignity and worth that rises above every other part of creation. There is something very special that He did not place in anything else. **Eternal soul. Ability to know God. Rational thought.**

2) People were given dominion over all other parts of creation. (26)

God determined an order of dominion for His creation and humans are at the top of that order. People are to govern, rule over all creation.

3) God created two sexes, male and female. (27)

All of humanity is divided into these two categories. The differences involve genetics, anatomy, biology, perspectives and function. In other words you can see some differences on the outside, but there are also differences on the inside. Adam recognized that Eve was like him, yet very different, in a complimentary way. These distinctions are God-created and God-ordained.

4) The first command was directly tied to the gender differences (28)

They were to be fruitful and multiply. The mechanism for obeying that command was sex relations between the husband and wife. This command could only be obeyed through the sexual union of a man and a woman. The uniqueness of each gender was necessary for the fulfillment of this command.

Matthew 19:3-6 (Two things)

1) Jesus affirms the creation of two distinct genders

Notice there are only two. Notice also that they are distinct from one another. There is no hint of any kind of blurring of the two. Nor is there any hint of a distinction between biological sex and perceived gender, which is so vital to the transgender movement.

2) Jesus affirms the connection of distinct genders to marriage

Jesus affirms the need for male & female as distinct genders in the marriage relationship. He reminds us of the complimentary nature of the two

genders. Each one brings something that the other does not have, so together they can become one flesh. This would be impossible without the distinctive differences between males and females.

Summarize what the Bible teaches

- 1) God created two distinct genders.
- 2) Those distinct genders were foundational to marriage union.
- 3) Those distinct genders were essential in obeying God's first command.
- 4) There is no hint of division between perception and biology.
- 5) Even after the fall, Jesus affirms what was true at creation.

3. Cultural problems with the transgender movement

What's at stake? Far more than I have time to share. Here are nine.

- 1) Mental health of those affected by gender confusion or dysphoria.
- 2) Physical health of those who choose hormone therapy or surgery.
- 3) The physical safety and dignity of children in public restrooms.
- 4) The integrity of female sports.
- 5) The loss of the distinctive features of what it means to be male and female.
- 6) The destruction of Biblically defined roles in the family.
- 7) Loss of parental rights to make decisions for their own children.
- 8) Unwanted indoctrination in public schools, even in early grades.
- 9) Spiritual condition of those who reject God's revealed truth.

4. Affirmations about sex and gender

Things I believe and want to affirm in light of biblical truth and gospel grace.

- 1) Gender identity is determined by biological sex and not self-perception.
- 2) Gender confusion is real and painful for some.
- 3) Gender confusion or disorientation is a result of the fall.
- 4) Transgender people are loved by God.
- 5) Transgender people must be loved by the church.
- 6) The church must graciously come alongside those struggling.
- 7) Disagreement on the issue does not mean rejection of the person.

- 8) Believers may disagree on the particulars of how we respond. (pronouns)
I will show grace to those who choose to minister in a different way.
- 9) It is wrong to offer hormone therapy or sex realignment surgery to minors.
- 10) I will attempt to be quick to hear & slow to speak, on this issue. I can learn.
- 11) I will see this as a people issue more than a cultural issue. Focus on people.
- 12) The gospel offers hope to all, including transgender individuals.