

Series: **Aliens 2.0**
Today's Title: **"Gender & Transgenderism"**

October 31, 2021 – *Selected passages*

Objective: To help people know what the Bible says about gender.

What is gender?

Are 'sex' and 'gender' synonyms - or altogether different?

Is gender fixed - or is it fixable?

These are questions that our society is wrestling with.

The answers to these questions are forming the philosophy and worldview of the younger generations.

- Parents are now raising 'genderless' children.
- Public schools have new rules to accommodate students who 'identify' as a gender other than their biological one.
- An executive order signed by President Biden in January 2021 mandates that public schools allow students who identify as transgender to use the restrooms and locker rooms of their choice. ([https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-preventing-and-combating-discrimination-on-basis-of-gender-identity-or-sexual-orientation/)

[actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-preventing-and-combating-discrimination-on-basis-of-gender-identity-or-sexual-orientation/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-preventing-and-combating-discrimination-on-basis-of-gender-identity-or-sexual-orientation/))

- For decades there has been a clear line which has distinguished men's sports from women's sports. That line is now being erased as 'Trans-women' (biological men who transition and identify as women) play in women's sports. If you dare challenge or question this - if you believe it's unfair to the girls / women, you will be canceled - just ask Martina Navratilova, who is a gay woman married to her

wife, and one of the greatest women tennis players, who spoke out against Trans-women playing in women's tennis tournaments and faced intense scrutiny, public ridicule and was publicly called transphobic. ([https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/20/tennis/martina-](https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/20/tennis/martina-navratilova-dropped-lgbt-group-scli-spt-intl/index.html)

[navratilova-dropped-lgbt-group-scli-spt-intl/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/20/tennis/martina-navratilova-dropped-lgbt-group-scli-spt-intl/index.html))

- Instead of a person's sex being clearly identified at birth, the terminology now says that a person's sex at birth is "assigned" - which has the idea of an arbitrary decision instead of a scientific fact.
- Wednesday, October 27 - the U.S. issued its first non-binary passport with 'X' gender marker. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced in June that the X marker would be offered as an option on passports, following other countries including Canada, Germany, Australia, and India, which already offer a third gender on documents.

If you think this will all go away someday, you couldn't be more wrong.

Gender confusion / Gender uncertainty / Gender fluidity / Gender Identity is deeply engrained in other countries in the world, and for decades this thinking has been solidifying in our universities and in the policy-making bureaucracies of our own government.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 2013, the condition underlying

transgenderism, gender dysphoria, afflicted roughly 1 in 10,000 people or .01% of the population.

(DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 454. ISBN 978-0-89042-555-8)

This is a real issue with a very small % of people.

However, in the youngest generation - Generation Z - due to a number of influences, we are seeing a spike in cases of gender dysphoria with young adolescent girls - as high as 15%.

As followers of Christ, we need to understand this issue, because it's an issue all around us - in the culture we're called to love - in the culture we're called to share the gospel with.

It's an issue we've dealt with as a church - and virtually every church has dealt with this issue - either knowingly or unknowingly.

We want the Bible - the love, truth, and grace of God to guide our thinking on this issue - and every issue.

1 Corinthians 14:33

“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.”

2 Corinthians 10:5

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”

Just a few comments to those who might be dealing with gender dysphoria - or related issues.

I want you to know you are loved by God.

He loves you more than you can imagine!!

I love you.

We love you.

How can you say that - you don't even know me!

We can say that because you are loved by God - you are made in the image of God - and you're a sinner...just like us.

God has a plan for you - He wants to walk with you through this struggle every day - He died for you - gave His life for you.

You're not alone.

If you want to talk - to pray - we would love that...I would love that.

Now...let's pray - and then we'll look at this issue.

Opening Prayer

What does the science say?

This is not just a theological issue - it's certainly a science / biological issue.

Primarily, our sexual identities as male and female has to do with reproduction.

- Reproductive structures are different in males and females. Both have internal reproductive organs and external sexual anatomy.

- Hormone levels are different in males and females.

Hormonal differences lead to the development of secondary sex characteristics, such as the development of breasts and wider hips in females and more muscle mass and facial hair in males.

- There is also a difference between male and female on the genetic level. The presence or absence of a Y chromosome distinguishes male from female.

Also, a recent study conducted by geneticists also found 1,559 different characteristics on the genetic level that distinguished males from females (e.g., the men-specific skin genes).

Source: <https://bmcbiol.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12915-017-0352-z>

So, according to the scientific data, someone is biologically a male or female based on four things:

1. Internal reproductive organs.
2. External sexual anatomy.
3. Hormones that produce secondary sex characteristics.
4. The presence or absence of a Y chromosome.

In a recent WSJ article titled, *“The Dangerous Denial of Sex”*, biologists Colin M. Wright and Emma N. Hilton provide clarity regarding the gender confusion that exists in our modern culture.

“If male and female are merely arbitrary grouping, it follows that everyone, regardless of genetics or anatomy should be free to choose to identify as male

or female, or to reject sex entirely in favor of a new bespoke ‘gender identity’. To characterize this line of reasoning as having no basis in reality would be an egregious understatement. It is false at every conceivable scale or resolution.”

They continue...

“In humans, reproductive anatomy is unambiguously male or female at birth more than 99.98% of the time.”

“No third type of sex cell exists in humans, and therefore there is no sex ‘spectrum’ or additional sexes beyond male and female. Sex is binary.”

“The time for politeness on this issue has passed.”

They call on biologists and medical professionals to “stand up for the empirical reality of biological sex.”

Science shows, without question, that sex is binary.

It’s also a scientific fact that some people struggle with this reality.

Gender Dysphoria is the severe discomfort in one's biological sex, and it has been studied for nearly one hundred years. Before 2012, there was no scientific or medical literature discussing adolescent girls who wanted to transition to the opposite sex. It almost always involved boys who began feeling it between the ages of 2 and 4.

(Zucker KJ, Cohen-Kettenis PT, "Gender identity Disorder in children and adolescents." In: "Handbook of sexual and gender identity disorders," New York: Wiley, Sons; 2008)

But we have seen a drastic increase in recent years of adolescent girls wanting to transition to the opposite sex, and this is raising all sorts of questions and causing all sorts of problems and dilemmas.

It is scientific fact that men and women are different - very different.

Male and female are categories of biological sex.

Biologically, we are a race of men and a race of women.

Biologically, there is no "in between" and there is no third option.

Sex is not socially constructed; it is a biological - a scientific fact.

Some people do struggle with their biological sex - this is called Gender Dysphoria.

(James Emery White - Sermon: "Gender: A Theology of Sexual Identity")

What does the culture say?

Contrary to the science we all learned in Jr. High, Gender theorists - those leading and teaching Gender Studies at Universities and in the Public Schools teach that sex and gender are not related.

They teach that one's sex has nothing to do with their gender.

They teach that gender is cultural - a 'social construct'.

They teach that a person can choose their gender.

Gender Theorists believe gender has to do with the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of being male or female.

There is a kernel of truth here.

You can break ‘gender’ down into two very different categories: ***gender roles and gender identity***.

Gender roles describe the social and cultural aspects of being male or female – in other words, all things related to masculinity and femininity in our culture, and this is largely built around stereotypes, traditions, etc.

In western culture, masculinity is associated with playing sports, being physically aggressive, being tough, not tender, and excelling in STEM fields - science, technology, engineering, and math.

Boys - prefer blue over pink, jeans instead of dresses and rough-and-tumble play rather than sitting in a circle talking with friends.

Femininity – it is often thought to be more nurturing, compassionate, agreeable, and less physically aggressive than men.

Women who fit this stereotype prefer pink over blue, talking instead of sports, and working at jobs that involve people rather than things. Again, this is what is meant by gender roles.

And these roles are generally understood to exist as a result of a combination of nature and nurture, biology and culture.

So, we can say the majority of **gender roles** in our country are based on generalities; ***they're not based on absolutes.***

- Some women are taller than men.
- Some women might be more aggressive than other men.
- Being an aggressive female or a passive male has nothing to do with whether you are, in fact, a female or a male.

Let's now consider **gender identity**.

This is where the issue typically lies.

Gender identity has to do with the psychological aspects associated with being male or female – someone's internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither. Which brings us to the transgender issue.

Some people experience incongruence between their biological sex and their gender – this incongruence can be related to either gender role or gender identity - or both.

And from that incongruence has come the idea that people should therefore feel free to choose their gender, despite their biological sex.

The heart of the transgender argument is that sex and gender are two different things. Sex has biological overtones, but gender does not - it's cultural.

And that suggests that gender is distinct from the nature of sexuality.

This issue affects more than the gender people choose to identify with, it works through the culture - removing any references to gender-specific items.

You've probably heard about **Target stores** changing their toy aisles from boy or girl toys - to a toy section with no reference to sex / gender.

Hasbro toys has re-released Mr. Potato Head with a new, gender-neutral name – now he's just Potato Head.

As GLAAD, an organization aimed at promoting all things LGBTQ, responded with this statement.

“Hasbro’s decision to introduce Potato Head as a gender-neutral toy is the latest move in a larger movement towards greater diversity and inclusion in toys and media aimed at kids.

[Now, this is where language is key.]

“By offering a toy that exists outside of the binary of male and female, Hasbro is helping kids to simply see

toys as toys, which encourages them to be their authentic selves outside of the pressures of traditional gender norms.”

(<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2021/02/25/mr-potato-head-receives-gender-neutral-name-drops-title/6818363002/>)

So, we have a clash between science and culture regarding sex and gender.

Science is clear on the issue - culture has a different belief.

But...what does the Bible say?

The Bible's clear teaching on sex and gender.

The Bible is very clear on this topic.

It starts in the very 1st chapter of the Bible.

Genesis 1:27 - Jesus affirmed this teaching in Matthew 19:4-6

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

We see in this verse that we are created.

We were created in the image of God.

God created us as binary creatures: male and female.

He purposefully created a human race consisting of men and women.

This has profound implications for our sex - our sexuality - our gender.

Your sex is profoundly linked not to what you do - but to who you are.

It may have implications for what you do in some obvious areas of life, but in a more profound way, it is who you are.

Your maleness and femaleness are inseparably linked to the image of God in you.

The image of God relates to many things in us, but we know for certain that our body is part of that image.

Christ has an eternal, glorified body - and our body will also be resurrected and glorified for all eternity.

We do not exist only as souls.

We are souls who are embodied.

As Paul writes, our bodies will be “raised a spiritual body”

(1 Cor. 15:44)

Your body is part of who you are - and it is part of the image of God in you.

But what about how we embrace or live-out our biological sex?

Does our sex matter when it comes to how we live - what we do?

Does our biological sex have an impact on our identity?

Does it affect how we view ourselves - how we present ourselves - and how others see us?

Yes...I believe that is what the Bible teaches.

Know this: The Bible teaches this - even though there are some who struggle with this - even though it seems counter to their nature - their true selves.

The Bible teaches a lot of things that people have a hard time accepting and obeying. There are a lot of things that people's flesh and the desires of their heart scream out in protest of what the Bible says we should / shouldn't do.

Be kind.

Don't take revenge.

When insulted, love the person who insulted you.

Serve others.

Be faithful to your spouse.

Don't gossip.

Don't steal, be greedy, or covet.

Don't lust.

Shall I go on?

Deuteronomy 22:5

"A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God."

This is not talking about taking out the garbage to the garbage can at night - and you grab your spouse's jacket because it's right by the door - and you wear their jacket to take the garbage out.

This is talking about cross-dressing. It's talking about presenting yourself as a person of the opposite sex.

Why is this an “abomination” to God?

1. It's contrary to the created order...the God-ordained created order.
2. It's a rejection of your biological sex, which is in part how the image of God is embodied in each of us.

Psalm 139:13-15

“For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.”

This passage clearly teaches that we are not an accident. Our maleness or femaleness - or our height, eye color, hair color, none of it is by accident.

Each of us is a unique, intentional, purposeful creation of God with His full awareness of who and what we are.

Then why are some people born with disabilities or with other things that limit their life?

Sin.

When sin entered this world, it distorted the perfect creation of God.

From that point on, this world and everything in it was marred - tainted - corrupted at various levels.

But God is redeeming His creation.

Jesus was born - and died - and resurrected - to redeem people and the planet.

God will make all things perfect again.

Apply it...

Once again, I can only scratch the surface of this issue in a Sunday morning. There is so much more to talk about, but I believe this gives each of us a good foundation - a few solid stakes driven deep into the soil of truth - that prepare us to continue learning in light of what the Bible says.

So, the final question I want to answer is:

How should the Church / Christians respond?

1. We must respond with truth, gentleness, and respect.

Parents are often pressured into treating their son or daughter with puberty-blocking drugs and other treatments that have life-long implications because they're told if they don't give their permission, their son / daughter is more likely to commit suicide.

The truth is: Suicide rates increase after someone goes through the transition process.

A Reuters story from 2018:

“Trans Teens Much More Likely to Attempt Suicide”

“Our findings are startling,” said study leader Dr. Russell Toomey of the University of Arizona in Tucson.

The study revealed that the suicide rate of transgender teen girls is more than 40% and it is nearly 30% for transgender male teens.

“At this point, we don’t just know that lives are at stake - we know how many lives are at stake.”

1 in 2 biological girls who call themselves boys tried to kill themselves in the past year.

2 in 5 gender-nonconforming adolescents tried to kill themselves. And 3 in 10 biological boys who identify as girls tried to kill themselves.

(<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-transgender-teen-suicide/trans-teens-much-more-likely-to-attempt-suicide-idUSKCN1LS39K>)

Studies have shown that in the U.S., 0.5% of the population deals with gender dysphoria, but up to 15% or more of Generation Z embracing it.

It is clear, when you look at these numbers, that there is something going on that’s not dysphoria. You’ve got something cultural. You’ve got something being socially pressured or socially influenced.

1 Peter 3:15-16

“...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

We must share the truth about sex and gender - lives are at stake!

And we must share the truth with gentleness and respect.

2. We must respond with compassion and love.

I heard a testimony of a girl named Leslie.

As a little girl, Leslie struggled with her gender identity.

Finally, in her late teens, she went to her pastor for help and told him her struggle, eager for some guidance.

Instead of helping, he escorted Leslie out of the building and told her not to come back.

She didn't...for 18 years.

People need love and community - and since the church rejected her, she found love and acceptance - in the LGBTQ community.

She fell in love with a woman (Sue) and got married.

Sue had a rare disease - which caused her hands to shake terribly.

One night, Sue went outside to smoke a cigarette - and her hands were shaking so much that when she tried to light her cigarette, she lit herself on fire.

Leslie was doing the dishes and heard terrible screaming, and when she ran outside, Sue was engulfed in flames.

Sue died 3 days later.

Leslie scrambled to find a church for Sue's funeral. She called a church that Sue had volunteered at for some event - it was one of the most conservative churches in the area.

When she was able to reach one of the pastors, she said, "Hi, my name is Lesli, and my wife just died. We're lesbians, but, um... I want to know if you would do my wife's funeral."

The pastor replied, "We would be honored to serve."

He went on to say, "I'm so very sorry for your loss. You must be truly grieving right now. I can't imagine what it would be like to lose a loved one [like you have].

Please, Lesli, let us take care of all the details of the funeral - whatever you need. Please, Lesli, let us love you through your pain."

Through the process, as the pastor and the people of that church loved Leslie through her pain, it brought Leslie back to Christ - reignited her faith in Christ.

She still struggles with her gender dysphoria, but she is walking faithfully with Christ - serving and loving others. (James Emery White - Sermon: "Gender: All Things Transgender")

Jesus told those who wanted Him to condemn the woman caught in adultery, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7)

After Peter denied Him 3x, Jesus forgave him. Jesus embraced him - let him know he's loved - and He was still important - and God would still use him despite his sin.

Closing prayer

Resources:

Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church, and What the Bible Has to Say, by Preston Sprinkle