Gender and Sexuality

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* What was once considered impossible and marginal many decades ago has now become accepted and mainstream in the cultural climate that we live in.
* What led to this cultural climate?
  + Sexual revolution of the 1960s – “if it feels good, do it”
  + Post-Christian value systems – confluence of looking at things without a biblical lens.
    - A value system that doesn’t involve the traditional Judeo-Christian values
  + Triumph of the modern self – the self is the highest ideal and highest source of authority we have in our cultural climate
* We are in a complex and confusing culture of sexuality in the modern world.

How do we think about this issue as a Christian?

* We do need to think about this politically – the impact of and issues surrounding gender identity do affect societies and individuals.
  + We do not think about this politically first, though.
* We think about this from a personal level, not a policy level.
  + We think about this through the lens of scripture.
    - Scripture reveals who God is and what is true and good.

The Revelation of Scripture

* God created. He created because He is the creator. Because He’s the creator of humanity, He gives definition to maleness and femaleness. Humans are made in the image of God and have been given the commission to be fruitful and multiply.
* Genesis 1: 27- 28 – So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”
* Genesis 2: 21-24 – So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribsand then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.
* God – who is all wise and all loving – designed humans in two complimentary halves that are completed in joining together to bear fruit (the reproduction of humanity). Humans are given a mission to fill the earth.
* Fruitfulness means that men and women are interdependent and complimentary for this to be able to happen.

1. God created humans – human beings are intentional.
2. God made humans in two distinct forms as male and female. Human beings are not interchangeable.
3. God makes man and woman to need each other. Human beings are complementary.

* This divine design is true and good.
* Jesus affirmed these very things.
  + Matthew 19: 4-6: Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”
  + When Jesus makes this statement, he affirms what we learned in Genesis 1 and 2. Jesus reiterates the truth. He tells us again that we are created beings, that we are made male and female, and that to be male means to be able to reproduce with a female, and that what God does, we should not undo.
* To reject the blueprint is not just a rejection of the blueprint, but a rejection of Jesus. Jesus himself affirms what God did in this divine design.
* “Men and women are equal but different, intentional but not interchangeable.” – Andrew T. Walker in *God and the Transgender Debate*
  + This is the divine design. But that design has been distorted through sin. This distortion affects people spiritually, emotionally, psychologically, and physically.
  + Sin’s effects can be felt in many ways. Sometimes the effect expresses itself in a disordered view of sexuality.
* Some feel an incompleteness in their body or gender.
* Gender dysphoria is a real issue.
  + Gender dysphoria – a confusion and tension around one’s gender; it’s most often completely unwanted.
* Thankfully, we have hope in the gospel – Jesus’ life and death and resurrection.
  + The gospel gives us hope beyond our broken bodies and minds and gives us the realization of a future of wholeness, even if it means we have to struggle for a season with the remnants of our brokenness for a season right now.
  + This is true for all of us, and is particularly true for those who struggle with gender and sexuality.

Living as a disciple in light of issues of gender identity

* How do we interact with friends or family members struggling with gender identity?
  + **Love**
* Luke 10:27 – “He answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”
  + Our neighbor is everyone everywhere.
* **What does love do?**

1. **Love gives dignity**

* Love gives dignity to the human being straight across from you sitting face to face with you.
* When we love God, we love people, and we offer them the dignity associated with being made in the image of God.
* This should not get lost on us that follow after Jesus. Those struggling with gender identity are people – humans created in the image of God, and they need to be afforded the dignity of their humanity.
* We get this wrong too often. Too many times in our history we’ve seen people that don’t give the dignity of humanity to other people.
* We as Christian people should allow love to create an atmosphere of dignity, regardless of what people may be going through, and especially when they’re walking through very difficult issues like gender dysphoria or struggles with gender identity.

1. **Love is patient.**

* God has been overwhelmingly patient with us.
  + We sometimes forget that to our own detriment.
  + We become dismissive of people and their struggle.
* We demonstrate the good news of Jesus and the gospel when we offer people patience that’s in keeping with the reality of what God has done for us.

1. **Love is compassionate.**

* Gender dysphoria is working at the core of the identity of the person dealing with this – most of the time, unwanted.
* We as people – even if we have certain ideas about what should be and what’s right and wrong – our compassion should be seen, known, and felt by those we minister to.

1. **Love embraces the truth**

* 1 Corinthians 13:6 – Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
  + Love delights in truth
* We don’t divorce love and the truth. Love doesn’t mean we condone and encourage things set up against God’s design for human flourishing.
  + It is actually unloving to do something like this.
  + It’s unloving to dehumanize, to be quick-tempered, and wrath filled; it’s also unloving to deny the truth.
* We must embrace the truth without arrogance and judgement.

**Within a relationship of love, we can share the truth of the gospel that gives hope and life, and we can do so without an air of arrogance or dismissal or marginalization of people.**

Resources for further study

* *God and the Transgender Debate* – Andrew T. Walker
* [God and the Transgender Debate Youtube video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_p1WTkvdjM)
* *Gender Dysphoria* – Mark Yarhouse
* *The Gospel Comes with a House Key* – Rosaria Butterfield
* Pastor Jerry’s message on sexuality: <https://thechapel.com/messages/worldview/sexuality/>
* <https://www.livingout.org/>
* [“Navigating pronouns while loving your transgender neighbor”](https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/he-she-ze-zir-navigating-pronouns-while-loving-your-transgender-neighbor/) – Andrew T. Walker