

Lesson 8: Gender Dysphoria

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The “Modern” Challenge: Each person can choose for themselves the sexual expression they feel or prefer, regardless of maturity, biology, or design.

The Truth: Human sexuality is designed, created, and regulated by God for our good. It is given as a blessing. But when we violate God’s commands it is both sinful and hurtful. This is a very personal subject, so people need and deserve thoughtful, caring, and gracious teachings on these subjects.

#1.) What is Gender Dysphoria?

- There are 3 modern phrases to be aware of. Even if we disagree with the ways these terms are used, it is important to understand what others are communicating in these discussions.
 - Biological Sex: Body Parts & Shape, Hormones, Chromosomes, Brain Structure
 - Gender Identity: How I think of myself... What my psychological sense of gender is...
 - Gender expression: How I live, How I behave, What I wear...
- The term “transgender” refers to a person whose sex assigned at birth (i.e. the sex assigned by a physician at birth, usually based on external genitalia) does not match their gender identity (i.e., one’s psychological sense of their gender). Some people who are transgender will experience “gender dysphoria,” which refers to psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one’s sex assigned at birth and one’s gender identity. Though gender dysphoria often begins in childhood, some people may not experience it until after puberty or much later.
 - American Psychiatric Association, November 2020, psychiatry.org

#2.) The Debate Can Be Summarized Very Simply: Is A Person’s Sex Determine By Biology or Psychology? In Other Words: Is A Person’s Sex Determined By Their Body or Their Feelings?

Today, many psychiatrist and surgeons believe the most helpful thing they can do is “affirm” the feelings of their patients. If a patient “feels” like a gender other than their body, these professionals will prescribe treatments that support and encourage these feelings. Is this really best?

Dr. Paul McHugh ran the sex-change surgery center at John Hopkins hospital. When following up with patients, they learned that even these radical surgeries did not resolve the patient’s feelings, and for some even became “suicidal and depressed and regretful.” When he realized they were harming the patients, he closed the surgery center. Consider this quote:

- Dr. McHugh does not believe surgery cures gender dysphoria. He thinks that condition, along with anorexia and body dysmorphia, is a “disorder of assumption,” characterized by an “overvalued idea,” or a ruling passion that “fulminates in the mind of the subject, growing more dominant over time, more refined, and more resistant to challenge,” as he has written.
- In the case of anorexia, the overvalued idea is that it’s good to be thin. The primary goal of the psychiatrist ought to be to help the patient change behavior. The prevailing standard of care for sufferers of gender dysphoria—“affirmative care”—is the opposite: It calls for mental-health professionals to accept both a patient’s self-diagnosis of gender dysphoria and the corresponding behavior.

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Dr. McHugh makes the excellent observation that psychiatrists have made mistakes in the past and prescribed treatments that were actually harmful. Likewise, helping a person today DOES NOT REQUIRE that we affirm their feelings and associated actions. In the case of anorexia, we would NEVER encourage them to eat even less, because we know it would be very harmful! Instead we would help them understand the benefits and joys of good eating habits and healthy body image. Likewise, in the case of someone with gender dysphoria, we should not affirm their feeling, but instead, help them understand the benefits of God's design for men and women and a healthy sex life in marriage.

#3.) The Truth of God's Word

Sex & Gender Are Determined By Biology, Not Psychology.

- 1. Who is to be circumcised? _____ Gen. 17:10-14
- 2. Who had pain multiplied in childbirth? _____ Gen. 3:16
- 3. When was Cain's Sex (& Gender) Determined? _____ Gen. 4:1

This may not be popular, but what does Romans 3:4 remind us to do when God's word is rejected?

#4.) The Bible Directly Addresses Gender Roles & Transgender Behavior

- What groups does Jesus hold accountable to His commandments about sex? (Mt. 19:12)
- How does God regulate behaviors associated with "Gender Expression?" (Deut. 22:5)
- What Basic, Obvious Key Facts can be Established from this Passage?
- What warning does God give about modern philosophies? (Colossians 2:8, Colossians 3:5, 9)
- Read 1 Cor. 11:1-16. Does God give commands that acknowledge differences in men and women? Does God give commands that acknowledge different cultural practices/expressions between men and women?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8. How does God desire for us to think and act regarding sex?

#5.) Case Study: How Can We Help Drew?

- Drew is a Christian. He is doing a group project at school with 3 other students. One of these students, a girl named Ellen, came back from Christmas break wearing boys' clothes and asking to be called Elliot now, and referred to as "he" or "him."
- Drew isn't sure how to talk to his classmate or how to introduce Ellen/Elliot during their project presentation. Drew knows this student is going through a lot right now, so he wants to be kind and helpful. Drew also knows that lying is wrong, so he doesn't want to say anything untrue.
- How can we help Drew speak with both love and truth?

Bottomline: Homosexual & Transgender Acts Do Not and Will Not Bring Peace – They Amplify Feelings of Depression & Anxiety. Walking With Jesus Is What Will Actually Bring Peace.