

## Biblical Sexuality and Gender, Part 1: A Biblical Foundation

1 Peter 3:15; Genesis 1:27-28; 2:25; Matthew 19:

**MPS** Christians honor Jesus as Lord when we stand on the truth of a Biblical foundation for sexuality and gender.

**OBJ** Every Christian can be ready to bear a faithful witness for a Biblical foundation of sexual identity and gender by Three Aspects.

**INTRO** “Eva was in a church luncheon when she got an email from her 12-year-old daughter, Grace. “Mom and Dad, I need to tell you I’m not actually a girl,” she read. “My pronouns are they / them.” Eva couldn’t breathe. She felt like she’d been punched in the gut. She hadn’t seen this coming—in fact, a few months before, Grace had shared on social media her belief that God created people male and female. Back then, Eva was sure that statement was going to earn Grace—who attended a progressive public school—some social problems. Instead, it seemed to blow over right away. “I would’ve gotten bullied,” said Grace, who is now 16. “Instead, they decided to reeducate me. I got invited to groups where all they wanted to talk about was the transgender stuff. Over the course of a few months, I decided I was going to be agender. And then I ended up deciding I was a boy.” Grace was experiencing what is often called “rapid-onset gender dysphoria,” in which friendship groups begin to experience similar gender questions at the same time. One in five Gen Z Americans now identify as LGBT+, double the number of millennials (one in 10) and quadruple the number of Gen X Americans (about one in 20). A surprising number of them—40% of Gen Z and millennials—also identify as religious. Increasingly, Christian pastors, youth pastors, and parents are fielding questions and declarations from young people examining their own gender or sexual orientation.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the way the article from July of this year began. As you can imagine, it caught my attention. It was not the first time I had been introduced to the issue when I read it, and that was not the part that most alarmed me. The 40% of Gen Z and millennials who identify as LGBT+ also identify as religious alarms me. [I’m less shocked by the percentage of who claim LGBT+ identification than I am alarmed that they believe it is compatible with Christian doctrine.](#) And with a new school year beginning, there is a great deal of conversation about it throughout our local schools.

This issue of Sexual Identity and Gender is pervading and dominating every area of society today, government, medicine and healthcare, business, economics, media, entertainment, and maybe most of all, education. There is an intentional agenda, though not necessarily unified across all situations, that is radically reorienting our culture and society in a direction that stands in direct opposition to Biblical teaching, and that opposes and undermines all that is good for humanity and creation. We may not know exactly how to confront every argument that arises, and we may not know how to address every situation in which we find ourselves. But let it not be said of followers of Jesus Christ, that we ignored such a grievous lie and deception and remained silent. Do not be confused, the core of these ideologies are atheistic and God-denying.<sup>2</sup> We are not facing an argument simply over ideas. We are engaging a battle against the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. [Where ideologies and movements blatantly oppose God’s creational design and commands of Scripture, Christians hold a responsibility before God, to our brothers and sisters in the Church, and to our fellow man to speak up and labor for the good of humanity in bearing a faithful witness to the truth of God’s Word.](#)

**Sermon Plan** Over the next two weeks I will cover the topic of Biblical Sexuality and Gender from a Biblical perspective. The first message will lay a foundation of Biblical doctrine on which Christians must be prepared to stand as our defense and the reason for our hope. The second message will implore a missional approach from our foundation for a faithful witness in the world. We will not have time to provide comprehensive coverage. I admit, I am no authority on the issue. But I am reading

<sup>1</sup> Zylstra, Sarah Eekhoff. “Transformation of a Transgender Teen”. The Gospel Coalition, July 6, 2022.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/transformation-transgender-teen/>. Last Accessed September 14, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Branch makes this point when he states, “The idea that Christian sexual ethics are oppressive and must be rejected is an idea that now pervades America. Seen in this light, transgenderism is the ultimate rejection of Judeo-Christian ethics.” Branch, Alan. Affirming God’s Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 14.



deeply and widely to provide you with Resources to further your study that will best serve you in preparing your defense and plan of action.

**Resources** My full manuscripts with all references for sources cited will be available on Mondays at my website, [www.mlaneharrison.com](http://www.mlaneharrison.com). I will recommend several books, articles, videos, and websites for different purposes. Limited copies will be available on the Resource Wall in the North-Community Room. (LifePoint makes not profit from the Resource Wall. Resources are provided there only for ease of accessibility.) I strongly encourage every person to read at least one book on the topic, to grow in understanding and prepare to address the issue in your life.

In his first letter to Christians in the First Century, Peter exhorts,

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, <sup>16</sup>having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. **1 Peter 3:15-17**

These verses provide both an exhortation to fidelity in Biblical truth as well as faithfulness of application in Christian witness.

**Christians honor Jesus as Lord when we stand on the truth of a Biblical foundation for sexuality and gender.**

**OBJ** A Biblical foundation for sexual identity and gender is built by Three Aspects.

**Aspect 1:** The first critical aspect of any foundation is what it is built on. In the Ozarks we should understand this. Any developer considering land immediately looks for dangers in the ground to avoid, like sinkholes. A foundation is only as strong as that upon which it is built. A Biblical foundation must be built on the bedrock of God's Truth.

### **1. God's Design and Purpose for Sexuality. Genesis 1:26-28**

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over..." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. **Genesis 1:26-28, 31***

**When God created, he made man in His image, in two genders.** This design for humanity was to fulfill God's purpose: to represent Him on the earth, to multiply and fill the earth, and to exercise dominion of the earth. Both genders are equal in dignity and worth, and the creational command was given for both to fulfill. But, as we will see, in the unique way that each was made. This is neither accidental nor evolving. **Two genders, male and female, are God's purposeful design for the world and for each person, and of which He said is "good".<sup>3</sup>**

**God created people as a whole: body, mind, and spirit.** Biological sex and gender are not the same, but they are inseparable from one another. And the former is essential for the latter. These false claims of separating mind from body have been made in every generation, whether in Gnosticism, Mysticism, or otherwise. Claims about gender that are counter to God's Word do not reveal something God missed or flaws in His design. They reveal what that person thinks about God. Denying God's design and purpose of two genders, a gender binary, is like building a foundation on a sinkhole that's already open. **When we trust God's design, we embrace our gender as His good purpose for our life.**

<sup>3</sup> Branch, Alan. *Affirming God's Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 27. Branch states, "Genesis 1:27 affirms that sexuality is not an accident of nature, nor is it simply a biological phenomenon. Instead, sexual identity and function are part of God's will for his image-bearers. The gift of gender is not an accident of evolution or a mere social construction; it is a part of an intentional and purposeful plan for each person. When God finished the work of creation and called it "very good" (Gen 1:31), this means our gender is a very good thing to be embraced. Thus the sex we are given at birth is part of God's will for us as his image-bearers."



**Aspect 2:** A foundation is only as strong as the material of composition. **Did you know there are different kind of concretes that have different strength ratings?** The strength rating is determined by the amount of pressure applied, or PSI. A Biblical foundation is designed for the pressure life applies when it is composed by...

## 2. God's Plan for Sexuality. Genesis 2:18, 20b-25; Matthew 19:4-6

*Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."*

*But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,*

*"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Genesis 2:18, 20b-25*

God's created design of two genders that complement one another, fit together, enable His creation to obey His creational command to multiply, procreate. In naming all the animals, Adam found no corresponding partner for himself. And God said about this what He had not said about anything else, *"It is not good... I will make him a helper fit for him."* So God took a rib from Adam and formed the woman. When Adam saw her he recognized that she was made for him, just as God promised. Then God states His plan for these two persons, one male and one female to leave parents and hold fast to his wife, and to become one flesh. Two genders to be "fitted together" in marriage for glory in union and intimacy of oneness. Biblical scholars recognize this as an "innate characteristic with corresponding role-responsibilities for each sex."<sup>4</sup> **By God's plan, a man and a woman in marriage are made one flesh by sexual union to fulfill His creational command.**

When we distort or abort God's plan, we forsake His glory in creation. **But is this really that important, and pertinent to the gender debate today?** Jesus says it is. When asked about divorce by the Pharisees, Jesus cites Genesis 2 and affirms God's plan of two genders made one flesh. (Matthew 19:4-6) We don't have to dig terrible deep to realize these truths, but we do have to receive them with faith. **Jesus recognizes that what Genesis states is the Father's revelation of His good plan for humanity.**

**Aspect 3:** A foundation determines the footprint for what will be built. Several years ago, Christin and I built a house, not the one we now live in. We had plans drawn up and were ready to go. The way the lot sat we angled the garage to stay within easements. When the foundation got poured, they missed the angle, not by much but enough. Because the foundation was altered, that whole side of the house had to be re-designed. A foundation is not just about what's underneath, but it determines what the finished product will be from the very beginning. Only a Biblical foundation produces God's glory in sexuality.

## 3. Glory of Sexuality in Relationship 1 Corinthians 11:7; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7

When we come to this third aspect we see how the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the two genders serve the marriage relationship. Paul, in speaking to an issue of worship, highlights the distinctions between the two genders. He builds his teaching on the creation narrative to show how the two relate to glorify God. (1 Corinthians 11:7-12) Then, in teaching on the marriage relationship in Ephesians (5:22-33), he instructs the husband and the wife how to relate to each other, because of the distinctiveness of their gender. Finally, Peter (1 Peter 3:7) exhorts husbands to *"live with your wife in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life"*. He is not degrading women but teaching one gender how to honor the other, because they are equal, but not identical. This is not a negative remark. He is acknowledging that the strength of a female is not in her outward display of power, but inner fortitude of spirit. **The way a husband and wife relate, ultimately, and even the way men and women can relate outside of marriage, to honor one another in the distinctiveness with which we were created, glorifies God by recognizing the equality, dignity, value, and blessing of each one.**

These three aspects that form our solid foundation are not simply cultural stereotypes but distinctives of God's design for gender. And gender is established in biology, this is proven even in treatment strategies. Higher levels of testosterone (men)

<sup>4</sup> Branch, Alan. *Affirming God's Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 28. Branch states, Commenting on Genesis 2:21, branch states, "In this way, gender is presented not as something arbitrary and self-defined but as an innate characteristic with corresponding role-responsibilities for each sex."



make you something different than higher levels of estrogen (women). This doesn't make one better than the other but confirms the glory of their uniqueness as God's Word reveals.

**ILLUS** Dr. Alan Branch, who preached at LifePoint in June of this year, used the example of Florence Griffith Joiner, Flo-Jo, the fastest woman who still holds female world track records today, since 1988. She's the fastest woman in the world, but six High School boys from Missouri have beaten her time in the 100-meter dash. And it's not because they are eating their Wheaties! (Too much?)

A Biblical foundation of sexual identity and gender, in its architecture and engineering for life, is solid and sound, and artistically beautiful! [The Biblical foundation is God's creational design and purpose, His plan, and His glory!](#)

**Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism have become the epidemic of our time among children and teens.** This is not a virus with an unknown source, but an intentional agenda driven with a specific purpose. How Christians should respond to Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism will be the focus of next week's message, but I need to make some final comments for today.

First, we must recognize that gender dysphoria and transgenderism are not the same, and that not every situation must or should be treated the same way. To be clear; we are not denying that people experience gender dysphoria. "A Christian stance acknowledges biological factors, the home environment, past experiences, and human volition can all contribute to gender dysphoria."<sup>5</sup> We reject, however, the demand of actions toward acceptance and affirmation that presume forgone conclusions of theory that are both unproven, misleading, deceptive, and abusive. And for those who struggle with Gender Dysphoria, we should neither shame nor shun them. We open our arms to love and walk with them. But we walk in the light of God's truth, not the darkness of transgenderism's lie. [How Christians can walk in light and love will be our focus for next.](#)

**CLOSE** Carl Trueman, in his landmark work, [The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self](#), describes our times well when he states, "In a world of empathy-based ethics, the moral sense is ultimately the aesthetic sense. And that means that when the sacred order collapses, morality is simply a matter of taste, not truth."<sup>6</sup> [The foundation for our morality has eroded and we are left with whatever looks good, where everyone does what is right in their own eyes.](#)<sup>7</sup>

**What aspects form your foundation of sexuality and gender?** Before you proceed you need to consider this, because how you address and respond to gender dysphoria and transgenderism doesn't begin with them. It begins with how you respond to God's Word regarding sexual identity and gender. Today's voices speak a counter narrative, and if you listen your foundation will be built on an ever-shifting ideology that seeks to deny God and remake Him in a human image. [When you build your life on God's Truth, you stand on a rock that cannot be moved and walk in a light that cannot be dimmed.](#)

[Christians honor Jesus as Lord when we stand on the truth of a Biblical foundation for sexuality and gender.](#)

[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 1 Peter 3:15](#)

**Set your heart to honor Christ as Lord.** Understand that the doctrine of His Word is the design for all of life. Do not waver on this; God is neither wrong, embarrassed nor squeamish about the foundation He has given to us. And His people should not be either. Commit to read at least one resource to better understand and prepare yourself. Parents, start early to teach your children at the earliest age about Biblical sexuality. And if you have not had any of these discussions with your

<sup>5</sup> Branch, Alan. *Affirming God's Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 33.

<sup>6</sup> Trueman, Carl. [The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to the Sexual Revolution](#). (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), p161.

<sup>7</sup> Judges 17:6; 21:25



children, apologize to them and start now, no matter what age they are. We have resources on the Resource Wall for talking with your child for every age, from 3 through the teen years.

