

What Does The Bible Say About Transgenderism / Gender Dysphoria / Gender Identity Disorder

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Our culture is changing so rapidly in regards to human sexuality that it takes your breath away. A decade ago, Bruce Jenner's transgender transformation would not have been celebrated on the cover of [Vanity Fair](#). A decade ago, the state of California would not have passed a [law](#) allowing transgender students to enter any restroom or locker room they choose. A decade ago, a transgendered man would never have been glorified by being allowed to sing the [national anthem](#) at a professional sporting event. Yes, the LGBT agenda has advanced at a shocking rate.

As we respond to the world's embrace of gender identity disorder, Christians must offer informed, educated answers to our confused world - not ignorant, knee-jerk rants. When people resort to insensitive, clumsy name-calling ("You fags!" "You're disgusting!"), their words and attitudes become every bit as sinful as the homosexuality or transgenderism they are attempting to criticize.

If we want the sinner to stop sinning, we need to study sin. We need to know what

transgenderism is (*and what it isn't*). We need to know what it means to be made in the image of God. We need to know what true repentance looks like for the transgendered individual. And we need to know how Christ treated sinners.

Who Do You Think You Are?

The core problem of the LGBT agenda is the issue of identity. We all want to be noticed, accepted, and approved of by our peers. Like sheep without a shepherd, we try to fulfill this desire in different ways. True worth, however, is found in being who God made us to be (Ecc. 12:13; Eph. 2:10). Jesus is the answer to our search for meaning. Our identity is found in Christ. We are not defined by our socio-economic status, by our race, or by our sexual urges. We are called to be Christians.

Understanding Gender Identity Disorder

Gender Identity Disorder is the diagnosis given to people who feel significant discontentment (dysphoria) with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. **While gender identity disorder is similar to homosexuality** (“transgender” is the “T” in “LGBT” references), **they are different issues**. While homosexuality is the attraction to the *same* sex, gender identity disorder is the identification with the *opposite* sex. Worthy of note, gender identity disorder is more prevalent in men than in women (Clinton, p. 231). Generally speaking, homosexuals do not have gender identity disorder (p. 233), and many who struggle with gender identity disorder do not necessarily struggle with homosexual attraction (WebMD). In both cases, however, homosexual and gender identity disordered behavior typically manifest themselves in emotionally and spiritually wounded men (James, p. 118).

“Trans” in “transgender” is merely a political prefix, not an actual fact. It implies that it is possible to literally completely change from one gender to another. Just because one is confused about their gender does not mean they can ever stop being biologically male or female. Only God can assign gender. While transgendered people feel like the opposite sex - and may succeed in looking like the opposite sex physically - they will never fully become the opposite gender biologically or spiritually.

Christians should be reminded that those who suffer from this disorder are very confused and often discouraged. They often suffer social rejection on a daily basis, opening the door to other problems like substance abuse, depression, and thoughts of suicide. It is common for those who struggle with gender identity disorder to “feel debilitating shame” because of their strong perception that they are very “different” and don’t fit in with their peers

(Clinton, p. 234). As a result, they keep their feelings secret and attempt to hide from the rest of the world. There is a danger that they will meet someone who will affirm their gender confusion and “love” them by “accepting” and “embracing” sinful behavior.

Sin Comes In Different Flavors, But They All Have The Same Nutritional Value

No one is perfect. While I personally may not be tempted to act on feelings of gender confusion, I am tempted to sin in other ways. While someone else may struggle with transgender urges, they may not struggle with the same weaknesses with which I struggle. We *all* fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). And **all sin - regardless of whether it is the “transgender” variety or the “little white lie” variety - will produce spiritual death** (Rom. 6:23; Isa. 59:2; Jas. 1:15). As far as sin goes, it doesn’t matter how big or ugly it is; even the smallest of sins will keep us out of the kingdom of God (cf. Jas. 2:10).

In order to be saved, we must *repent* (more on that below). Ezekiel said it (Ezek. 18:30); John the Baptizer said it (Matt. 3:2); Jesus said it (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:5); Peter said it (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22); Paul said it (Acts 17:30). While we are broken and imperfect people, we must renounce our sinful imperfections. And what is remarkable is that Christ doesn’t call us to perfection (though we shouldn’t stop trying); He just calls us to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7).

In the early days of Christianity, there were former sinners at the church in Corinth (including adulterers and homosexuals), but they repented and made sin a foreign element in their lives. “Such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:11) will always be the hope-filled call to holiness to everyone who struggles with homosexuality, gender identity disorder, and everyone else who struggles with sin. Lifelong repentance is at the core of Christian discipleship.

God Made Us In His Image



Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. [...] So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them. (Gen. 1:26-27, ESV)

When God created man, gender was the basis for how mankind would bear the image of God. He purposefully made us how we are (Psa. 139; 13-16), and the body parts which signify our gender are immediately evident.

The LGBT agenda has cheapened the concept of identity by reducing it to mere sexuality. Sexuality is not an identity; it is simply a behavioral term that describes the ability to act sexually (James 71). This means that neither homosexuality nor heterosexuality are identities. Being “transgendered” is not an identity. They are merely terms to describe what a person feels or chooses to do in regards to their sexual capabilities.

What we *feel* does not determine our identity. When we buy into the lie that says that feelings justify behavior, we have forgotten what it means to be “made in the image of God.” Transgenderism is, at its core, a confusion of spiritual gender identity. While some take the radical step of surgical sex reassignment (transsexual) or merely cross-dress (transvestite), it is impossible to totally become the opposite gender – physically or spiritually. Biologically, we will always be the sex we were given at birth, and spiritually, we will always be the gender God has chosen us to be. God gave sex-assigned body parts to mankind so men and women would know what gender they are. Yes, we are more than body parts, but certainly not less.

As God made man in His image, He made them male and female (Gen. 1:26-27). Men and women can have the assurance of their gender from the moment they are born. God is truth and has communicated His truth to us (1 John 2:21). The truthfulness of our identities is not dependent upon confusing feelings. If feelings could serve as the basis for our behavior, one could make the argument for any sinful deviant behavior (such as bestiality, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, polygamy, incest) or plural sinful behavior (like homosexual,

pedophilic incest).

Men Should Act Like Men, Women Should Act Like Women



While there is some overlap in describing both masculinity and femininity, spiritually speaking, men need to be more masculine than they are feminine, and women are to be more feminine than they are masculine.

The Bible alludes to the importance of masculinity and femininity (and the difference between the two) throughout scripture. Fathers are to demonstrate leadership, and mothers to be nurturing (cf. 1 Thess. 2:7-11). Men are to clearly look and act like men, and women are to clearly look and act like women, and they are to follow in large part what culture determines to be masculine or feminine (1 Cor. 11:2-16). Men are to be particularly strong and resilient to difficult conditions (1 Cor. 16:13). Within the marriage bond, men and women are equal in value but have different roles to play (1 Pet. 3:7; Gen. 2:18-24; Eph. 5:22-25). A man's behavior and appearance should not be characterized as being "soft and delicate" (*malakos*, "effeminate," cf. 1 Cor. 6:9). God has always wanted men and women to dress according to their gender (Lev. 22:5).

Instead of perverting gender into some sort of continuum, Christians must celebrate the differences of Biblical manhood and womanhood. We should encourage men to act like men and allow them to engage in recreational activities associated with masculinity. We should encourage the same with women. Father's need to provide for their sons by not only affirming their masculinity, but by doing masculine things with them - camping, playing football, building things, and teaching them how to provide for and defend the people in their care.

It's About God's Glory

Gender distortion is a symptom of a larger problem. When people reject God's authority and make their own wisdom their god, they will also exchange their respective genders for a lie (Rom. 1:21-31).

We glorify God by exemplifying our roles. Women glorify God by being feminine and playing the feminine role in the home and in the church (cf. Eph. 5:22-25; 1 Tim. 2:12; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:1-2). Men glorify God by being masculine and playing the masculine role in the home and in the church (1 Tim. 2:8; Acts 20:27-28; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; Eph. 6:4; Gen. 3:16).

What Repentance Looks Like For The Transgender

Those who recognize they are guilty of sin must repent (Luke 5:32; 13:3, 5). Repentance is analogous to being "born again" (John 3:5); repentance is essential to receiving salvation (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22).

Repenting means more than being sorry (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10). To repent means to change your heart, mind, and ultimately your actions. The Greek word behind the English word "repent" (metanoeo) is a combination of two parts: *meta* and *noeo*. The prefix *meta* means to move or to change. *Noeo* refers to the mind and its disposition and purpose. Therefore the basic meaning of repentance is to change one's mind in relation to its intentions and desires.

Jesus told us what repentance looks like. He commanded us to "bear fruits in keeping with repentance" (Luke 3:8). Our inward change of mind needs to be reflected by our behavior. In other words, repentance means more than no longer sinning outwardly - it means to change inwardly which in turn keeps us from sinning outwardly.

Because sin comes in different forms, one's repentance must be custom-fitted to each individual. The thief must stop stealing. The gossip must stop gossiping. The pornographer must stop creating pornography. The alcoholic must stop drinking alcohol. And the transsexual must dress and behave in keeping with the gender God assigned him or her.

Repentance does not mean the automatic disappearance of any feelings of gender confusion. Perhaps over time, by God's grace (cf. 2 Cor. 12:8-9), the temptation to identify as the opposite gender will diminish. It is not sinful to sometimes feel like the opposite gender, but

it is sinful to rebel against one's God-given identity by behaving like the opposite gender.

Perhaps you have undergone expensive surgery, mutilating your body to more closely resemble the opposite sex. But you must remember that gender is not dependent upon sexual plumbing. After all, the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 still had a masculine gender, though he was asexual (cf. Acts 8:26-39). **Repentance would not necessarily necessitate corrective surgery, but it does necessitate once again dressing and acting like the gender of your birth. God intends for women to be feminine and men to be masculine** (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2-16).

Because sexuality is not the basis for our identity (though it is inseparably connected to the core of our identity), it is not mandatory for people who still struggle with feelings of gender confusion to date or marry. God can be just as glorified by remaining single (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:1, 7).

We Must Respond To Gender Identity Disorder In The Manner Of Christ

Jesus felt compassion on those who were lost (Matt. 9:36). Likewise, Christians cannot assume an attitude of condescension when discussing gender identity disorder; we must be compassionate towards those who are lost and hurting.

Jesus engaged sinners and tried to influence them for God (Mark 2:15-17). Likewise, Christians must not withdraw their sphere of influence from those who struggle with gender identity disorder (cf. John 17:15). We must engage the culture, not become hermits. At the same time, we must do this without bowing to the temptation to approve or condone sin (Rom. 1:31; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 1:27).

Jesus loved people who had spiritual heart problems. Jesus, knowing the rich young man did not love God with all of his being (Mark 12:30), still felt love for him (Mark 10:21). Naturally, Jesus could not affirm the man's sinfulness; the rich young man would need to repent to be saved. But Jesus loved him enough to engage him with God's word.

As Christians we must...

...love sinners without affirming their sin.

...love sinners without loving their sin.

...love sinners by teaching them the truth.

...love sinners by telling them to repent and obey the gospel.

...love sinners by demonstrating Biblical manhood and womanhood for them to emulate.

Conclusion

Struggles are real. Some struggle with lust. Some struggle with dishonesty. Some struggle with homosexual or transgender urges. Some struggle with depression and self-worth. As Christians, we groan under the weight of our problems (Rom. 8:22-25). But we are called to be faithful in Christ. Let us live lives worthy of the gospel, repenting when we sin and walking in the light (1 John 1:7), so we can be somewhere better one day.

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Heb. 11:16, ESV)

Your comments are welcome and encouraged, even if they are in disagreement. However, please keep your comments relevant to the article. For my full comment policy, [click here](#).

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