**Christianity and Transgenderism**

 One of the most bewildering situations to a conscientious Christian is how to interact with a person who is transgender or is an advocate of transgenderism. One is often at a loss for words in how to communicate with such people. The matter was rarely, if ever, encountered in the younger years of most people alive today. Yet, the movement has certainly gained steam in the past couple of decades where we currently have 1.4 million individuals claiming to be transgender in the United States. We regularly hear terms like: cisgender, transgender, gender-fluid, non-conforming, preferred gender pronouns, etc. With this recent and widespread support and encouragement of transgenderism, Christians need to equip themselves to the end that we may better understand this issue and better communicate with those who are transgender, as well as those who advocate for transgenderism.

**I. Is This A Spiritual Matter? What Does the Bible Have to Say About It?**

 A. Bible affirms God created & identifies two genders (Gen. 1:26f; 2:7, 18-25; Mt. 19:4).

 B. The Bible affirms that the Fall has brought catastrophic effects (Gen. 3:16-19, 23f; Job 14:1f; Rom. 8:19-23; Rev. 21:4). The unavoidable fact of the matter is that these effects are often expressed in a variety of genetic, biological, behavioral, and mental disorders. A time will come where these things will pass away (cf. Rev. 21:4), but we do face coping and struggling with them now.

 C. The Bible affirms the value of a male and female relationship in marriage (Gen. 2:24). The Bible clearly and unequivocally condemns perversions of this relationship (Heb. 13:4; 1Thess. 4:3-8; 1Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 1:24-27).

 D. The Bible affirms gender differences (1Pe. 3:1-7; 1Ti. 2:9-15//1Co. 14:34f; Titus 2:3-8). These differences do not make one greater than the other (Gal. 3:28). Males and females are complementary to one another and equal in the sight of God. Scientific and genetic research confirms there are thousands of differences (Jerry Bergman, PH.D., “Male and Female Differences Supported by Scripture and Science,” *ICR*, May 31, 2018)

 E. The Bible makes clear that we should make an effort to distinguish and display our gender in a clear manner (cf. 1Cor. 11; Deut. 22:5; Rom. 1:24-27).

 F. The Bible condemns deception and misrepresentation (Rom. 1:28-32; Eph. 4:25).

**II. Delineating Different Types of Transgenderism**

A. Biological Transgenderism

 1. Contributing Factors:

 a. Chromosomal Aberrations & Mutations

 b. Physiological Mutations or Deficiencies (e.g. 5-alpha-reductase- deficiency; 17-beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency; congenital adrenal hyperplasia; androgen insensitivity syndrome; Reifenstein syndrome)

 c. These sorts of disorders can result in three primary issues:

 i. Hermaphroditism occurs when both genitalia are fully occurring in a person

 ii. Female Pseudohermaphrodites have ovaries and some male genitalia, but lack testes

 iii. Male Pseudohermaphrodites have testes and some female genitalia, but lack ovaries

 2. Difficulties Facing the Christian:

 a. The fallout from sin has perverted something as singularly fundamental as genetics. Yes, God created male and female; sin however has eroded away at that very fabric and introduced something that does not conform to that dualistic nature.

 b. Can we and should we condemn someone for something they have no control over? To what degree does accountability and responsibility get involved?

 c. Should we encourage genetic research into the mutation that took place and require the person to seek out what their intended gender was before the corruption took place and should we hold a person accountable to that financial and psychological burden?

 d. This is so very highly uncommon and only happens in handfuls of cases and may be clearly defined as a mutation or insufficiency. Only 0.02% of people born have issues that contribute to this & less have full-blown abnormalities. Should we develop a systematized spiritual understanding of something that so infrequently occurs?

 3. *“Although much is made of a rare ‘intersex’ individual, no evidence supports the claim that people such as Bruce Jenner have a biological source for their transgender assumptions. Plenty of evidence demonstrates that with him and most others, transgendering is a psychological rather than a biological matter.”* (Dr. Paul McHugh, University Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical School)

 B. Psychological Transgenderism

 1. Contributing Factors:

 a. Body Dysmorphic Disorder – a mental disorder in which a person rejects a part of their body so strongly that they inflict bodily harm on themselves, typically trying to sever it from their body.

 b. Gender Identity Disorder – a mental disorder where cognitive dissonance is particularly attached to gender and a person’s thoughts constantly provoke agitation/anxiety over their gender.

 c. Physical and Psychological Trauma – These traumas, particularly sexual traumas, may produce a mental disorder that causes one to reject or hate the gender they were born with or that their perpetrator has or doesn’t have.

 d. 63% of teens who claim to be transgender have previously been diagnosed with at least one mental health disorder or neurodevelopment disability and 96% engage in self-harm (Andy Sochor, Plain Bible Teaching Podcast, Season 13, Episode 4)

 2. Difficulties Facing the Christian:

 a. The diagnostic criteria for these disorders is ever-changing, in part because of societal pressures towards acceptance.

 b. This is seen in simple comparisons between the various DSM versions released by the APA (GID is now called Gender Dysphoria in the DSM-V) & the changes that have taken place w/ WHO in the ICD.

 c. These difficulties and changing standards may cause us to provide exemptions and allowances where they should not be made or to not extend compassion where compassion is desperately needed.

 d. The APA and WHO have also created more confusion by creating an arbitrary distinction between “sex” (what we are biologically determined to be) & “gender” (what sex we feel closer to).

 C. Social Transgenderism

 1. Contributing Factors:

 a. Moral Relativism – truth is relative and in the eye of the beholder

 b. Misunderstandings of Gender Roles – men CAN do this and women CAN do this; therefore, they must do these things! No, not necessarily. We shouldn’t conflate ability with responsibility. Also, we should be careful to recognize that adolescents may and often do go through a stage where they wonder about their gender. 98% of gender confused boys & 88% of gender confused girls accept their biological sex after puberty w/o any counseling!

 c. Self-Labeling Victimization – what greater attention-getter could one have than to identify as something different than your biology?

 d. Nonconformism – I don’t want to conform to traditional conceptions

 e. Conformism – I want to fit in w/ in-vogue progressive conceptions

 2. Difficulties Facing the Christian:

 a. The discomfort with this comes primarily with the accountability factor being higher here than with psychological or biological issues. This is a choice, a very significant choice, that amounts to intentional and consistent deception and/or misrepresentation.

 b. Social pressures may cause psychological malfunction, so how do we draw a line? Can we draw a line?

 c. Social pressures ignite political & governmental change, stigmatization of those who dissent, and becomes a spiritually evil & totalitarian source of tyranny against conscientious Christians & the Church (for discussion on this, see “Transgenderism is leading us towards totalitarianism” The Van Maren Show Episode 9)

 3. *“The idea that one’s sex is fluid and a matter open to choice runs unquestioned through our culture and is reflected everywhere in the media, the theater, the classroom, and in many medical clinics. It has taken on cult-like features: its own special lingo, internet chat rooms providing slick- answers to new recruits, and clubs for easy access to dresses and styles supporting the sex change. It is doing much damage to families, adolescents, and children and should be confronted as an opinion without biological foundation wherever it emerges. But gird up your loins if you would confront this matter. Hell hath no fury like a vested interest masquerading as a moral principle.”* (Paul McHugh, MD)

**III. The Moral, Societal, and Spiritual Fallout of Transgenderism**

 A. Abuse (physical, psychological, and emotional) – Social and psychological transgenderism have a high correlation with initial trauma and that correlation also has a high correlation with perpetuating traumas on others. The American College of Pediatrics released a position stating that the move to indoctrinate children with the idea that they can pick their gender is child abuse.

 B. Medically-enabled and socially-pressured surgeries are causing the mutilation of children & adolescents.

 1. Walt Heyer has a website called sexchangeregret.com where he details and accounts for numerous of these issues. He gives one account of a teenager named Nathaniel who regretted the sex change he was pressured into. Nathaniel sadly describes his experience post-surgery: *“Now that I’m all healed from the surgeries, I regret them. The result of the bottom surgery looks like a Frankenstein hack job at best, and that got me thinking critically about myself. I had turned myself into a plastic- surgery facsimile of a woman, but I knew I still wasn’t one. I became (and to an extent, still feel) deeply depressed.”* Heyer has a book entitled *Trans Life Survivors* where he details 30 people who regret their sex changes.

 2. Another case was the first “legally non-binary person” in the United States named Jamie Shupe who now has gone back to being a man. He acknowledges pressures put on him, a history of sexual and physical abuse, and PTSD as a soldier & says *“My psych is eternally scarred, and I’ve got a host of health issues from the grand medical experiment.”*

 C. Anxiety & Depression – Introducing more debate about something as fundamentally determined as gender causes more strain on mental faculties or adults & kids. Two biologists wrote a powerful critique regarding this effect of social pressure in the February 3rd, 2020 edition of the Wall Street Journal stating: *“Biologists and medical professionals need to stand up for the empirical reality of biological sex. When authoritative institutions ignore or deny empirical fact in the name of social accommodation, it is an egregious betrayal to the scientific community they represent, and it is dangerously harmful to those most vulnerable.”* (Collin M. Wright and Emma N. Hilton, “The Dangerous Denial of Sex”)

 D. Suicide – There is a massive correlation between transgenderism and suicide. More than 40% of those who have sex change surgeries attempt suicide. One of many studies on this was done at the Department of Clinical Neuroscience in Stockholm, Sweden which found a higher general morbidity rate after surgery and a rate of suicide 20x higher than peers.

 E. Human Trafficking – Transgender persons are much more likely to be trafficked.

 F. Divorce – Subjectively-determined identities and social pressures strain marriages; homosexual relationships are consistently found to be less monogamous

 G. Secondary & Tertiary Matters – Economics, politics, sports, the Church, etc.

**IV. Spiritual Guidance on How to Communicate and Interact**

 A. It’s Okay to Be Spiritually Uncomfortable—You Should Be! (Rom. 12:9)

 1. Transgenderism is not the biological rule. It is atypical from what would, under normal considerations, be expected.

 2. Moreover, misrepresentation and deception are both sins. If these two factors are at play, then sin is at play. Any sin should cause revulsion.

 B. Don’t Be Afraid or Intimidated to Start a Conversation (Matt. 10:32f; 2Tim. 1:7).

 1. Love and compassion reach out; fear and apathy retreat inward.

 2. These individuals can talk; they are not alien. They have the God-given ability to communicate and we have a responsibility to reach all who are in the world. Jesus came to seek and to save sinners. Jesus came to heal infirmities. If those goals are not our goals, we are not being transformed by the renewing of our minds, we are being conformed to the world.

 C. Gain as Much Information about the Type of Transgenderism You Are Dealing with as Each Type Will Require Different Tactics.

 1. Regarding biological and psychological transgenderism, what accountability can you attribute? Sin has caused a genetically and psychologically toxic result. What degree of accountability will God give? Until you can answer that definitively, be careful about imposing a standard, lest it be self- created. These individuals need compassion & sympathy first & foremost.

 2. Regarding social transgenderism, a firmer obligation must be met. Willful repudiation of God’s holy and righteous intent for males and females requires a stronger, more overt response.

 D. Be Respectful, Kind, and Loving (Rom. 12:16; Col. 3:12-14).

 1. Do not unnecessarily cause offense. This will give a ground of accusation against Christianity. You represent your Lord; act as He would act. Be kind and respectful. This person is created in the image of God and the Spirit produces kindness in His people. If we are unkind, whose fruit are we actually bearing? Certainly not His!

 2. You can love without supporting someone’s actions. Make sure to be clear that your love for them is seen in your willingness to have a conversation. If you didn’t care, you wouldn’t bother.

 E. Be Firm in Your Convictions.

 1. Relativity and spinelessness have vastly contributed to what we face today.

 2. The use of names or pronouns you know to be clear perversions of truth will put you under condemnation. Words have meaning and the improper use of words will be held against you in God’s court (Mt. 12:33-37).

 F. Regarding the Workplace:

 1. You have the legal right to request a reasonable accommodation.

 2. You will have to use impeccable wisdom in how you ask questions and interact with transgender individuals (Matt. 10:16; James 1:5).

 3. You will have to respect your conscience in a way that may end up getting you fired. Do you love your job more than you love the command of the Lord?

 There is a large degree to which this lesson will not have addressed all of your questions. However, our goal today is to see with the eyes of Jesus, to take a stand where a stand needs to be made, and to love our fellow brothers and sisters in mankind. We have responsibilities here brethren. Don’t stick your heads in the sand. Don’t say what shouldn’t be said. Don’t do what shouldn’t be done. Don’t approve where approval is not warranted. Do love and respect. Do be sympathetic and compassionate. Do desire salvation for everyone. May God grant us with wisdom and love and may we be vessels of His love and justice.