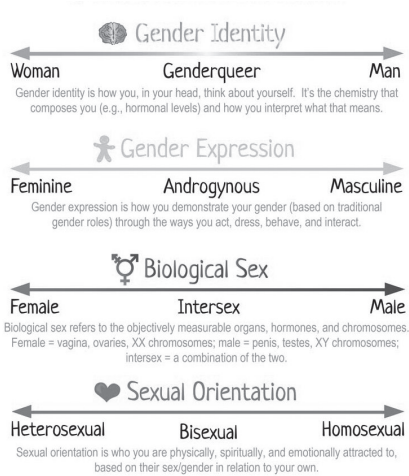
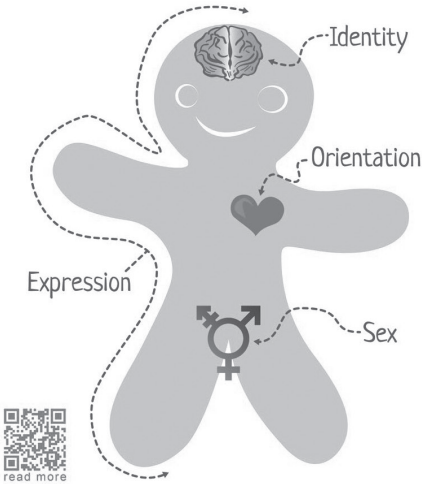


WHAT ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY?

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In an attempt to explain sexual brokenness, contemporary secular psychologists created categories to differentiate one's biological sex (anatomy), gender identity (subjective feeling of being male or female), gender expression (external appearance, mannerisms, etc.), and sexual orientation (sexual attractions). See "The Genderbread Person"²² diagram on the next page. According to those four categories, a female (biological sex) could think of herself as a male (gender identity), dress like a male (gender expression), and be attracted to females (sexual orientation). Or a male (biological sex) could think of himself as a male (gender identity), dress like a male (gender expression), yet be attracted to males (sexual orientation).

The Genderbread Person



<http://bit.ly/genderbread>. Used with permission.

While the four categories may help secular psychologists explain sexual brokenness, they are human constructs that have only come about in recent history to justify same-sex unions and transgender ideology. For instance, the term *homosexual* originated in the 1860s to decriminalize sodomy,²³ marking a dramatic shift in culture. Whereas *sodomy* describes an action of the body, *homosexual* became a means of describing an internal identity of the soul that exists independent of one's biological sex. Theologically speaking, this is a subtle form of the dualism embraced by Gnosticism,²⁴ divorcing the soul from the physical body. This divide between soul and body set a precedent for contemporary distinctions between one's biological sex (body), gender

identity (mind), and sexual orientation (mind/heart). There is really no such thing as a “sexual orientation.” This is simply a human construct created to describe disordered desires and to justify sinful behavior.

The concept of *gender* developed even more recently. Prior to the 1950s, the term *gender* was only used in linguistic contexts, such as in the Spanish language where nouns and adjectives can be masculine or feminine. In the 1950s, sexologist John Money introduced the term *gender* to describe whether someone with an intersex condition (formerly called hermaphroditism) identifies as male or female despite having ambiguous genitalia.²⁵ This normalized the term for use with those who identify as transgender because their mental concept of their gender remains at odds with their biological sex.

You may not have noticed, but prior to this chapter I have avoided using the word *gender*. Instead, I have used *male/female* and the category of *biological sex*, which more closely align with Scripture. God describes humans simply as *male* and *female* and makes no concession for changing one’s sex based on one’s mental perception of his or her gender. Despite our culture’s attempt to differentiate between biological sex and gender, linguistically, the two concepts are directly related, as Christopher West notes:

Gender shares the same root as the words generation, generous, genre, and—how ‘bout it—*genitals*. The origin of the word can be taken to mean: “the

manner in which we generate” or “with what genitals we generate.” Even more literally, we determine our “gender” by asking with what genre of genitals we generate. It’s so simple and obvious. Why hadn’t I seen that before? Contrary to those who want to make gender a malleable social construct, *gender* is, and always has been, determined by our *genitals*.²⁶

In contrast to the Genderbread Person, God’s original design for sexuality is that our biological sex, gender identity/expression, and sexual attractions would all align. For example, God created females to understand themselves as female in their minds, present as female in their bodies, and experience attractions to males. Likewise, God created males to understand themselves as male in their minds, present as male in their bodies, and experience attractions to females. If a person’s biological sex does not align with their gender identity/expression or sexual attractions, it is not an indicator that they were born that way or that God made a mistake. Rather, it is an indicator that something is out of alignment in their soul (mind, emotions, and will) since their mental perception (gender identity) doesn’t align with their God-given body (biological sex).

Because God created us as triune beings (spirit, soul, and body), our mental/emotional development can influence our physical drives and desires. In other words, painful experiences in childhood can contribute to the development

of same-sex attractions and transgender desires. Psychologists refer to the link between our minds and our sexual desires as “psychosexual development.” Interestingly, the New Testament Greek word for “soul” is *psuche*, the same root from which we get the words *psyche* and *psychology*.

In my case, I reacted to painful experiences in my past by becoming jealous of men and viewing women as second-class citizens. In my mind, males were superior to females. As a result, I longed to identify as male and despised my female body. Additionally, because I rejected my own mother (despite her best attempts to nurture me), the emotional deficit in my heart for motherly nurture became sexualized and aimed at females when I hit puberty. My desire to bond sexually with other women was a subconscious attempt to complete the formative step of connecting meaningfully with my own gender. I skipped that step during my formative years, so my sexuality became confused. My story is only one example of how misalignment occurs. Since we are complicated beings who live in a fallen world, there are countless ways that Satan can distort our sexuality.

The Body Is Part of the Gospel Story

God created us as spirit beings who have a soul and live in a physical body. Therefore, the fall affects us in every regard—spirit, soul, and body. Some mistakenly think that the body itself is evil and of no value to God and that only the soul and the spirit matter to God. The result of such thinking leads

to the heresy of gnostic dualism, which limits salvation to the spiritual realm and discounts the material world. If you follow that gnostic mindset, you could conclude that acting out homosexually or undergoing sex-reassignment surgery has no bearing on what it means to be made in God's image. However, the image of God in us includes our physical bodies and our sexuality, which was distorted by the fall. Because of the fall we rebel against God's design for our sexed body. Consequently, God's plan of redemption deliberately includes our physical bodies.

Consider how our physical bodies are part of the gospel story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration:

1. *Creation:* God creates us with sexed bodies that image God's unity in diversity and have the capacity to procreate additional image-bearers and invite them into community.
2. *Fall:* The fall not only impacted our spiritual relationship with God; it distorted our sexuality as well. After the fall, we see the introduction of sexual deviations such as polygamy (Genesis 4), homosexuality (Genesis 19), incest (Genesis 19), and rape (Genesis 34). And that's only the first book of the Bible! The fall corrupted all human relationships and defiled all human beings with a distorted view of sexuality.
3. *Redemption:* Human sexuality plays a vital role in our salvation in that a female gave birth to a Savior who inhabited a gendered physical body. As Albert Mohler states,

We must note that one of the most important aspects of our redemption is that it came by way of a Savior with a body. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14; cf. Phil. 2:5–11). Human redemption is accomplished by the Son of God incarnate—who remains incarnate eternally.²⁷

Thus, the body is indispensable to God’s plan of salvation.

4. *Restoration:* Those in Christ will experience bodily resurrection and have glorified bodies for the rest of eternity, just as Jesus lives eternally in a glorified body. Some think that Jesus’s reference to there being no more marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:30) means that the redeemed will have genderless bodies for eternity. However, Jesus’s glorified body retained his male gender, and when we see him, we will be like him (1 John 3:2).²⁸ Mohler explains that while we will retain our gender, the purpose for sexual activity will be fulfilled:

In terms of our sexuality, while gender will remain in the new creation, sexual activity will not. It is not that sex is nullified in the resurrection; rather, it is fulfilled. The eschatological marriage supper of the Lamb, to which marriage and sexuality point, will finally arrive. No longer will there be any need to fill the earth with image-bearers as was the case in Genesis 1. Instead, the earth will be filled with

knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.²⁹

When I was struggling with transgender desires, I would have been devastated to learn that I would remain in a female body for eternity. I despised my female anatomy, and were it not for the grace of God, I would have gone through with my plans to become “David” and live happily ever after—or so I thought. It may not have ended well when I realized that rearranging the skin on my body did nothing to resolve the anguish in my soul.

The gospel response to transgender desires is not to change one’s body to match one’s fallen mind, equating to rebellion against our Creator. As Isaiah writes, “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘You did not make me’? Can the pot say to the potter, ‘You know nothing?’” (Isaiah 29:16). Nor is the universal solution simply to “white-knuckle it” until we experience freedom in heaven. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus—who redeems our spirit, soul, and body—is able to provide peace with our God-given gender *in this life*. Rather than changing our body to match our fallen mind, we renew our fallen mind to match the body God gave us. The answer is not transitioning, but *transformation* by renewing the mind (Romans 12:1–2).

The reason why some people experience transgender desires is not because God gave them the wrong body. Rather, it is because they have wounds in their soul, resulting in lies

that influence their mental concept of their sex, persuading them that living as the opposite sex would be superior to living as their God-given sex. The root issues are idolatry and intense jealousy, which have more to do with the soul (mind, emotions, and will) than the physical body.

Similarly, for those who experience same-sex attractions, the attractions themselves are merely a red-flag indicator that something is off in the soul. At their root, same-sex attractions are not a sexual issue but most often an emotional-relational deficit or root of rejection that becomes sexualized. Therefore, the answer lies not in adjusting one's theology to affirm gay "marriage"³⁰ but in addressing lies in the soul that may contribute to the development of disordered desires. Because the fall affects every part of our being—spirit, soul, and body—God wants to redeem us on every level. As the Apostle Paul said to the believers in Thessalonica,

May God himself, the God of peace, *sanctify you through and through*. May your *whole spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and *he will do it*. (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24, emphasis mine)

What About Gender Stereotypes and Intersex?

While we affirm the biblical categories of male and female, we must be aware that gender stereotypes can unwittingly perpetuate gender insecurities that may contribute to the

development of same-sex attractions and transgender feelings. I will address that more fully in later chapters but suffice it to say here that some males do not fit the world's "macho" stereotype because God created them with a sensitive temperament, artistic abilities, or a preference to cook instead of play football. Likewise, some females do not seem as "girly" as others because God gave them a bold temperament, athletic ability, or a preference for climbing trees instead of playing with dolls.

When boys and girls don't fit into cultural gender stereotypes, they may feel as if something is deficient about their sexuality. Sensitive boys are often teased as "sissies" and struggle to feel masculine. Strong girls are sometimes considered "butch" and struggle to feel feminine. It's important to affirm the God-given personality types and gift sets in children without forcing them into cultural gender stereotypes that are incongruent with how God made them. To be clear, a boy is masculine because he is a male human being—not because his personality type or gift set conforms to a societal ideal. Likewise, a girl is feminine because she is a female human being—not because her personality type or gift set conforms to what our culture considers feminine. Interestingly, the Bible refers to God creating males and females but never offers a definition of masculinity or femininity.

While we shouldn't pigeonhole males and females into cultural gender stereotypes, we are not contending for androgyny or a blurring of the distinctions between the

sexes. Both the Old Testament and New Testament affirm gender differences. Pagan rituals often involved blurring the distinctions between male and female, which pertains to the context of Deuteronomy 22:5: “A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this.”

Therefore, regardless of personality temperament or gifting, we still recognize the inherent differences between males and females, including their approach to life³¹ and their anatomical and genetic differences. Even if a biological male undergoes so-called “sex reassignment surgery,” that does not turn him into a female. It merely rearranges the skin on his body, literally mutilating his genitals to make them appear more like those of a female—yet he will always have XY chromosomes. Similarly, if a female undergoes surgery to appear male, her chromosomes remain XX.³²

Granted, there are intersex conditions in which a baby who appears externally female has XY chromosomes (known as AIS, androgen insensitivity syndrome) or a baby who appears externally male has XX chromosomes (known as CAH, congenital adrenal hyperplasia). Such conditions in which the sex chromosomes (genotype) conflict with the external appearance (phenotype) are extremely rare—less than 0.02 percent of the population.³³ Still, LGBTQ³⁴ activists seek to include the “I” in their alphabet (LGBTQI, for example), insisting that intersex conditions form a bridge to explain the transgender phenomenon. However, intersex conditions

differ from transgender feelings in that intersex conditions often involve a misalignment between one's chromosomes and external appearance, whereas someone with transgender feelings has chromosomes that match their God-given external anatomy, yet in their minds they feel as if they are the opposite sex. In that sense, transgender feelings are psychological, whereas intersex conditions are physiological. Intersex conditions happen because we live in a fallen world and are not an indicator that God intended to create more than two sexes.

Closing Thoughts

The concepts of “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” are human constructs created to justify homoerotic behavior and transgender ideology. While the Bible describes homosexuality as an action of the body—“men who have sex with men” (1 Corinthians 6:9) and “women who exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones” (Romans 1:26)—the creation of a “homosexual orientation” turns the action into a state of being, an inherent identity at odds with God's design for sexuality. In addition to creating false constructs to justify sinful behavior, pro-gay advocates take Scriptures out of context to support their position, as detailed in the next chapter.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Summarize how the term *homosexual* came about and why it leads to a subtle form of gnostic dualism (dividing the soul/mind from the physical body).
2. Summarize how the term *gender* came about and how that plays into the concept of gender identity.
3. When individuals experience transgender desires, that doesn't mean God made a mistake and put them in the wrong body. Explain what's happening from a biblical perspective.
4. What's the difference between intersex and transgender?