

The Harvester



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A Transgender Treatise

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There is perhaps no issue as pressing to so many as the sudden flood of all things transgender into Western society. The pervasiveness of transgenderism has been in the works for several years. According to most estimates, 0.3 percent of the United States population identifies as “transgender” (“Transgender”). While this may seem like a very small amount of people, it equates to around 700,000 transgender Americans. From department store bathroom policies to Executive directives, the transgender discussion is in full-swing. Such means that Christians should be aware of what proponents of transgenderism are saying, and how such compares to what is revealed in God’s word. Christians must understand what transgenderism is and God’s role in gender assignment, gender definition, and sexuality.

Definitions

A basic definition of transgender provided by Oxford is “denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity does not correspond with the gender assigned to them at birth” (Soanes). Similarly, Gender Spectrum defines a transgender as “an individual whose gender identity does not match their assigned birth gender” (“Understanding”). The backbone of the transgender movement is a culturally skewed definition of the word gender. Once again, Gender Spectrum, which is an organization dedicated to creating “gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens” explains, “Gender is not inherently nor solely connected to one’s physical anatomy” (“Understanding”). Encapsulating the climate of popular gender theory, the organization states, “Some individuals do not identify with being either male or female; others identify as a blend of both, while still

others identify with a gender, but express their gender in ways that differ from stereotypical presentations” (“Understanding”).

What’s the Difference?

While traditionally and Biblically, gender is viewed as binary (i.e., only two options: male or female), the new gender activists view gender as a spectrum (i.e., a person can be some male some female, look male but be female, be female but feel and therefore become a male, etc.). The viability of transgenderism stands or falls on two questions: (1) Is “gender” completely different from “sex”?; and (2) Is a person’s gender a physical fact (and therefore objective), or a mental choice (and therefore subjective)? Because of their definition of gender and sex, the modern gender activists claim that one’s sex can be male (i.e., one can have the anatomy of a male), but the same man can self-identify as a female, and therefore be a female. By this definition, the biological sex assigned to one at birth is contingent upon the mind’s agreement.

However, “male” and “female” are not defined as feelings or thoughts. Rather, both “male” and “female” are objectively defined as physical, anatomical realities. The only way to be a male or female is to have the necessary anatomical characteristics of a male or female (including an XY or XX chromosome pair: a genetic trait inherited at conception, not alterable by any surgery). Physical, objective reality is not overruled by feelings or self-identity. Male and female are defined by characteristics that are intrinsically physical, and therefore cannot be thought or felt into existence. In reality, “gender” and “sex” are inseparable, though cultures might have subjective gender norms (e.g., pink for girls, blue for boys, etc.).

The Side of Psychology

It must be noted that until recently, the American Psychological Association (APA) classified what we refer to as transgender as “Gender Identity Disorder.” However, in the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) the term is replaced with the softer and less-consequential “Gender Dysphoria.” With a top-notch association like the APA, one would expect a change of terms to be representative of an in-depth psychological study. However, the term change is only due to the fact that “For years advocates have lobbied” (Beredjick).

Likewise, Dr. Paul R. McHugh has much to say on this subject. Dr. McHugh is the former Psychiatrist-In-Chief at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. McHugh currently is the University Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. McHugh has written several articles on transgenderism and sex change operations, seeing that he was in charge of psychological evaluations for these individuals at Johns Hopkins Hospital (McHugh). It was, and still is, McHugh’s professional opinion that to go along with those who identify as another gender is to “collaborate with a mental disorder rather than to treat it” (McHugh).

Dr. McHugh concludes,

One might expect that those who claim that sexual identity has no biological or physical basis would bring forth more evidence to persuade others. But as I’ve learned, there is a deep prejudice in favor of the idea that nature is totally malleable. Without any fixed position

on what is given in human nature, any manipulation of it can be defended as legitimate We have wasted scientific and technical resources and damaged our professional credibility by collaborating with madness rather than trying to study, cure, and ultimately prevent it. (McHugh)

Transgenderism and the Bible

First and foremost, it must be understood that God has created the sexes, and He defines gender, not man. Genesis reads, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (1:27, ESV). God did not create multiple humans along a spectrum of gender. He created two distinct genders: male and female. These are the only two that exist and a human being is either born one or the other (barring extremely rare medical cases). Human gender identity is not defined by abstract cultural definitions. Human gender has been crafted by God Himself and fulfills a specific purpose. Likewise, there are transcendental (i.e., not bound by culture), God-given gender roles and definitions (cf. Gen. 3:16-19; 1 Cor. 11:7-16; Eph. 5:22-28; Tit. 2:1-8). The Bible even speaks of aspects of gender that “nature itself” teaches us (1 Cor. 11:14).

The Law of Moses included, “A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the

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Lord your God” (Deut. 22:5). While we are not under the Law of Moses, the moral principle remains: The distinction between the sexes has been divinely instituted and is to be sacredly observed. It has been correctly stated,

The distinction between the sexes is natural and established by God ... and any neglect or violation of that distinction, even in externals, not only leads to impurity, but involves the infraction of the laws of God. (Lange 164)

Finally, “effeminate” shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9, ASV). The Greek word translated “effeminate” (*malakos*, μαλακός) in the ASV refers to the passive partner in consensual homosexual acts (ESV marginal reference). The NJK and the NAS translate *malakos* as “homosexuals,” and the ESV translates it with another word in the Greek text as “men who practice homosexuality.” While homosexuality and transgenderism are not the same, *malakos* literally means “soft” and refers to men who act like women and fulfill the role of women. Paul, however, continues, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11). There were men who acted like women and saw themselves practically as such in first century Corinth, but they stopped. They accepted the good news of Jesus and no longer were effeminate.

Conclusion

Gender is not malleable and subjective. Thoughts do not override physical reality. The desire to “identify” as another gender is not inconsequential. While the transgender movement contradicts nature and the will of God, there is hope. The hope of long-term help for those with Gender Dysphoria through medical measures, and the

hope of restoration, divine forgiveness, and justification through Jesus Christ. The hope remains to identify as a child of God, where there is “neither male nor female,” but only union with God through His Son (cf. Gal. 3:27-29). May Christians proclaim this hope to all—transgendered and otherwise.

The response toward those who identify as transgender and those who support them should not be one of hate or violence from Christians: not ever, and certainly not now! To speak with love, act with love, and show others love should be the goal of every Christian (1 Cor. 16:14). To morally disagree with someone’s actions or to seek to show them God’s will is not hateful or unloving. While proclaiming the truth of God’s word on gender and sexuality may be an uphill climb in our current culture, it is still worth the effort. Only, “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Col. 4:6).

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Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; ¹⁸but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. (2 Pet. 3:11-18)

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