

**Thinking,
and talking,
about issues of
sexuality and
gender with our
friends.**

Session 02:
**Thinking and
Talking About
Gender**

KEY THOUGHT:

Any assertion people make must be backed up by a trustworthy (and relevant) source of information.

A little understood fact about Christians:

Christians simply aim to repeat the message of Jesus, as given to us through the writings of the New testament. For us, Jesus earned the right to tell us what the world really is, and how to live. Any authority lesser than his authority does not compete with his claim. If there's a conflict, he wins. We have no choice.

So, Followers of Jesus just ask, a simple questions: What does the bible (God) say about this issue? Then we just seek to understand, live out, and report what it says. Since what God says is *true*, and God is loving, this is the most loving thing we can do—and what God says is what will lead to the best for men and women. The fruit of our culture's ways, on the other hand, is self evident—**how are we doing** out there, with all these new ideas?

Opening Thoughts:

When we talk about Gender...

The big issue: does your body tell you what your gender is or not?

The culture says: your body does not tell you anything about who you are.

Talking Point:

“The way I think about Gender is totally bound up with what I know about what humans *are*.”

“Can you tell me what a human is?”

Talking Point:

“Can you tell me
what a human is?”

In any personal interaction, *this*
may be a way more fruitful topic
of conversation...

Applying the previous session to Gender:

As we've seen, Christians have the word of God, which gives us comprehensive information which makes sense of who and what we are—but that those who deny this have no such authority, even though they ridicule our ideas. We just need to ask questions which invite people to share where they get their ideas about gender from:

- *“What do you think a human is? How do you know that?”*
- *“What do you think our bodies are for? Where'd you get that information?”*
- *“Who decides what gender is? Why are they an authority on this?”*

“What is a human?”

If someone can't give an answer to that question which is coherent and compelling...

Then they can't know or say what gender is.

“What is a human?”

“What is a man?”

“What is a woman?”

Is the answer *coherent*?

- Does it make sense?
- Does it work in the larger world view?

“What is a human?”

“What is a man?”

“What is a woman?”

Is the answer *compelling*?

- Can we actually live with it?
- Can we actually we live it out?
- (Does it work in the real world?)

“What is a human?”

Genesis 1:28

So **God created** man **in his own image**, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

“What is a human?”

A Christian answer from Genesis 1&2:

A human is a creation made in the image of God, with a mandate on the earth, under authority, and called into relationship with God.

**Simply living out the implications
of the Christian answer to this
question leads us to:**

- **Love others**
- **Work hard**
- **Be honest**
- **Care for our families**
- **Care for strangers**
- **Care for our bodies**
- **Care for the earth**
- **Keep our word**

“What is a human?”

Consider this answer:

“Humans are bundles of cells which are highly organized due to random natural selection over millions of years.”

What does it look like when someone lives out *this* answer?

“What is a human?”

Consider this answer:

“Humans are bundles of cells which are highly organized due to random natural selection over millions of years.”

What does it look like when someone lives out *this* answer?

No one actually does.

**What we're hoping to
establish tonight:**

*How does one determine if they
are a man or a woman?*

What is the Christian's answer?

*(Not so much, "What is a woman?" but more
"How do you know if you're a woman?")*

What we're *not* going to discuss:

Gender roles

What masculinity and femininity *are...*

Jesus and Gender

What did Jesus say?

See [Mark 10:4-8](#).

They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.”⁵ And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.⁶ But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’⁷ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,⁸ and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.”

He’s quoting [Genesis 1:26-28](#); [Genesis 2:21-22](#).

Jesus and Gender

“From the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’”

He’s quoting **Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:21-22.**

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 2:21-22

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

Jesus and Gender

He's quoting **Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:21-22**.

He's quoting these scriptures, and the events they refer to, as *history*, that is, as something that really happened.

He's referring to them as realities that should determine how we *currently* understand the issues they impact.

Jesus and Gender

Talking Point:

Jesus upheld the Old Testament teaching that humanity was made up of two genders—male and female. All his teaching assumes it.

Gender Issues

The main disagreement we have with the culture right now is this:

Many people say the physical shape of our bodies (biological sex characteristics) have nothing to do with telling us if we're a man or woman. Many say it is only what someone feels inside that determines his or her gender identity.

Christians say that the physical shape of our bodies is God's way of indicating to us which of the two kinds of humans he made us.

Gender Issues

We say that our body matters when we're deciding if we're male or female because we believe that the entire material universe (as described in Genesis 1 and interpreted in Romans 1) has intention, purpose, and significance, and also communicates to us about itself and God.

And since our bodies are part of that material creation, they too, and the way they're made, carry significance, intention, and communication. This is why we say that the material "shape" of our bodies (everything from chromosomes to "sex characteristics") is God's way of telling us *which kind* of human we are.

To Understand Gender

We need to ask three questions:

1. Why is there gender?

Which leads us to ask...

2. Why do we have bodies?

(In other words: Why do we have physical component to who we are?)

Which leads us to ask...

3. Why is there any physical thing at all?

To Understand Gender

Why is there gender?

Why do we have bodies?

Why is there any physical thing at all?

The “why” question always has two components:

1. “Why” as in, “where did these bodies come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what are these bodies for?”

Talking Point:

“Where did we get these bodies from anyway?”

“What are these bodies for?”

No one is asking or answering these questions...

...but everyone seems to know how we should or shouldn't use our bodies, and what they do or do not mean...!

Where do they get that information?

Talking Point:

“Where did we get these bodies from anyway?”

“What are these bodies for?”

So we can ask people these questions...
and listen...

Are their answers coherent?

Are their answers compelling?

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Gender:

1. “Why” as in, “where did gender come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what is gender for?”

Bodies:

1. “Why” as in, “where did these bodies come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what are these bodies for?”

Matter:

1. “Why” as in, “where did matter come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what is matter for?”

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Matter:

1. “Why” as in, “where did matter come from?”
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Bodies:

1. “Why” as in, “where did these bodies come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what are these bodies for?”

Gender:

1. “Why” as in, “where did gender come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what is gender for?”

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Matter:

1. Matter was created by God. (Genesis 1)
2. “Why” as in, “what is matter for?”

Bodies:

1. “Why” as in, “where did these bodies come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what are these bodies for?”

Gender:

1. “Why” as in, “where did gender come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what is gender for?”

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Matter:

1. Matter was created by God. (Genesis 1)
2. The Material universe is for making God's *invisible* glory *visible*. (Romans 1:20, Psalm 19)

Bodies:

1. “Why” as in, “where did these bodies come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what are these bodies for?”

Gender:

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To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Matter:

1. Matter was created by God. (Genesis 1)
2. The Material universe is for making God's *invisible* glory *visible*. (Romans 1:20, Psalm 19)

Bodies:

1. Bodies are given to us by God. (Genesis 1&2)
2. “Why” as in, “what are these bodies for?”

Gender:

1. “Why” as in, “where did gender come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what is gender for?”

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Matter:

1. Matter was created by God. (Genesis 1)
2. The Material universe is for making God’s *invisible* glory *visible*. (Romans 1:20, Psalm 19)

Bodies:

1. Bodies are given to us by God. (Genesis 1&2)
2. Bodies are for humans to make God’s *invisible* glory *visible*. (1 Corinthians 6:20, Philippians 1:20)

Gender:

1. “Why” as in, “where did gender come from?”
2. “Why” as in, “what is gender for?”

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

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Gender:

1. Gender is given to us by God. (Genesis 1&2)
2. “Why” as in, “what is gender for?”

To Understand Gender

Ask the “why” questions:

Matter:

1. Matter was created by God. (Genesis 1)
2. The Material universe is for making God's *invisible* glory *visible*. (Romans 1:20, Psalm 19)

Bodies:

1. Bodies are given to us by God. (Genesis 1&2)
2. Bodies are for humans to make God's *invisible* glory *visible*. (1 Corinthians 6:20, Philippians 1:20)

Gender:

1. Gender is given to us by God. (Genesis 1&2)
2. Gender helps us make God's *invisible* glory *visible*.

To Understand Gender

Why is there Gender?

1. Gender is **given** to us by God.
2. Gender helps us make God's *invisible* glory *visible*.

Important: Gender is a **GIFT**.

This means we don't deserve it, and we don't get to define it.

Gender is a Gift

This means we don't deserve it, and we don't get to define it.

....which means we don't get to define

1. **how we discover it**, or...
2. how we handle it, or...
3. how we use it.

Gender is a Gift

So, what does God's Word tell us about how we discover which gender we've been given?

We can look at how the first humans discovered their gender.

How To Discover Gender

How would Adam and Eve have known which of the two kinds of humans they were?

Order of Creation: One human had been made first, and one had been made second.

Names: God attached the general name “Adam” to the human made first. Later the Hebrew word for “Man” or “Male” also attached Adam.

Physicality: God gave different physical shape and biological function to both of the first two humans, relative to procreation.

How To Discover Gender

The words for “Man” or “Male” are assigned to the human made first, and the words for “Woman” and “Female” are assigned to the human made second.

God gave different physical shape *and* biological function to both of the first two humans, relative to procreation.

The human who had the biology and ability to conceive and bear a child was called “woman” and the one who could cause her to conceive and bear a child was called “man.” This became the primary way to distinguish gender when they had children.

How To Discover Gender

All these years later, the situation has not changed.

Someone who has a body that is in the class of bodies that can bear children is a woman. This person can also be called female.

Someone who has a body that is in the class of bodies that can cause someone else to bear a child is a man. This person can also be called male.

How To Discover Gender

Notice:

We understand, and have accounted for, the objection, “*So if someone is infertile, what are they?*” The point is not actual ability to conceive or to impregnate, but which of the two classes a human body is in—is it in the bearing, or the impregnating class? In other words, we’re talking about *structure* first, and current *ability to function* second (and only as a result of structure).

How To Discover Gender

The key distinction to notice is not if an *individual* has the ability to bear or to impregnate, but which of the two abilities is possible or impossible for the kind of body an individual has.

A man's body, whether it is functioning properly or not, can never conceive and bear a child. And a woman's body can never impregnate someone else. Interestingly, gender reassignment surgery is completely unable to change this. These are the rock-bottom realities which face all human beings, and which divide us irresistibly into two genders.

How To Discover Gender

Once we've seen how the entire material creation has significance, and communicates things, this should come as no surprise to us. Our bodies, as part of God's material creation, are significant. And they communicate things to us. And this means that the material "shape" of our bodies (everything from chromosomes to "sex characteristics") is God's way of telling us which kind of human we are.

How To Discover Gender

So when a human being wants to know which kind of human they are, the question they ask is not, “how do I feel inside?” but, “which of the two bodies have I been given, and which role in procreation may I play?” We apply our logic consistently—since my gender is a *gift*, I don’t *determine* it, I *receive* it—and I can also know that I don’t determine how to *discover* it. My physical body is the gift, and the sign, which indicates which gender I am. It starts with my chromosomes, and culminates in my secondary sex characteristics.

How To Discover Gender

So the bible's answer is that gender and biological sex are not distinct.

Biology and sexual function *signal* sex and gender.

In this way biology is like the rest of the physical universe in its communicative function. The heavens say, "God is glorious." And your body says to you, "You are a man," or it says, "You are a woman." These things which are commonly spoken of as two (gender and biology) are so intertwined as to be truly one. To try to separate them is to mess with both.

How To Discover Gender

This is why a Christian, taking his or her definitions from the bible, can never affirm a statement like, *“I am a man trapped in a woman’s body.”* It is precisely the woman’s body which tells someone that they are a woman. Within the gift that is human nature, there is no such “I” that can be distinct from or opposed to the body.

Just like the visible, material creation expresses God’s invisible, immaterial attributes, so our visible, material bodies express the invisible, immaterial attributes of who we are. The outer displays the inner. The body reveals the soul.

How To Discover Gender

The clear facts of biology are God's means for interpreting our feelings and thoughts, which are notoriously more uncertain and unstable than the seeable, touchable, unchangeable reality of the bodies that were given to each of us.

Yes, any of us might struggle with painful feelings of disconnect between our feelings and our bodies. But the bible calls us to look away from our hearts, our feelings, and even our desires, as untrustworthy sources of knowledge. This idea is explicitly stated when God speaks through the prophet Jeremiah and says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

How To Discover Gender

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

Not only is our heart “wicked” according to God (some translations say “sick”) but it’s so deceitful that we can’t even really know it or understand it. This is huge. Just like you wouldn’t ask a person who’s a pathological liar or a practical joker for directions, the bible teaches that we can’t really find out anything we need to know by following where our heart leads. It’s deceitful, and it’s wicked.

How is this loving?

If someone suffers from Gender Dysphoria, and feels pain because they sense that their biology doesn't match their sense of their gender, how does it help them for us to tell them they're wrong about their feelings and sense of identity?

How is this loving?

Putting it all together:

Since their heart and our culture are not trustworthy sources of information, they can only expect pain and brokenness when they listen to them.

Since we have the true source of information, we can know that if they listen to God's word, they'll find healing.

Christians Love Transgender People

Christians are called to love all kinds of people, with all kinds of problems.

And part of our loving people is to speak the truth in love to them.

So we don't have special classes of people that we shun, or certain people who disgust us, or anything like that.

And we also won't refuse to love our friends by telling the truth, the words of God that can help them escape the life-ruining sin they have come to embrace.

“WHAT IF I’M A CHRISTIAN AND I FEEL LIKE I’M TRANSGENDER?”

A few thoughts:

First, we are all aware that some who are followers of Christ experience what psychologists are now calling Gender Dysphoria—that feeling that your body doesn’t match your sense of who you really are. We acknowledge your existence. As our brothers and sisters in Christ, we welcome you (Romans 15:7).

“WHAT IF I’M A CHRISTIAN AND I FEEL LIKE I’M TRANSGENDER?”

Second, every follower of Christ must come to grips with fundamental truths about themselves—like our status as a creation rather than creator, the untrustworthiness of our own hearts, our tendency to be deceived by sin, and the deep brokenness caused by the fall which runs through our whole being, and can be healed in Christ. So in that sense, all Christians can identify with you. While each of us has different flavors of struggles in this broken world, we are all touched by the world’s brokenness, and we all face our own battles with aspects of who we are which are broken and frustrating. We’re all in this together.

“WHAT IF I’M A CHRISTIAN AND I FEEL LIKE I’M TRANSGENDER?”

Third, like all battles with sin and confusion, this one can only be waged God’s way. If this is your struggle, you must first let God define it for you—by searching the scriptures and meditating on his word. Then you must call on God’s power, relying on the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and to enable you to keep God’s commands. He has the strength, and he will most certainly give it to you. Through it all you must stay in open, living fellowship with the body of Christ—especially with people who can minister God’s grace to you and help you on your path.

Session 02:
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Q + R

What About Intersexuality?

1. True Intersexuality (the inability to tell if someone is a man or a woman from physical characteristics) is a manifestation of either male or female *brokenness*. It is not a third sex, or physical evidence of a “spectrum” of Gender. (see www.isna.org)
2. Christians do not get information about the universe from brokenness. They find out what is true from: 1. God’s word, and 2. The Created Order, when it is working properly, and *as it is interpreted and explained by God’s word*.
3. People with intersex characteristics are a very small fraction of a percent of the human population. Their existence does cancel out or reinterpret: 1. The true and unambiguous statements about gender in God’s word. 2. The overwhelming evidence from the physical and biological creation that, when born whole and healthy, all humans fall into one of two sex categories.
4. Men and women who have intersex characteristics are invited to seek God like everyone else, and seek his help to live their lives in a way that honors and glorifies God. Whether or not someone has ambiguous chromosomes or secondary sex characteristics, every man and woman is in this exact same situation.

1. We love all gay people and transgender people.
2. LGBTQ are all welcome to come here...
3. ...and we say the same thing to everyone who comes: Repent. Turn away from what the Bible calls sin and believe Christ. You can find the love of God and a whole new identity in him. Everyone is welcome to find the new life he offers, and to join us as we all seek to learn more and more how to follow Christ faithfully based on his written word. We want everyone to join us.
4. No one has to join us on this road. If repentance is not something you're interested in, you can choose not to be a part of our community in any meaningful way. This is true of any and all kind of people, regardless of their sexuality.

The True Words We Must Speak

The Transgender Movement Promotes Sin.

We haven't explicitly said it yet, but now it must be said that the transgender movement is a movement that promotes sin. People who have adopted the transgender ideology have chosen *sin* as a way of finding true happiness and life. How can we say this?

The logic could be followed out like this:

1. God is the creator of all things.
2. As creator, He alone has the right to define all things, establish their value and purpose, and direct their use.

The Transgender Movement Promotes Sin.

3. God has created the material world to reflect His glory and divine attributes.
4. God has created humans in His image.
5. God has given humans material bodies as part of the image of God.
6. Therefore, the value and purpose of our bodies is established by God—He defines them and directs their use.
7. Human bodies, in their material shape, are made to display the Glory of God.
8. Therefore, sex differentiation, as part of the material shape of the human body, is something God defines, determining both its meaning and use.

The Transgender Movement Promotes Sin.

9. In the Scriptures, we see that the material shape of sex distinctions is the way God has told humans whether they are male or female.
10. Therefore, maleness and femaleness are gifts, created by God.
11. Therefore, God established the definition, value and purpose of being male and female.
12. God has told us that our inner feelings and desires (the “heart”) are not reliable guides to self-knowledge.
13. Therefore, humans cannot look within to discover the nature of their existence as male or female. The only method of gender discovery is the “shape” of the physical body, from chromosomes to secondary sex-characteristics.

The Transgender Movement Promotes Sin.

14. Therefore, for someone to be born as a member of one gender, but wish to be a member of the other, is envy and covetousness—wanting something that God has given to someone else. Envy is sin.
15. Further, for someone to choose to listen to inner feelings and desires, and ignore the clear message of their physical body, is to deny the right of God as creator to define their humanity and set their purpose. It is to usurp God's place as Lord. This is also sin.
16. Finally, we can see that all the actions motivated by a desire to adopt a gender (a sex) different than the one given—including cosmetics, clothing, hormones, and surgery—are sin. Deuteronomy 22:5 states as much.

Applying this to Gender:

No One Has a Good Reason to Reject this.

Of course, when Christians share the teachings of scripture, and say that our bodies and our nature as men or women are given facts, people are free to deny this kind of reasoning. But then, the simple question we ask is: By what authority do you deny our bodies have this significance? If someone denies it simply because it comes from the bible, we can simply ask: do they have any kind of moral or intellectual authority to come up with another way we “should” think or act? Unless they have another “universal” authority (like the Qur’an, for instance—that would change the discussion), they are really just giving us cultural feelings and opinions.

How does gender “make God’s invisible glory visible”?

Why is there sexual differentiation (gender)? Even if we grant that our bodies are a gift, and that we have them in order to reflect God’s glory visibly and materially, this still doesn’t answer the question as to why there is *distinction* in human bodies. Why didn’t God make just one kind of human? Why did he make male *and* female? We’re not given a direct answer to this in scripture, but we can find our way to some answers from what we’ve already seen. It must be that the separation of humanity into two different kinds affords us a greater opportunity to attain their purpose of glorifying God by imaging him visibly and materially. In other words, God knows that we can more fully fulfill our purpose as humans if there are two kinds of us than if there were only one.

How does gender “make God’s invisible glory visible”?

In reading the passages where God creates this differentiation (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7-8, 2:18), we see that the first, stated reason the Bible gives for it is that two kinds will be necessary to enable humans to fulfill their mandate to fill the earth and exercise dominion. God could, conceivably, made humans to be able to reproduce asexually, but he knew this arrangement was better. His solution was that only a union of...

two humans
who *differ*

...would be able to produce more humans.

How does gender “make God’s invisible glory visible”?

Human difference and better reflects God than uniformity.

Marriage displays the gospel, and gender difference is necessary to display the difference between Christ and the church, and God and humanity. (Ephesians 5:22-32)

So gender distinction ultimately displays the love God has for his creation and the love Christ has for the Church.