

Male and Female He Created Them, Part 1

Genesis 1:27 and Selected Scriptures

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Introduction

Well, between wanting to preach my Shepherds' Conference message here in GraceLife, along with some unexpected schedule changes, it's been a couple of months already since I last preached a sermon from the series I began at the beginning of the year, entitled *Confronting the Culture*.

I began that series by responding to our culture's full-scale assault against the very concept of truth. Truth has been reimagined as nothing more than personal preference—a purely subjective expression of one's own values. And we confronted that lie with the teaching of Scripture, showing that (1) truth is objective, that it corresponds to reality; (2) that it is rooted in the character and being of God Himself, so that you don't get God without truth; (3) that it is expressed in the revelation of God in Scripture; and (4) that it is absolutely fundamental to all rational thought—especially to our understanding both of reality and morality. We saw that the result of such a categorical rejection of truth altogether is our society's descent into absurdity and chaos.

The evidence for that is literally ever-present, but the absurdity and chaos resulting from the rejection of the truth is no better illustrated than by our culture's embrace of transgender ideology. And because of that, and because of the havoc that transgenderism is wreaking in the lives of so many, I wanted to spend time in GraceLife bringing the Word of God to bear on the question of human sexuality. I've mentioned that if we're going to faithfully be salt and light in this culture, we need to be equipped to bring the perverse thinking of our society into captivity to Christ. The secular religion of the contemporary western world is expressive individualism. And the chief devotional task of expressive individualism is the unmitigated venting of every desire and inclination. Over and against that, if we are going to be salt and light, we must be equipped to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ over every aspect of life, and therefore we must proclaim the biblical doctrine of sexuality.

But because our culture has conflated sexuality with identity—teaching that if we ever act out of accord with our basest desires and impulses we are somehow not “being true to our authentic self”—I recognized that the biblical doctrine of sexuality must begin with a biblical doctrine of mankind's identity at its most fundamental level.

And so we went back to the beginning, taking Genesis 1:27 as something of a launching point: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” The very first, most foundational thing to say about man is that he is **created**. “God *created* man.” This is the baseline of our identity: that we are *not* God, that we are *creatures* of the one true and living God. And that means that we are accountable to God our Creator, subject to the identity *He* has given us, subject to the law of His mouth as the rule of our lives. If the culture’s goal is ultimately to free man from this accountability to our Creator and the totalizing claims of the law of God so we can be left alone to sin in peace, then they must attack the notion that we are *creatures* at all. If man is an evolved animal, then my “authentic self” is whatever my basest inclinations and desires tell me I am, and I should be free to express myself in those ways. But if I am a creature, accountable to my Creator, then I must order my life according to His Word. And so we preached a second sermon vindicating the doctrine of six-day creation.

Then, we spoke about what is the next most fundamental concept concerning man’s identity—namely, that man is the **image** of God. That is the second thing that Scripture says about man in Genesis 1:27: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.” And so we preached a third sermon, considering the Bible’s teaching on the significance of man as the image of God. And we found that being created in the image of God means that we are like God in very important ways, and that we represent God in the world in a way that is unique among the other creatures. Men and women are designed by God to make His character visible, living in a way that tells the truth about God to the rest of creation. *That’s* why we’re here, and *that’s* who we are. If we are image-bearers, then we are not free to forge our own identity! We *receive* our identity from the One whose image we bear, the One whom we represent. Our identity is derived not from our own sense of self, but from God’s revelation of who He’s made us to be.

This morning, we come to the third phrase of Genesis 1:27, to hear of the next most fundamental concept concerning man’s identity. And that is: our **gender**. Our **maleness** and **femaleness**. Listen to the verse: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female** He created them.” The very next thing that is said about mankind after we’re told that we are image-bearers of Almighty God, is that we bear His image *together* in the beautiful distinctiveness of being male or female. Our gender—our maleness or femaleness—is deeply connected to our identity as image-bearing creatures. It runs to the heart of who we are: of who God says we are. And it speaks much to precisely how we will glorify God by representing Him to the world as His image-bearers. Just as the persons of the Trinity are united in their essence but distinct in their personal properties as Father, Son, and Spirit, so also men and women are united in their humanity but distinct in their genders.

This cannot be missed. Gender—and, in particular, the gender binary—is fundamental to the biblical doctrine of man. What it means to be an image-bearer is to be either male or female. And therefore, any attempt to change male *into* female—and certainly any attempt to find a space in *between* male and female—is a fundamental attack (1) on the authority of God and (2) on one’s own humanity. Transgenderism is an attack on oneself—a suicidal attempt at self-exaltation. It is the creature’s attempt to escape from the accountability of *being* a creature, but which in the process ends up being an attempt to *uncreate* oneself. “I will create male and female, in *my* image!” Or: “I will be *neither* male *nor* female, and therefore I will undermine my very humanity itself!”

The Transgender Delusion

And the chaos of that worldview is, as I said, wreaking havoc all over our culture. The **transgender delusion** is what seems to be the peak of the absurdity that you must embrace after the denial of truth: that men can be women, and women can be men, if they feel like it. And we all know it’s not true. It’s one of those, “The Emperor has no clothes” kinds of issues. No one—inside or outside of the church—believes that a man can really become a woman. But it’s like this mass delusion, where everyone agrees to play pretend, because (1) if they pretend like there’s no standard by which *transgenderism* wrong, they can pretend there’s no standard by which *their* sin is wrong; and (2) because they know if they don’t play along they’ll be ridiculed and accosted and canceled. And so our society tolerates the utterly absurd, in order to protect this delusion.

And it started in the public discourse in earnest not long after the Obergefell decision that legalized so-called homosexual “marriage.” In 2015 Glamour Magazine gave their Woman of the Year Award to none other than Bruce Jenner, who had by then begun calling himself “Caitlyn Jenner.” The *Woman* of the Year Award went to someone who wasn’t a woman at all.

Richard Levine, a man who dresses as a woman and calls himself Rachel, was appointed by Joe Biden to be the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health for the Department of Health and Human Services. He is celebrated as the first female four-star admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. But of course: he’s not *female* at all. As a result of those spurious honors, USA Today named Levine one of their “women of the year” for 2022.

William Thomas was a three-year swimmer on the men’s team at the University of Pennsylvania. During those first three years, he was ranked 462 in the world in men’s NCAA swimming competition. Before the '21–22 season, William began identifying as a woman and calling himself “Lia.” He was allowed to switch to the women’s swim team at Penn, and he won the NCAA Championship in the 500-meter freestyle, besting the young women he was competing

against by more than a full second. He finished college ranking #1 in the world in NCAA women's swimming.

Madison Kenyon is an *actual* female college track athlete who's recently spoken out about the effect the transgender delusion has had on women's athletics. She says, "We're supposed to smile and cheer and clap and pretend that we're all very happy about this—that we don't object to seeing our years of effort and lifelong dreams go up in so much smoke, and that we don't mind denying reality as long as it pleases the woke crowd and keeps our school safe from a lawsuit." So rare to find an actually educated person in college these days.

Boyd Burton is a mixed martial arts fighter who identifies as a woman and calls himself "Fallon Fox." In 2014, while in competition, he fractured the skull of the *actual* woman he was fighting against. Think about that. Why would any woman compete in a mixed martial arts bout with someone who remains physiologically male? It's one thing to *pretend* and be politically correct when it doesn't cost you a fractured skull! But given the foreseeability of that kind of danger, why would any thinking woman go through with it? And the answer is: the same reason *any* female athlete goes through with competing against a biologically male opponent: the fear of being called a transphobe and a bigot—the fear of being canceled and shamed into oblivion for refusing to play pretend. It used to be that pressuring a woman to subject herself to being battered by a mentally ill man was called *abuse*. Now, apparently, it's called *feminism*.

And that's the most stupefying thing of it all. This is all done in the name of *liberating* women from oppression! And in reality, you couldn't design a system more oppressive to women! Let men into women's sports, where they are at an unfair disadvantage; into women's locker rooms and bathrooms, where their privacy is invaded; into women's prisons, where criminals can prey on women who have no way to protect themselves. It is absolute lunacy! For all the talk about wanting to "smash the patriarchy," the woman of the year is a man; the best female college swimmer in the country is a man; the best female MMA fighter is a man; the first four-star admiral in the Public Health Service is a man; the greatest female *Jeopardy* champion is a man. What's the message these feminists are trying to send? that men are better than women even at being women? It sure seems like transgenderism ensures that the patriarchy always wins in the end. In fact, that observation has led one social commentator to say: "Hard truth: the trans movement *is* the patriarchy. Just in makeup and heels."

An Anti-Biblical Worldview

Why does our culture tolerate such manifest absurdity? Well, I've given several reasons already, but it is certainly partly owing to how seamlessly transgenderism fits with the secular worldview of our times—an anti-biblical worldview, a worldview that Carl Trueman calls "expressive individualism." Expressive individualism is the idea that "each of us finds our meaning by giving

expression to our own feelings and desires” (*The Triumph of the Modern Self*, 46). The Enlightenment philosopher Rene Descartes is famous for the dictum, “I *think*, therefore I am.” Well, expressive individualism is captured by the motto: “I *feel*, therefore I am.” “I am what I feel that I am. And in order for me to be my authentic self, I must give expression to that feeling. Any contradiction of my psychological beliefs about myself—even as non-aggressive as just you refusing to affirm those feelings—disturbs my sense of inner well-being. And because I *am* my feelings, your lack of affirmation is a threat to my very identity. It is violence against my personhood!”

That is western culture over the last 15 years. It’s why words are spoken of as being “weaponized”—because *everything* is a weapon if I am under attack when my feelings aren’t affirmed. It’s why we need “trigger warnings” and “safe spaces” where we can avoid anything we might not like to hear—from “micro-aggressions” all the way to “hate speech.” Do you see how seamlessly transgenderism coheres with that culture of expressive individualism? If your feelings *are* your identity, and any contradiction of those feelings is a threat to your very personhood, then even the *facts* of your name, the pronouns you use, even the physiology of your body itself must be changed to suit your inner sense of self. And if you don’t affirm me in making those changes, you hate me. You don’t just disagree with a choice I’m making; these feelings are *me*. Any lack of wholehearted affirmation is therefore the same as wanting me to die. And so you see where all the rhetoric comes from: expressive individualism.

A homosexual activist group that calls itself “The Human Rights Campaign” defines gender as “one’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves” (as in Pearcey, 214). Nancy Pearcey, who’s written a great book on this and other watershed cultural issues of our day—it’s called *Love Thy Body*—she comments on this and says, “We do not discover our gender identity, as though it were an objective fact. Instead we declare our identity. We speak ourselves into existence” (215). She’s exactly right. We declare ourselves to be in the place of God, creating male and female in *our* image.

But not only does transgender ideology benefit from expressive individualism. It also shares a fundamental affinity with the old heresy of **Gnosticism**. Gnosticism was a second-century Greek philosophical school that taught, among other things, a radical dualism—that the spiritual is inherently good and the material is inherently evil. The Greek phrase *soma sema* was a popular Gnostic motto, and it translates to: “the body is a tomb.” The Gnostics taught that the body was a prison which incarcerated the true self of the spirit, and they longed for death when the spirit could be liberated from its material prison.

Transgenderism is a species of that kind of thinking. The fundamental premise of transgender ideology is that our real self is found within us. Again: I am what I feel I am, inside. The

external, material reality of my body is only accidental to the real me. In fact, in a BBC documentary on transgenderism and children, a trans activist is quoted as saying, “It doesn’t matter what living *meat* skeleton you’ve been born in; it’s what you feel that defines you” (as in Pearcey, 197). My identity—my authentic self—is my internal feelings. The physical body is just a meat skeleton that my inner-self possesses as an instrument. My body is not *me*, in any meaningful sense. And if my physical body is imprisoning my immaterial authentic self, then I should feel perfectly free to *alter* my body—even through crippling hormones and mutilating surgeries—in order to make it match my feelings. Conflict between the body and the mind? The mind always wins. That’s led one commentator to say that “the foundational ontological assumption undergirding transgender ideology is a low view of the body.” And as we’ll see, both this Sunday and next, that is entirely antithetical to the biblical worldview, which has an exceptionally high view of the spiritual *and* the physical, of the soul *and* the body.

And of course, the transgender worldview is inherently **contradictory**. It is an internally **incoherent** system of thought. As much as the fundamental ontological assumption of transgender ideology is a low view of the body, there is an awful lot of importance placed upon the body, isn’t there? On the one hand, the body is so lowly regarded “that the real self is fundamentally separate from the material body” (Anderson, *When Harry Became Sally*, 3); yet on the other, the body is so important that it must be subjected to radical, invasive, expensive, and dangerous hormone treatments and surgeries in order to be conformed to the inner sense of self. Carl Trueman puts it this way: the body “is both irrelevant to identity such that it is no ultimate guide to who we are and it is also vital to identity in that it may, if desired, be modified to fit the inner sense” (*Triumph*, 369). And more than that: so vital that if taxpayers don’t pay for these surgeries, all of these people will have no choice but to kill themselves.

Another contradiction is that they claim that gender is an artificial social construct such that it can be totally fluid, but then they rely upon rigid stereotypes to say people can be trapped in the wrong body. “If you’re a girl who likes to play with guns and trucks, that must mean you’re really a boy!” Wait, why? Gender is so fluid that it can’t be indicated by chromosomes, DNA, and anatomy, but it’s so rigid that it can be predicted by shared hobbies and interests? That makes no sense. “There’s no such thing as a *boy*; gender is just this fluid spectrum. But if you like trucks you must be boy!”

Still further: on the one hand, transgender ideology promotes an expressive individualism that issues in a radical subjectivism; people must be free to do *whatever* they want according to their deeply held beliefs and feelings. On the other hand, if you don’t call someone by their pretend name and their pretend pronouns—if you don’t confess with your mouth that “Trans women *are* women,” and believe in your heart that “Men can be ‘birthing persons’ too”—you’re a transphobic bigot who shouldn’t be allowed to work or even be in the presence of polite company. “Everyone’s free to be whomever they wish! Except when they disagree with *me*!”

What is our response to the madness? It can only be to declare the Word of God to all those who rebel against it. The only response to the deception and the lies of the culture is to proclaim the truth. And to equip us for that, the Scriptures teach us at least **five truths about gender** that we must learn and live by, as we seek to live in faithful obedience to the Lordship of Jesus in the present moment. And we'll begin working through those **five truths** for the rest of our time together this morning, and what we don't get to today we'll take up next week.

I. Granted by Our Creator

And that **first truth** is that gender is **granted by our Creator**. Or you could say, bestowed by our Creator. And we see that once again from our anchor verse, Genesis 1:27: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created them." He created them male and female. As we said before, the very first thing that Scripture says about man is that we are *created*. We are *not* God. The second thing is that we are created in His image—most fundamentally to represent Him, not express ourselves. And the third thing is that God has created man to represent Him as His image-bearers in this distinctive way as *men and women*.

This is radically opposed to the transgender ideology, which claims that gender is a social construct, spoken into existence by the sovereignty of each individual. We are not *self*-creators. We do not *self*-identify. We do not declare our identity. We *receive* our identity from a God who identifies us, according to His sovereign prerogative—a prerogative which He retains over us as the One who has created us. As Paul tells the Athenians on Mars Hill in Acts 17:24, this God is "the God who made the world and all things in it." "The earth is Yahweh's, and all it contains," Psalm 24:1, "the world, and those who dwell in it." And since He is Creator, He is "*Lord* of heaven and earth." "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." And so, Acts 17:25, "*He* gives to all people life and breath and all things." All things are **bestowed** upon us **by our Creator**, who by virtue of His being Creator is owner of all He has created.

And so the point is: man does not create himself. You are not self-creators. And therefore you are not *self-identifiers*. You are not free to forge your own identity. God has created you male or female in *His* image. And therefore you are what God says you are, and you must conduct yourself in the way God says you must. You may not rebel against the created order of God by identifying as a different gender. There is only One who gets to say, "I am who I am," and that is the self-existent Triune Creator, not the self-identifying "transgender" creature.

You remember that passage at the end of 1 Corinthians 6, where Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that, because Christ has purchased them by His own blood, that they are not their own but belong to Him? He says, "Do you not know...that you are not your own? For you have been

bought with a price: therefore glorify God *in your body*.” The primary application there is that Christians are God’s people by redemption, and that creates ethical obligations for how we conduct ourselves. But what these passages we’ve just been quoting teach us is that all people, while they’re not God’s people by redemption, they *are* God’s possession by creation. And so it may be said of them just as well: “You are not your own! Therefore glorify God *in your body*!” There is a very real sense in which God, by virtue of having created you, points to your body and says, “*My body, My choice!*”

And so gender is not determined by the feelings, self-perceptions, or preferences of the creature. Gender is **granted by** the sovereign prerogative of **our Creator**.

II. Grounded in Biology

A **second** truth, intimately related to that, is that gender is **grounded in biology**. And we see that again in the early chapters of Genesis. Back to 1:27: “Male and female He created them.” Our gender is integral to our identity as image-bearers of God. And the observation to make here is: God made the binary. There are only two genders here: God created mankind male and female. One or the other. It does not say, “God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him, male, and female, and agender, and genderqueer, and genderfluid, and pangender, and two-spirit He created them.” No. There are only two. This is God’s design from the beginning: mankind is either male or female.

And then you turn to chapter two. And whereas chapter 1 was a more zoomed-out, cosmic account of the creation of man, you see in chapter 2 the more zoomed-in, covenantal, relational account of God’s creation of man. Verse 7: “Then Yahweh God”—I am who I am, the covenant-keeping God of Israel—“Yahweh God formed *man* of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and *man* became a living being.” And then, verses 8 and 15, God places man in the garden to cultivate and keep it, and in verses 16 and 17 He gives the man the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He threatens death for disobedience and implicitly promises life for obedience.

But by then it’s plain that mankind, in that early stage, is just the man, Adam. Eve hasn’t been created yet, because in verse 18, God says, “It is not good for the man to be *alone*.” And so He declares He’s going to make a helper suitable for him, but that none of the animals that God made and brought to Adam *were* suitable.

And so, in verse 21, “Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. [And] Yahweh God fashioned into a *woman* the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called *Woman*, because she

was taken out of Man.” And so God created mankind. And He created mankind male and female. He called the male “Adam,” and “the man.” And then He formed the female, Eve, out of Adam’s body, and Adam called her “woman.” And so manhood is inextricably linked to maleness, and womanhood is inextricably linked to femaleness. Gender is inextricably rooted or **grounded** in biology.

And we can go further. What *was* “woman,” then, from the beginning? Genesis 2:18: a helper suitable to Adam. *Néged*. “Corresponding” to him; “complementary” to him. The woman was sufficiently like the man, in such a way that she was suitable for him in a way that none of the animals were. She was human, just as he was. But she was not identical to him. There was correspondence, but there was not identity. There was likeness, but not sameness. There was unity, but there was also diversity.

And in particular, for what task was the woman suitable for the man, to help him? For the commission given to them in chapter 1 verse 28. Immediately after we’re told in Genesis 1:27, “male and female He created them,” we read of God’s charge to mankind: “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’” God created man male and female and commanded them to reproduce! To create a family! To create more people like themselves! God brings all the animals of creation to Adam, and none of them is a helper suitable to aid Adam in the fulfillment of this divine mandate! The only creature suitable for *man* is *woman*, because only the union between man and woman—alike in their humanity, but distinct in their gender—could result in the fruitfulness of reproduction.

This means that the complementarity of man’s and woman’s *bodies* are absolutely essential to their *identity* as man and woman. **Gender** is fundamentally **grounded in biology**, because maleness and femaleness are designed by God with an eye to reproduction. And in that task of fruitful multiplication, the man’s and woman’s bodies are perfectly suited to their distinctive roles. The man gives, and the woman receives. The man provides the seed, and the woman nurtures that life in her womb until it’s time to give birth, at which time she continues to nurture that life by giving nutrients from her own body in feeding. What it means to be *woman* is to be one whose body—in principle—can suitably help a man to walk in obedience to God’s command to multiply and fill the earth.

It cannot be denied. The moment we’re told God made man male and female, we read of God’s command to be fruitful and multiply. The moment the woman is discovered to be the suitable helper for the man in the way the animals are not, we read, chapter 2 verse 24, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” Male and female? Multiplication! Man and woman? Marriage and one-flesh union! What it means to be man and woman—male and female—is inextricably **grounded in biology** and is irrevocably and immutably binary. And at the end of the sixth day, when God made man this

way, He “saw all that He had made,” and He pronounced it what? “*Very good.*” This is God’s very good design.

So much is it the case that **gender is grounded in biology** that same terms for “man” and “woman”—*ish* and *isshah*—and “male” and “female”—*zakar* and *n^eqēvah*—are used of the animals as Noah prepares them to board the ark ahead of the flood. Genesis 6:19: “And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to *keep them alive with you*; they shall be *male* and *female*.” What does God mean, “to keep them alive”? To preserve their existence by having male and female so they can reproduce and fill the earth after the flood passes! Which means “male” and “female” relate fundamentally to those biological functions that, in principle (barring any physiological dysfunction), allow for reproduction.

And so what’s the conclusion? Gender—maleness and femaleness, manhood and womanhood—is not a social construct grounded in the creature’s mind. Since the same terms are used of animals as well as humans—and since of course animals don’t have gender identity distinct from their biology—it’s plain that “gender has a biological component firmly rooted in the physical body.” That is clear indication that, according to Scripture, God has designed each person’s gender to correspond with his or her biological sex (Beeke & Smalley, *RST*, 2:210). Again: what it means to be man and woman—male and female—is inextricably **grounded in biology**, by God’s good design. I suppose it’s possible God could have made three or four or fifty-seven genders. But He didn’t. Something about this gender binary in the creatures reflects the glory of the Creator.

And not only is this binary woven throughout all human relationships—man/woman, boy/girl, husband/wife, father/mother, son/daughter, brother/sister, king/queen, prince/princess—it’s also affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So often it’s claimed that Jesus never said anything about LGBTQ issues. But that’s absolute nonsense. In Matthew chapter 19, the Pharisees come to test Jesus with questions about marriage and divorce. And Jesus answers their question by saying, Matthew 19:4, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning ‘*made them male and female,*’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?” Jesus says, “This is the way God has done it from the beginning! It is His design, and it is the foundation of all humanity. All human civilization is **grounded** in this binary of the **biological** sexes: male and female, for the purpose of one-flesh union with a view to having children.”

You say, “Wait a minute. What about people who can’t have children? If manhood and womanhood is so geared toward reproduction, are infertile couples less men or women because of their infertility?” And the answer is: of course not. That’s why I keep repeating the phrase “in principle.” Being is not grounded in function. Being gives rise to function, but what something is doesn’t *depend* on what it does. But because of the entrance of sin into the world, the creation is

cursed and corrupted, and you have dysfunction. Things don't always work the way they're supposed to. But that corruption that issues in dysfunction doesn't overturn God's design. Just because there is a deviation from the norm doesn't mean that the norm isn't normal, or that nature isn't natural.

A similar response can be given to the oft-raised objection of intersex people: "How can you say there's this immutable gender binary when we know there is such a thing as intersex people—those who have genetic or physical anomalies that result in both male and female genitalia, or dysfunctional reproductive organs?" But those with disorders of sexual development do not constitute a third gender. In the first place, DSDs are biological or physiological issues, and activists say gender has nothing to do with biology or physiology. But secondly, consider this illustration. Also as a result of the fall, there are people who are born without two functioning legs. But it's still right to say, "God made human beings as bipedal creatures." The physical anomalies are the exceptions that prove the rule. In the same way, it's still right to say, "God made human beings as males or females." The existence of biological anomalies are the exceptions that prove the rule. And those who do have disorders of sexual development need to be loved, accepted, and cared for—not *used* as political pawns to justify perversion.

III. A Gift of God's Loving Care

Well, so far we've seen that gender is granted by our Creator, and that it is grounded in our biology. The third truth about gender that we need to glean from the Scriptures is that **gender is a gift of God's loving care**. And for this I want to turn to a familiar passage: Psalm 139, and particularly verses 13 to 15. David is praising God for His omniscience and omnipresence. God searches and knows him; before a word is on his tongue, God knows it. He can't flee from God's presence—whether in heaven or in the grave, God is there. All his days are ordained by God. And then David praises God for His intricate craftsmanship in knitting him together even in his mother's womb. Psalm 139, starting in verse 13: "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth."

The emphasis in this passage is on how intentionally, carefully, and purposefully God Himself fashions each individual image-bearer in their mother's womb. He is like a master artisan, skillfully weaving the body of the unborn child together to function as a cohesive whole. Job 10:11 says that God "clothe[d] me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews." "*Fearfully and wonderfully made.*" "*Skillfully wrought.*" Each and every one of us! With the wisdom of the omniscient God who knows every thought we think and word we speak! With the **care** of the loving God who hems us in behind and before and leads us by His right hand! He hand-crafts our *bodies* as we grow in our mothers' wombs. Can we imagine that a God

so wise, and so skillful, and so full of **love and care** for His creatures, could err—even in one instance—and fashion the wrong body, so that a male soul could be trapped in a female body? Or vice versa? It’s absolutely unthinkable!

Which means: our gendered body is the **gift of God’s loving care** to us, whereby He kindly and graciously *reveals* to us this vital aspect of our identity. Do you see? The body is God’s gracious revelation of our gender. Our gender isn’t declared *by* us; it is revealed *to* us, in the body that was skillfully wrought and wonderfully made by our loving Creator. And if that is so—if our God has fashioned each one of us so carefully and purposefully, what must our response be? It must be to *receive* that identity as a gift from Him, rather than to argue with Him about it, and call either His wisdom or His goodness into question.

Isaiah 45:9 says, “Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’ Or the thing you are making say, ‘He has no hands?’” That’s so similar to what Paul says in Romans 9:20: “Who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, ‘Why did you make me like this,’ will it?” Those are such vivid illustrations. The clay doesn’t dispute with the potter over being made the wrong way! That would be an absurd exaltation of oneself outside of the bounds of its proper domain. In the same way, the creature doesn’t dispute with the Creator about being made in the wrong body! That would be an absurd exaltation of oneself outside of the bounds of *our* proper domain, *intruding* into the throne room of the Sovereign God.

Acts 17:26 tells us that *God* determines the time and place of our birth, not us. He determines our ethnic background and the families we are born into. He determines even our physical features. We don’t choose any of these things. We look around at the country and state and city we were born in, we look at the color of our skin, we even look in the mirror and we conclude: “God has made me like this. This is who I am.” And the proper response to God for all those things is to give Him *thanks*, Psalm 139:14, as the Giver of all good things (cf. Jas 1:17) (*Right Thinking for a Culture in Chaos*, 111). But now, when it comes to our bodies as a whole, we want to look at what God has made us to be and conclude that we can choose otherwise?

It comes down to a question of three things: authority, knowledge, and trustworthiness. “Who has the right to tell me what to do? Who knows what is best for me to do? Who loves me and wants what is best for me?” (Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate*, 39). Because God is our Creator and we are His image-bearers, He has the authority, and we do not. Because God is all-wise and perfect in wisdom, He knows what is best, whereas we must confess our ignorance and finitude. And because God is perfectly trustworthy—compassionate and gracious and abounding in lovingkindness—we can trust Him to want what is best for us, even more than we can trust ourselves, we whose hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked.

Conclusion

And though there's more to be said—which we'll pick up next week—it is the character of our God to which we must direct our thoughts to a culmination. God is God, and we are not. And so I say to my unbelieving friend—perhaps one who is struggling with temptations related to transgenderism, or simply one who is struggling with *any* sin—dear sinner, lay down your arms. The rebellion you persist in against the God who created you is a battle you cannot win. And so I call you to turn away from your rebellious self-exaltation, whereby you would put yourself in the place of God, and to bow your knee in humble submission before Him, acknowledging Him to be the rightful Sovereign and Lord of your life.

And not only is God *God*, but He is a *wise* God. His thoughts are not your thoughts, and His ways are not your ways. While you have devised and schemed and convinced yourself of the wisdom of your own worldview, which raises itself up against the knowledge of God as revealed in His Word, hear the word of the Apostle Paul: that “God has made *foolish* the wisdom of this world”! that “the wisdom of this world is *foolishness* before God”! And whether you reject His thoughts on the matter of gender and sexuality, or on any other matter that He reveals in His Word, I call you to turn away from that vain conceit, whereby you would exalt yourself above the omniscient God, and to submit your mind to what He's revealed of Himself, and to confess in repentance and faith that His ways are wisest.

And then not only is God sovereign and wise, but He is also good. He is also trustworthy. He is the God whose pinnacle of self-revelation is in the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, who says, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” You who languish under the burden of your sin—whether LGBTQ sins or any *other* pattern of sins—come to Christ for rest! There is sufficient grace stored up in Him to conquer every rebel power at work in you. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins that is sufficient to wash away all your guilty stains. So that whether you are, as 1 Corinthians 6 says, a fornicator, an idolater, an adulterer, an effeminate one, a homosexual, a thief, a coveter, a drunkard, a reviler, or a swindler, it may be spoken of you as it was of those believers: “Such *were* some of you; but you were *washed*, but you were *sanctified*, but you were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

That Gospel—that washes, and sanctifies, and justifies—remains free and offered to you, because the blood and righteousness of the Savior who died and rose again in the place of sinners remains worthy! It remains *powerful* before the Father to satisfy divine wrath! And it is yours for the taking if you will come to Christ in faith this morning! Turn away from your sins—from the vilest to the most “respectable”—and trust in Christ for your salvation!

And fellow-believers, take up the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith as you engage with this world on these issues. More to come next week, but for now: remember that gender is **granted by our Creator**, is **grounded in our biology**, and is a **gift of God's loving care**, whereby He reveals our identity to us.