

Transgenderism: Responding with Courage & Compassion

Pastor Brett Wendle

June 2023

I. Introduction

II. Understanding Transgenderism

a. What transgenderism is

American Psychological Association: *“Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.”*

b. What transgenderism claims

1. Gender is a valid reality independent of sex.

2. Gender is self-determined and can only be known by the self.

The Gender Fairy: “Only you know whether you are a boy or a girl. No one can tell you.”

3. Gender is nonbinary.

4. Gender can be fluid.

Nancy Pearcey, Love Thy Body: "The mother of a twelve-year-old told reporters, 'Some days Annie is a girl, some days Annie is a boy, and some days she's both.' When they pair went shopping for Annie's graduation outfit, they purchased both a dress and suit because they were not sure which gender the child would align with for the evening."

5. One has an inherent right to live according to one's gender identity.

6. Others have a moral responsibility to affirm one's gender identity.

Galop (UK): "Transphobia is intolerance of gender diversity. It is based around the idea that there are only two sexes – male and female – which you stay in from birth."

III. Responding to Transgenderism

a. Compassion

b. Critique

1. *Claim: Gender is a valid reality independent of sex.*

Response: This is a statement of belief, not of established scientific fact.

2. *Claim: Gender is self-determined and can only be known by the self.*

Response: This depends on an unlivable notion of identity.

3. *Claim: Gender is nonbinary.*

Response: Intersex conditions do not show that sex is a spectrum.

Colin Wright (Wall Street Journal): *“The existence of borderline cases no more raises questions about everyone else’s sex than the existence of dawn and dusk casts doubt on day and night...An organism’s sex is defined by the type of gamete (sperm or ova) it has the function of producing. Males have the function of producing sperm, or small gametes; females, ova, or large ones. Because there is no third gamete type, there are only two sexes. Sex is binary.”*

4. *Claim: Gender can be fluid.*

Response: This is logically inconsistent with irreversible surgical transitions.

5. *Claim: One has an inherent right to live according to one’s self-identified gender.*

Response: Human rights depend on the image of God.

6. *Claim: Others have a moral responsibility to affirm one's self-identified gender.*

Response: This imposes a moral vision on others, which it resists when others do it.

A moral critique

c. Clarity

A brief biblical theology of gender and sexuality:

1. God has created all things, including humanity, and alone can speak authoritatively about the nature and purpose of human sexuality.

Genesis 1:1: *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*

Genesis 1:28: *"And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"*

2. God created humanity male and female, both in his image, equal in dignity, but distinct and complementary in design and calling. This is very good.

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 2:15, 18: *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"*

Genesis 1:31: *“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”*

3. The purposes of complementary sexuality include the display of the covenant love between God and his people and the multiplication of God’s image-bearers throughout the earth.

Ephesians 5:31-32: *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”*

Genesis 1:28: *“And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”*

4. Humanity has rejected God and his authoritative voice and has sought happiness outside him and his ways. Among the results of this fall are shame, disordered desires, and disordered bodies.

Genesis 3:6-7: *“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”*

Romans 1:24-25: *“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”*

Romans 8:20-21: *“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”*



DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

5. The rejection of God's design for gender and sexual intimacy, as with all sin, provokes his judgment.

Deuteronomy 22:5: "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 LORD your God."

Leviticus 18:22: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death."

6. God's Son, Jesus Christ, took on human nature, lived a sinless human life, and willingly bore the judgment due to human sin.

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

1 John 3:5: "You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin."

1 Corinthians 15:3: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures."

7. All who repent of sin and trust in Jesus receive salvation, among the blessings of which are imputed righteousness, cleansing of sin, adoption as God's children, and the Holy Spirit, who transforms us to resemble Jesus.

Romans 3:23-24: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality...will inherit the kingdom of God. 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."

John 1:12: *“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”*

2 Corinthians 3:18: *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

8. Christians regard their bodies as belonging to Christ and honor him sexually through celibate singleness or faithful marriage. Both singleness and marriage are gifts from God. Christians also honor God by appropriately expressing their gender.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”*

Matthew 19:9-12: *“‘And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.’ The disciples said to him, ‘If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.’ But he said to them, ‘Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.’”*

1 Corinthians 7:7: *“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.”*

1 Corinthians 11:4-5: *“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.”*

9. Christians will experience genuine change but will continue to experience the struggle between God's Spirit and their indwelling sin. Some who experience same-sex attraction or the desire to live as the opposite sex will continue to do so. But God will give them sufficient grace to walk faithfully with him.

Galatians 5:16-17: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

2 Corinthians 12:9: "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

10. When Jesus returns, all who have trusted in him will receive new, perfect bodies, and their sinful desires will cease forever. They will enjoy the reality to which human sexuality and marriage pointed: an eternal, intimate relationship with God.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53: "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality."

1 John 3:2: "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

Revelation 19:6-9: "Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure'—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are the true words of God.'"

Why the Christian vision of sexuality is better:

1. A foundation for human rights rooted in human dignity
 2. A celebration of both maleness and femaleness
 3. A respect for the human body
 4. A fulfillment that is not tied to sex
 5. A stable identity
 6. A motivation for true tolerance
 7. A sure hope of wholeness
- d. Courage

Daniel 3:17-18: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image you have set up."

1 Peter 4:12–14: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”*

e. Community

Hebrews 10:23–25: *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

f. Counsel

1. Counsel for those who identify as transgender

2. Counsel for those who love someone who identifies as transgender

3. Counsel about preparing children to encounter transgenderism

4. Counsel for Sunday mornings

IV. Resource Recommendations

God and the Transgender Debate (2nd ed.) by Andrew T. Walker (The Good Book Company, 2022). 184pp.

Transgender by Vaughan Roberts (The Good Book Company, 2016). 74pp.

Gender Ideology by Sharon James (Christian Focus, 2019). 126pp.

Affirming God's Image by J. Alan Branch (Lexham Press, 2019). 144pp.

Love Thy Body by Nancy Pearcey (Baker, 2018). 264pp. See esp. chapter 6: "Transgender, Transreality."

Gender: A Conversation Guide for Parents and Pastors by Brian Seagraves and Hunter Leavine (The Good Book Company, 2018). 74pp.

God Made Boys and Girls: Helping Children Understand the Gift of Gender by Marty Machowski (New Growth Press, 2019).

V. Conclusion

Habakkuk 2:14: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."