

## What Is the Foundation of “I’m Transgender”?

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When someone says, “I’m transgender,” are you prepared to respond? The Bible clearly teaches that God created “male and female.” (Genesis 1:27) Yet, there may be other places to start the conversation.

First, consider that “I’m transgender” tries to describe a person’s **being** by partly answering the question “*What* am I?” The person may also have certain preferences about how to present oneself (haircut and clothing, for example), and may even choose a new name. These changes of presentation offer answers to the question, “*Who* am I?”—the **identity** that flows from the transgenderist claim of being. Such interpretations of *being* and *identity* flow from a worldview that conflicts with the Bible.

Second, consider that calling oneself transgender may be an attempt to deal with an intense, but often temporary, feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent with one’s sex. This is known to professional counselors as “gender dysphoria” (the opposite of euphoria). Christians can accept the reality of those troublesome feelings while questioning transgenderist explanations or justifications for those emotions.

A clear distinction between *sex* and *gender* also is important. Informally, *gender* means maleness or femaleness, the same as *sex*. When used in another sense, *gender* refers to associations between each sex and things like words, behaviors, hobbies, etc. A transgender advocate may strongly protest against **gender essentialism**, the notion that specific masculine or feminine social characteristics (dress, mannerisms, etc.) are required for a person to be a real man or real woman. A Christian may *partly* agree. However, when breaking social expectations, it is important to distinguish between behaviors that express mere individuality and those that express rebellion: “I am not what God says I am in creating me.”

Saying “I am transgender” assumes there is a category of being beyond what God has made. Chemically or surgically changing one’s appearance to be similar to the opposite sex rejects the body that God created. Claiming to be “transgender” implies that God made a mistake. It echoes an ancient false teaching, **Gnosticism**, that favored immaterial feelings as more important than the

material body. By contrast, the church confesses that God creates and redeems us: body, mind, feelings, and soul.

Transgenderists may retort by asking whether corrective surgeries are wrong for people whose sexual anatomy is dysfunctional or ambiguous. The difference is not hard to see. Disorder and dysfunction are signs of a fallen world, and God has mercifully provided ways to address them. Gender dysphoria is not caused by having the “wrong” body. Emotions run out of sync with God’s creation. That requires other kinds of care than surgery.

Gender dysphoria makes sense as a mental and emotional effect of the sinful state revealed in Scripture. The solution must address the combination of disorders, guilt, and shame to bring lasting peace. The transgender movement can’t do that, but God does. Jesus bore His cross as one of us to reconcile us to God and open our way to eternal life, where we will be free of sin and all its effects. We follow His pattern now by bearing *our* crosses, including dysphoria in some cases.

We may feel alone, but we are not. “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

We may feel weak, but God strengthens us. “For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Christians may feel ashamed or afraid to address this subject, and some with gender dysphoria have been mistreated by others, but God provides hope and healing for all. The church calls *all* sinners to repentance and comforts them with forgiveness and love in the name of Christ.

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