

“Male and Female He Created Them” – Genesis 1:26-31

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Open a Bible and meet me in Genesis 1...

We have a lot of ground to cover today, so make haste in finding our passage (which should be easy since it is found on page 1 of the Bible). This morning we will be considering some of the implications this passage of Scripture, drawn from day six of the creation account, has for a right understanding of gender. This is a very sensitive topic because there is a lot of confusion on these matters in our place and time. And for many of us these aren't abstract issues, but close to home. I want to try to tread carefully, but faithfully this morning. So let's begin with the most important thing, God's Word, our highest authority. Follow along as I begin reading in verse 26...

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.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.’” (Genesis 1:26-28)

This is God's Word...

It hasn't always been this way in our society, but we find ourselves in a polarizing moment in which there is an increasing divide between differing understandings of what gender consists of and how gender is determined. As one author explains,

“The older understanding (sometimes called biological essentialism) claims that a person's gender is determined by the objective fact of their biological sex. Where there is a felt mismatch, then subjectivity should be helped to objectivity. The newer understanding (sometimes called psychological essentialism) claims that the objective facts of biology do not determine a person's gender. This is determined by their gender identity—their own subjective sense of who and what they are.”¹

Now, in truth, questions of identity have always been important to people—and they are the sorts of questions we all must wrestle with. When David asks, *“What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”* (Ps. 8:4), he is asking God an identity question. He is, in a sense, asking, “Who am I?” This is no new question. Yet today the question is being asked with a new twist. “The old form assumes there is an objective ‘I’ that already exists and is simply waiting to be discovered.” But the emerging gender theory no longer operates with this presupposition and, thus, when many today ask, “Who am I?,” what they mean is “What do I identify as?” Yet, as Robert Smith notes, “This way of putting things emphasizes chosenness (as opposed to *givenness*) and possible changeability (as opposed to *stability*).”²

Now, we could discuss these things from a scientific perspective or from the vantage point of sociological impact, but that's not our purpose today. This is a sermon after all. Those avenues of investigation are significant (and I would argue are consistent with the biblical view), but this is neither the time nor place for

those conversations. As Christians, we believe that the highest authority is God’s Word, so that is where we will focus today. We cannot be exhaustive on all that God’s Word says on such matters, but, as it turns out, the passage we have arrived at in our series in Genesis is the passage where the biblical view really begins to take shape. So that’s where we will focus our energies today, along with some related passages that reinforce the points made here.

With that in mind, I would like to consider four aspects of a biblical view of gender. Again, this is not an exhaustive list. But it is an important list, and it begins with this...

The Biblical View Reveals a Gender Binary

There are two genders, according to the Scriptures (and, for that matter, the estimation of the vast majority of those who have existed in human history), and those two genders are male and female.³ In this sense, gender is binary, not in the sense that an individual person can be both male and female, but in the sense that an individual person can be only a male or a female. I agree with Richard Phillips, who writes,

“In an age of such incredible confusion that gender is declared a social construct or personal choice—this in the face of irrefutable biological determinism—the Bible declares sexual identity to be created by God. If you are male, it is because maleness is intrinsic to your God-designed being. If you are a woman, it was God who made you female at the moment you came into existence. A man may deny his gender, put on a dress or even take hormone treatments to violate himself chemically. But he will never be a woman, or vice versa. Not only does the Bible declare the sexual difference, but it sets men and woman on distinct, though complementary, paths.”⁴

This stands in stark contrast with the claims of many around us in the West who are increasingly advocating for notions of “gender diversity” and “gender fluidity.” While it is difficult to define such notions (since they are rooted in subjectivity and seem to be ever-evolving), typically what is meant by “gender diversity” is that “gender is not binary (either male or female) but exists on a broad spectrum with many points lying in between (or outside) male and female.” So, for instance, I read of one list on Tumblr that included around 400 different options for gender. Generally speaking, “gender fluidity” refers to the notion that an individual “can move back and forth along the gender spectrum.”⁵ Of course, this doesn’t mean that everyone who identifies as LGBTQ+ believes that gender is fluid or that gender is non-binary. In fact, many who are called to mind by the “T” in this label tend to express feelings of “gender incongruence,” meaning their biological sex doesn’t seem to match their psychological sense of their gender, and so they report feeling as though they were in “the wrong body” and seek out ways transform their appearance to better conform to the opposite biological gender. “In other words, they don’t believe in gender diversity, nor are they interested in gender fluidity or gender neutrality,” which is more and more being acknowledged as “one of many tensions within the LGBTQ+ movement.” So, in other words, the movement is not a monolith in terms of worldview.⁶

Nevertheless, the biblical view does not match any of these notions. Nowhere in Scripture will you read of gender diversity, except in binary terms—male and female.⁷ Father and mother. Son and daughter. Boy and girl. Brother and sister. Nowhere in Scripture is there even a hint that one’s gender is fluid or anything but immutable. Nowhere in Scripture do we find it entertained that one can be in “the wrong body.” Nowhere in Scripture do we find gender spoken of as optional, a matter of personal choice, or a social construct.⁸ Therefore, we ought not expect that fidelity to God’s Word is going to keep us out of the cultural crosshairs.

We are living in a day where such biblical beliefs—that have been the undisputed consensus for millennia across cultural lines—are anathematized. We are living in a time when public outcry can cause companies like Amazon to refuse to sell books that reject the arguments of the transgender movement because “the company reserves the right to pull any book...that it believes violate company content guidelines on hate speech and other issues,” all the while continuing to ship to your door in two days or less a copy of Adolf Hitler’s *Mein*

Kampf. And thus, not too long ago, a famous example of this took place when Amazon stopped selling a book, which was sold on their site for years, called, *When Harry Became Sally* (by Ryan Anderson), though it had endorsements from a professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, a professor of law at Harvard University, a professor of psychology from New York University, a professor of law and legal philosophy from the University of Oxford, a professor medical ethics from Columbia University, a professor of psychological and brain sciences from Boston University, a professor of neurobiology and anatomy from the University of Utah, and others. I mention this not because such an appeal to authorities makes the book correct in every regard—I certainly would not share the author’s conclusions on everything—but merely to illustrate that this was not a book of unhinged *ad hominem* and strawman attacks, but one that sought to bring together evidence from a variety of disciplines to critique the transgender movement in a reasonable, yet compassionate way. Indeed, one endorser, Robert George (a professor at Princeton University), praised the author of the book for recognizing that those who he disagrees with on this issue “deserve to be treated with compassion, kindness, and respect” and that no one should “despise them, ridicule them, or disrespect them.” Instead, one can critique the ideology while “loving those who identify as transgender as our neighbors.” Yet despite descriptions like this of the tone of the book, Amazon labeled it as hate speech. Why? Because it was critical of the arguments and impact of the transgender movement. And that’s not allowed. In fact, it would appear that such thinking is more egregious than the writings of Adolf Hitler to the world’s largest bookseller.

I say all this not to promote fear (if you’ve been here for a while, you know I’m no fearmonger), still less animosity towards those who disagree (you need only look to last week’s sermon to see my convictions on how every person should be treated with love and dignity). Instead, I am simply attempting to convey that this is not an issue that you can hide from. There is a cost to be paid in our day to live out biblical convictions which are not the cultural orthodoxy. So, as Jesus said, we must count the cost.

“The first and fundamental responsibility of every Christian is to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God, irrespective of whether our culture makes this easy or hard. This means we need to listen carefully to what the Bible teaches us about human sexuality and gender identity and then tease out how we live, love, and minister in a deeply confused and increasingly hostile culture, and to the many confused individuals within it (if not within our churches also).”⁹

Fortunately for us, the Bible speaks with clarity on the matter of gender. Here in Genesis 1 we are told that God created humanity, and he created the humanity in two genders—“*male and female he created them*” (Gen. 1:27). The same sentiment is expressed after the Fall of humanity into sin (e.g., Gen. 5:1-2) and is maintained throughout the pages of Scripture. There are no additional sexes, pre- or post-Fall.¹⁰ Even Jesus echoed this sentiment when discussing marriage and divorce with the Pharisees, when, appealing to Genesis 1, He said to them, “*Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female*” (Matt. 19:4; cf. Mark 10:6). What kind of follower of Jesus would I be if I refused to adopt Jesus’ own thinking on the matter of gender?

The Biblical View Promotes Gender Consistency

By this I mean that we should aim to express ourselves in ways that appropriate to the gender in which God has created us. We should not adopt the dress or mannerism of the opposite gender as a way of rejecting or suppressing our own (biological) gender. There are some caveats to this, but let’s start with biblical instruction. In Deuteronomy we find the following command given to God’s people:

“*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.*” (Deuteronomy 22:5)

First, it should be noted, this law assumes that there are two sexes—male and female. But also, for this command to make any sense, we can see that the author assumes that “what is gender-normative in God’s world

is that one's biological sex governs both one's gender identity and its expression."¹¹ So, in other words, we should not seek to conceal or deny our God-given gender, but live in a way that embraces and even celebrates it before others.

For reasons we will get into in a moment, this command is expressed in very harsh terms, yet in translation some of the harshness is actually muted. Jason DeRouchie explains,

“In Hebrew, there are two types of negative commands—immediate (אִלֵּם) and durative (אִלְמָד), and God chose to frame these prohibitions as durative, so that we should read the ‘not’ as a ‘never’: ‘A woman shall *never* wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man *ever* put on a woman’s cloak.’ From God’s perspective, there is never a permissible time for the type of cross-dressing that this passage addresses.”¹²

Now this doesn't mean, of course, that a boy child trying on his mother's shoes and walking the house is doing something sinful. That's often just a part of childlike curiosity. And this doesn't mean a wife wearing a husband's shirt around the house is to be regarded as an abomination. That's not the point. God's Law is here addressing those attempts to confuse gender distinctions, celebrate such confusion, or perhaps even engage in cross-dressing for idolatrous and/or sexually immoral ends. So while it is not addressing those kinds of household scenarios I just described, like say with young children, still, “we must be cautious here, because we are always guiding our children into what is appropriate, and we are now living in a society that acts as though gender were a matter of choice rather than providence.”¹³

Additionally, though some English translations use the same word, there are different Hebrew words that stand behind the translation of the man's “garment” and the woman's “cloak.” The second word would seem to call to mind simply the outer wrapping, in other words, a woman's clothing, which men are told not to wear. But the first term is used not just for clothing, but for objects that could include tools, weaponry, jewelry, and other implements. Many argue, therefore, that the term, in this context, refers to any item or decoration normally associated with men.”¹⁴

So the text is not merely about clothing, but also about that which a person adorns themselves with in an effort to appear to be the opposite gender. Thus, it would seem that this law is attempting to underscore two things: “[1] Everyone needed to let individual gender expression align with one's biological sex; and [2] Everyone needed to guard against gender confusion, so that others would not wrongly perceive a man to be a woman and a woman to be a man based on dress.”¹⁵ To do otherwise, according to this text, is “*an abomination to the Lord your God.*” It's a grave offense. This language of “*abomination*” is used in the Old Testament to describe the sins of idolatry (Deut. 13:14; 17:4), witchcraft (18:12), dishonest gain (25:16), and homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; 20:13).¹⁶ So why does cross-dressing so offensive to the Lord? Here again I think DeRouchie hits the mark:

“Deuteronomy 22:5 is the fruit of this truth: YHWH [i.e. the Lord] is ever passionate to preserve and display right order in his world. This is the essence of his righteousness, and maintaining gender distinctions is an important part of this order. The stress in Genesis 1–2 on the way in which males and females image God and the Pentateuch's depiction of YHWH's relationship with Israel as a marriage push readers to view our biological sex and gender identity and expression as being first and foremost about God. The rest of the Old Testament highlights this parabolic purpose of sex and gender distinctions in books such as Hosea (chaps. 1–3; cf. Judg. 2:16–17; Isa. 1:21; 57:3; Jer. 2:2, 20; 3:1, 8–11; 31:31–32), and then the same idea is carried into the New Testament (see Matt. 9:15; 12:38–39; 16:1–4; Mark 2:19; 8:38; Luke 5:34), most clearly where Paul portrays the church as Christ's bride (Eph. 5:22–27; cf. Rev. 19:7–9; 21:9).”¹⁷

So, in other words, male and female gender—and the roles they were created for—were meant to reflect God's image and, in the case of marriage between a man and a woman, meant to be a picture of the relationship between God and His people. Therefore, to render these distinctions as God created them as irrelevant is to

jeopardize our capacity to image God and to confuse what God is trying to communicate through the right relationship between the genders in a marriage covenant.

“To the level that we flatten the inborn distinctions between maleness and femaleness, we flatten the distinctions between the sovereign Savior and the saved.... We take glory away from God and his Christ when we act as though distinctions between men and women were nonexistent. And we hurt the entire community both in the way that we fail to point them to gospel righteousness and in the way that we open them up for God’s just wrath.”¹⁸

Therefore, if as Paul and Jesus suggest, every command of God can be summarized as a call to love our neighbor and our God, then in “Deuteronomy 22:5, loving others and God means that people will maintain a gender identity that aligns with their biological sex and will express this gender in a way that never [intentionally] leads to gender confusion in the eyes of others.”¹⁹ So in our setting that doesn’t mean that all women should wear dresses, and never slacks at the office.²⁰ It doesn’t mean that guys can’t wear bright colors. It doesn’t mean that women must never have short hair or men must never grow their hair long. But we should live in such a way and adorn ourselves in such a way that suggests that we embrace the gender God has given us (which honors God) and that doesn’t cause people around us to stumble, which sometimes means we will have to account for cultural norms and associations (which honors neighbor).

The Biblical View Involves Gender Complementarity

This is a topic we will take up more when we get to Genesis 2, but it is at least worth mentioning at this juncture because there are certain roles—distinct, yet complementary—that are tied to gender.²¹ “Since our sexual identity is created by God, it should be honored through a grateful pursuit of his design.”²² The maleness and femaleness described in Genesis 1 is further developed in terms of that design in Genesis 2. For today, one example will have to suffice. We read at the end of the following chapter:

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:24-25)

This verse, of course, has significant implications for our understanding of marriage (as Jesus will show in the New Testament), and we will get to those later in this series. But here we see that certain tasks are assigned to each gender. Smith draws this out for us:

“The clear implication of this move from male and female (in Gen 1) to man and woman (in Gen 2), an implication everywhere confirmed as the biblical narrative unfolds, is that a person’s biological sex reveals and determines both their objective gender (what gender they, in fact, are) and certain key gender roles (should they be taken up). That is, human males grow into men (and potentially husbands and fathers) and human females grow into women (and potentially wives and mothers)...[In short:] a person’s biological sex reveals their actual gender, determines their true gender identity, and establishes certain potential gender roles.”²³

We will unpack that more later when we progress into chapter 2, but the point to see is that there are certain roles that are assigned to genders, not just here but elsewhere in Scripture. An understanding of this is “crucial to God’s designs for human life and prosperity.”²⁴ We cannot actually fulfil the call to “*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it*” the earth without one another (Gen. 1:28).²⁵ We each have a calling from God that is undertaken with one another, in a complementary fashion, requiring of each gender different things. But a difference in role, does not mean a difference in value, a point which Genesis 1, as we saw last week, underscores clearly. And this brings us to the next point...

The Biblical View Celebrates Gender Equality

And here I would refer you to last week's sermon on the significance of the image of God. We are told in Genesis 1:27 that both men and women are created in the image of God. That is the basis of human dignity. And that dignity is shared by all, regardless of gender. So sexism is excluded. And we should each value what the opposite sex uniquely contributes to human flourishing and the fulfilment of God's purposes in the world. The Scriptures celebrates this throughout. And we will have more to say on these truths in the days ahead.

The Bad News and the Good News

At this point in the story (Gen. 1) everything is perfect, orderly, and functioning as God intended. In short, "*it was very good*" (1:31). But that all changes in Genesis 3, when sin enters the equation and messes everything up. We have been reeling ever since because "sin has had a catastrophic effect on every part of our humanity." Nothing has escaped its destructive touch. "Not only have our hearts and minds become corrupt, but our bodies, like the rest of the created order, have been 'subjected to frustration' and are 'in bondage to decay' (Rom 8:20-21; [cf. 8:23])." This means that "all kinds of things have gone wrong with us—both psychologically (with our minds) and physiologically (with our bodies)."²⁶ While this is not the place to delineate all the ways this could intersect with the topic of gender, something like "gender dysphoria," which is a diagnostic term to describe the "distress experienced by those whose psychological gender identity differs from their biological sex." That's a real thing. And it's consistent with a biblical understanding of the Fall. I don't believe that people choose that necessarily. The fallen condition of humanity can affect us psychologically, just as much as physically. Many of you may have personal experience with this.

I want you to know, if that's you, that this is still a place for you. We love you. We see you as a fellow image-bearer. And those of us who do not relate to that kind of distress, don't think we are better than you. Indeed, we confess that sin and life in fallen world distresses us too, just in different ways. So please hear me when I say that when we talk about the biblical view on these matters, it's not because we are targeting you. It's just because we happen to be in this portion of God's Word. We all are confronted by God's Word to turn away from sinful thinking and lifestyles, if not by this passage by many others. Yet it's important for us to stand on these biblical truths not because we want to be mean or unaccepting, but because we are trying to be loving. We believe that God, the creator of humanity, knows what is best for human flourishing. We believe that to reject what He has revealed is right and wrong is to go the way of sin. And sin is always destructive to ourselves and others. So we care about truth. God's truth.

But, listen, we are not merely interested in defending positions, but in caring for persons.²⁷ Indeed, our positions—when biblically informed—ought to always be aimed at caring for persons. So maybe you find yourself struggling in these areas—trying to reconcile what you feel and what the Bible says is true, sensing a kind of gender dysphoria—we don't want you to struggle in isolation. And we want you to know that while the struggle of many men and women in this place may not be in that particular area, we all struggle in our own way to embrace truths and to reject sinful tendencies that are contrary to our nature and human flourishing. You are not alone in that. And God hasn't left you to yourself to solve for that. We are in this together, making use of the spiritual resources that God has given us in Christ.

Yet we cannot experience these graces, if we are unwilling to embrace what God has said is true. You will not know the difference He can make in your life, if you are not willing to call your sin "sin." But if you are willing to do so, and willing to look to Jesus for help and deliverance, you will find it in Him. That doesn't mean your struggle will end overnight. Most of our struggles don't. But you will find forgiveness, and, in His time, perfect transformation. And that's good news. It's the truth of the Gospel. Jesus came to die for sinners of every variety, and He forgives and delivers sinners of every kind. He died in their place on the cross. He bore the punishment for their sin. He rose on the third day in victory. And He calls us to turn from sin and trust in Him to save and make us new.

And that's why we want to be truthful on these matters. It's not because we are against you. It's because we are for you. We are for you finding what you're really longing for in Jesus Christ. "One's self-identity will be forever maligned so long as we are looking at a mirror and not into the face of Jesus Christ."²⁸ He saves. He heals. He can deliver us and make us new.

As Michael Horton writes, and this is a reminder for all of God's people,

"[O]nly an objective sin can be objectively forgiven. Essentially, to tell someone that these sins are not really sinful is to withhold the joy of forgiveness from them. When people are denied this relief by abusive counsel, my heart breaks for them just as when they are told that their *brokenness* is not real but something that they have chosen. They instead need to hear that there is an objective problem and an objective solution to their subjective feelings: real sin and real forgiveness from a real God who, in Christ, has absolved all who come to him in repentance and faith. Christ's objective work also provides a basis for a decisive defeat of sin's tyranny; by God's grace we can fight against sin. We have been given the Holy Spirit who works in us to do his pleasure (Phil. 2:13). He will never cease this work, even though we fall and sometimes even quench the Spirit (Phil. 1:6). Everyone who trusts in Christ is qualified to hear: 'If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself' (2 Tim. 2:13)."²⁹

Isn't that a glorious truth? There is hope for sinners like us. Each and all. And it is found in Jesus. Trust and Him today. Embrace His view of things, for in Him there is life. There is mercy. There is grace. Everything we truly need and long for is found in Him.

Let me close with a few thoughts from Daniel Darling:

"There is a better story for us than the promises made by the transgender movement: that futile attempts to re-engineer biology will bring ultimate happiness. There is a better story than is sometimes offered by the church's distorted vision of a hyper-masculinity or hyper-femininity. Though few of us understand the pain and the torment of gender dysphoria, in a sense we can all identify with ways we feel out of place in our earthly existence. Some struggle with anorexia, some struggle with body shame, some suffer from chronic pain or disease or dysfunction. All of us struggle against temptation. All of us have to weigh up competing voices about what it will mean to be really alive as human men and women. All of us will need to struggle, by the Spirit's help, to keep listening to the promise of the world God will restore us to. The Scripture says that our struggle is part of creation's groaning: the longing for final resurrection, restoration, and renewal (Romans 8 v. 22-23).

Therefore, he continues,

"We must believe that Jesus has a better story for our identity, for our bodies, for our lives than the one we create for ourselves. Until that final resurrection, we may never fully overcome the temptations that attack our souls, but we can cling to the hope of what is to come. Revelation describes the full reality of God's full, physical restoration at the end of the age, as we persevere in faith, where "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."³⁰

And so we say, as God's people, "Come, Lord Jesus." Maranatha!

Let's pray...

¹ Robert S. Smith. *How Should We Think about Gender and Identity?* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), 5.

² *Ibid.*, 17.

³ “The author has not considered gender and important feature in his account of the creation of the other forms of life, but for humanity it is clearly of considerable importance. Thus the narrative puts heavy stress on the fact that God created man as ‘male and female.’” Sailhammer, 69. Cf. Hamilton, 138: “Sexuality is applied to animal creatures, but not in the Creation story, only later in the Flood narrative (6:19).”

⁴ Richard D. Phillips, 145.

⁵ Smith, *How Should We Think about Gender and Identity?*, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁷ “Sexuality is not an accident of nature, nor is it simply a biological phenomenon. Instead it is a gift of God. While sexual identity and sexual function are foreign to God’s person, they are nevertheless a part of his will for his image bearers” (Hamilton, 138-139). Tremper Longman writes: “Further, Genesis 1 (and 2) informs the reader that gender and sexuality are part of the creation, not a part of the Creator. God may not be described correctly as a male or a female. We have seen that men and women are created in the image of God, showing that both genders reflect the divine glory. For this reason, too, later Scripture will use both male (king, warrior, shepherd) as well as female metaphors (Woman Wisdom [Prov 1; 8–9]; mother [Ps 131]) in reference to God” (Tremper Longman III, *Genesis*, SBC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016], 39). Nevertheless, it is appropriate to refer to God as “He,” following the biblical precedent which is consistent and intentional.

⁸ “Central to this new way of thinking is the idea that gender itself (and not simply gender roles and gender expression) is entirely a social construct and not in any way biologically determined. The seeds of this idea came out of feminism (e.g., Simone de Beauvoir’s famous statement: ‘One is not born, but becomes a woman.’), but were then refracted through gay and lesbian studies into queer ideology or gender theory. How so? The logical line of development is as follows: If being born a female and becoming a woman are two different things (so feminist ideology), and if there is no necessary correlation between your biological sex and your sexual orientation (so gay and lesbian thought), then why should there be any necessary correlation between your biological sex and your gender identity (so queer theory)? In other words, this new way of thinking not only draws a sharp distinction between sex and gender, but severs the connection. Sex is still generally seen as an objective biological reality, but it is not determinative of gender.” Smith, *How Should We Think about Gender and Identity?*, 20-21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹⁰ Commenting on “intersex” conditions or DSDs (i.e. disorders of sex development), which though rare can affect a person’s genitalia or even chromosomes, Smith writes, “it is important to realize that all such DSDs, like every other kind of disorder, disease, or disability, are postlapsarian (i.e., ‘after the fall’) phenomena, not part of the ‘very good’ creation ‘in the beginning’ (Gen 1:1, 31). Moreover, far from contradicting the teaching of either Genesis or Jesus, such conditions are normally, and rightly, classified as ‘medically identifiable deviations from the human binary sexual norm.’ In other words, male and female are not two extremes at either end of a broad continuum, and...the intersexed are not a third sex. From the beginning of creation, God made human beings male and female and either male or female, despite the difficulty we may have (on extremely rare occasions) or determining a person’s sex” (*Ibid.*, 34-35).

¹¹ Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017), 445.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 449.

¹⁴ Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 512. Similarly, DeRouchie writes, DeRouchie also points out that, “The term used here for the woman’s ‘cloak’ (הַלְבָשׁוֹת) is restrictive, pointing specifically to the outer wrapper or mantle that a female would wear. In contrast, the term rendered “garment” (לְבוּשׁוֹת) in relation to a man is broader and suggests any object associated with men—whether clothing (1 Sam. 21:5[H6]), vessel (1 Kings 10:21), ornament (Gen. 24:53), or piece of equipment (Num. 19:18) that was specifically associated with men. This could even include weapons of war (Gen. 49:5; Deut. 1:41; Judg. 9:54), but it was in no way limited here. Within Israelite culture, therefore, certain styles of dress, ornaments, or items distinguished men and women” (*How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 446).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ “Idolatry gives glory to someone other than YHWH; witchcraft looks to means other than God’s Word to discern the future or his will; dishonest gain diminishes the value of God’s image in others. We must conclude, therefore, that something about cross-dressing and gender confusion directly counters the very nature of God. This raises the likelihood that what makes transgenderism abominable is that it maligns humanity’s ability to reflect, resemble, and represent God rightly in this world. The possibility that it is also a criminal offense suggests that the sin actually endangers the welfare of the entire community. The clear distinctions between men and women laid out in Genesis 1 and 2 and maintained throughout the Pentateuch further suggest that this law bears a symbolic element. Those born boys are to live and thrive as boys, and those born girls are to live and thrive as girls. When corrupt desires are leading us to deviate from this course, we must choose with God’s help the path that best magnifies the majesty of God, and that path is defined in Deuteronomy 22:5. As for the purpose of the law, its objective appears to have been to maintain divinely created gender distinctions within the community of faith. The goal of this pursuit was to nurture an environment that properly displays the supremacy of God and the ever-present Head-helper distinction between God and the people he is creating for himself.” *Ibid.*, 446-447.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 447. Ajith Fernando writes, “The chapter [in Deuteronomy] prohibits breaking God’s order in the areas of agriculture (22:9, 10), clothing (22:11), and sexual behavior (22:13-30). Therefore, it is possible that the point addressed here is breaking God’s

order for gender distinction.” *Deuteronomy: Loving Obedience to a Loving God*, PW (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 508. Cf. Block, *Deuteronomy*, 512.

¹⁸ DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 447.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 448.

²⁰ “Sometimes people accuse women of immodesty when they wear slacks as they are predominantly worn by men. But in many cultures wearing slacks is the most modest way for women to dress. So we must beware of making rules about clothing without thinking of the cultural background.” Fernando, *Deuteronomy*, 508.

²¹ “Along with this, new covenant teaching maintains role distinctions between men and women, most explicitly in its instructions to husbands and wives (e.g., Eph. 5:22–32; 1 Peter 3:1–7) and to local churches regarding their corporate worship, teaching, and leadership (1 Cor. 11:1–16; 14:33–35; 1 Tim. 2–3; Titus 1:5–16). It also calls for men to live as men, for women to live as women, and for the young to be trained to live out the gender role related to their God-given sex (Titus 2:2–6). Paul exhorted Timothy to respect and encourage older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, in all purity (1 Tim. 5:1–2). All this instruction assumes that we can rightly identify those who are men and those who are women.” DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 448.

²² Phillips, 145.

²³ Smith, *How Should We Think about Gender and Identity?*, 35, 37.

²⁴ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1996), 175.

²⁵ “It is particularly important to note that God created both males *and* females in his image (v. 27). He did not create men in his image and woman in the image of men. Both men and women reflect his glory. Thus begins an emphasis that will continue in the second creation account on the equality of men and women.” Longman, *Genesis*, 37.

²⁶ Smith, *How Should We Think about Gender and Identity?*, 38. One of the places where Jesus Himself acknowledges this is in Matthew 19, where He distinguishes between a few types of eunuchs. “*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*” (Matt. 19:12). The third of these—eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven—are metaphorical, not literal. These are those who have set aside marriage and embrace a particular call to singleness for the sake of ministry in God’s kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 7). But the first two are literal eunuchs that can be distinguished. The first is one who was born that way. This would include various disorders of sex development (DSDs), which unfortunately mark life in a fallen world. Sin has devastating effects of physical development—both in the sense that we all die as a result of sin, also in that our bodies break down to disorder (sometimes even at birth). That’s the sort of situation that Jesus calls to mind with this first group of people mentioned. The second group—“*made eunuchs by men*”—would account for those who were made so either by accident or deliberation. This could include, for example, those who might undergo a gender-transformation surgery in our day.

²⁷ Michael Horton, *Recovering Our Sanity: How the Fear of God Conquers the Fears that Divide Us* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 241.

²⁸ DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 449.

²⁹ Horton, *Recovering Our Sanity*, 243-244.

³⁰ Daniel Darling, *The Dignity Revolution: Reclaiming God’s Rich Vision for Humanity* (The Good Book Company, 2018), 161-162.