

Thinking Biblically About Sexuality and Gender

Week 6: Loving Your Trans* Neighbor

Covenant of Community

Lord, help us, by your Spirit to... **Hear** and **see** your word rightly and wisely applied; **Listen** actively with a desire to learn, especially viewpoints not our own; **Speak** with grace, only to build up and encourage one another; **Honor** all people, and see all as made in your image; **Love** all people, even when it is hard; Just as Jesus Christ would do.

Introduction

- **I hope to make you mad right now.**
- Stories vs. Segments
 - Lesli, Andrew (Winifred)

Growth Goals for Today

- Humanize the trans* experience, shifting focus away from political or ideological battlegrounds.
- Complicate the cultural “jagged line” issue via education (this is complicated!).

We Must Define Our Words

- Sex: *The biological distinction between male and female. Humans are sexually dimorphic.*
- Gender: *The psychological, social and cultural aspects of being male or female.*
- Gender Dysphoria: *The experience of distress associated with the incongruence wherein one's psychological and emotional gender identity does not match one's biological sex.*
- Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria: *The current social phenomenon where Gender Dysphoria is experienced suddenly usually due to exposure either online or via friends.*
- Trans*: *Umbrella term recognizing the complexity and diversity in the transgender community.*

(Discussion) How do gender stereotypes potentially harm trans* people or advance gender dysphoria?

2 Extremes:

- Culture Warrior (truth, no grace) – the trans* community needs to be brought to repentance.
- Uncritical Ally (grace, no truth) – the trans* community needs to be accepted and embraced.

What side of the spectrum do you find yourself and how can you grow to be more centered?

Today's Test Case: Pronoun Usage

- Pronoun usage is a jagged line issue, and there are strong Christian arguments for both sides of the debate.
 - (Discussion) What are arguments against using pronouns?
 - (Discussion) What are arguments for using pronouns (pronoun hospitality)?
- Test case: Janet (they/them)

“The thing that brought me to an acceptance of Biblical masculinity was not a poignantly laid-out exegetical argument against transsexuality nor a fire and brimstone diatribe against homosexuality but a *man who gave me the space to speak about my desires openly and let me know he and God loved me nevertheless.*” -Alan

“As the number of trans* people in the world increases, our churches should have more trans* people, not fewer. Not because our ethic is weak or unclear, but because it is strong and wholistic—true, courageous, compassionate, and humble. If people—especially marginalized and broken people—come into our communities, they should never want to leave.” -Preston Sprinkle

Resources for Parents/Further Study

- *Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church & What the Bible Has to Say* (Preston Sprinkle, 2021)
- *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture* (Mark A. Yarhouse, 2015)
- *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say About Gender Identity?* (Andrew T. Walker, 2017)
- *Listening to Sexual Minorities: A Study of Faith and Sexual Identity on Christian College Campuses* (Mark A. Yarhouse, 2018)
- *Talking to Kids About Gender Identity: A Roadmap for Christian Compassion, Civility, and Conviction* (Mark A. Yarhouse, 2023)
- *When Children Come Out: A Guide for Christian Parents* (Mark A. Yarhouse & Olya Zaporozhets, 2022)