

## Introduction

This edition is written by Steve Bryant. It continues the theme of *the battle for young minds, wokeness or godliness?* It focuses on gender and sexuality issues, including the sexualisation of children. Bible passages on these issues are used to help explain the Christian worldview, contrast that with the woke worldview, and then look at ways in which our children can be taught and equipped to cope with the challenges they face. All passages are quoted from the New International Version [NIV].

## The Bible on sexuality and gender

In Mark's Gospel we read:

*“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”*  
[Mark 10:6-9]

In this short passage we can see several things, including:

- We were made male and female. Gender is binary, i.e. there are two complementary genders. That is the way God made us.
- Marriage is God-ordained – the man is to leave his parents and be one flesh with his wife.
- Marriage leads to the two becoming one. Physical sexual union is part of that and God declares that it is right and good within that marriage.
- The context of the passage is questions about divorce. Wrong sexual expressions in adultery and divorce represent distortions of God's good gifts of sex, sexuality and marriage.

In the parallel passage on divorce in Matthew 19, Jesus also talks about those who will not marry for various reasons. There is no sense that this is a second best option, as he includes those who choose to remain single as part of their service for God. Jesus himself was single, as was the Apostle Paul who wrote so much of the New Testament. As churches and Christian organisations now, we need to follow these biblical principles by affirming both marriage and singleness, and by celebrating life milestones with our single members.

## Sexuality

Throughout scripture, marriage is always shown as between a man and a woman. That is always held up as the norm and the ideal, even though the Bible does not hesitate to show us distortions in adultery and all forms of extra-marital sexual relations, prostitution, rape, and dysfunctional marriages. In the letter to the church in Ephesus, husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church; there could be no more self-sacrificial and complete love than this. The picture is that our marriages on earth should reflect the ultimate marriage picture with Christ as the bridegroom and His followers as the bride.

There are clear prohibitions of same-sex activity in both Old Testament law and New Testament teaching. The context of the prohibition in Leviticus is that of a number of forbidden practices that were widespread in neighbouring societies. These included child sacrifice, witchcraft, and cursing parents, as well as a wide range of other forbidden sexual activity including adultery, incest, and bestiality. In the first chapter of Romans, it is set as one of over twenty sins in the space of a few

verses, and the opening verses of chapter two focus on unrepentant self-righteousness. The message of these opening chapters of Romans is that all of us are sinners, but that all of us are offered grace and forgiveness if we will accept it and trust in Jesus. That same message applies whatever our sexual orientation, whatever our previous religious background, whatever our ethnicity – whoever we are.

We know from the book of Hebrews [4:14-16] that Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, but that He did not sin. Temptation to lie is not sin unless we lie, temptation to greed is not sin unless we act on it; the same applies to sexual temptation, whether that concerns same-sex or heterosexual desires.

### **Gender issues**

The passage from Mark's Gospel quoted above shows that God made us male and female – two complementary genders. Throughout the Bible there are no references to any other genders. The issues of infertility caused by disease, by inherited condition, accidental injury, or by castration to become a eunuch, are well recognised, but there is no question of the person's gender. With a few exceptions, the same two-gender understanding has applied throughout history around the world.

The Bible describes the creation of men and women:

*"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."* [Genesis 2:23]

In Genesis 1 it says that what God made is good. 'Very good' is used to describe creation after He made people. We are made male and female in God's image. Among so much else in these few short statements we can see that:

- God made us and described us as good
- All of us, regardless of ethnicity, status, gender, level of ability or any other factor, are made in God's image. This is true however we may feel about ourselves on our bad days.
- Given that we are made male and female in God's image, accepting that fact – including accepting our gender – is God's intention for our lives.

We know from reading the next few chapters that things went wrong, so that sin and evil entered into the world. We see the effects all around us of people made in the image of God doing great things to serve others, and we also see the effects of sin where self-interest leads to evil. Sometimes that sin is expressed in hatred towards others, but it can also be self-hatred, including hatred of one's own gender. Gender-hatred like this can lead to a rejection of who we are as male or female. By contrast, being at peace with God by turning away from sin, including self-hatred and rejection, will allow us to live in freedom and joy as the person He made us.

### **The woke worldview**

There is a history of people who did not accept their gender. This group of people was extremely small, mostly men, and there was little or no trans-rights activism. This group still exists and is different to the radical transgender activists of woke identity politics. The changes in recent years have made this a huge public issue and shifted the profile of trans-identifying people. Most of them are now teenage girls and young women; a significant number of them are on the autistic spectrum. Their underlying unease with being who they are as teenagers can be exaggerated by being with girls who say they are transgender, either in person or on-line. Pro-trans websites and social media

presence draw in girls and young women, encouraging them to identify as transgender in some way as the answer to their unease and anxiety.

In the woke worldview there are many genders. Gender expression can be fluid and can vary from one day to the next or even within the same day. The 72-genders message is widespread – lists of these are easy to find on-line, but often do not agree with each other. However, others argue that the number is unlimited and that gender is a spectrum rather than a limited number of distinctly-defined groups. The idea of two genders is rejected as out of date and oppressive; terms like *cis-normative* or *binary normative* are used negatively to describe it.

There are now many countries and states that recognise gender changes, including a growing number where self-declaration is allowed. Self-declaration means that all a male has to do is say he is female, in order to access services for girls and women, or vice-versa for a female. This has led to serious consequences in women's sports: female changing rooms, bathrooms, and residential accommodation; women's prisons; rape crisis centres; and other female-only spaces. The issue of mis-gendering also arises. This means using the 'wrong' pronouns such as calling a girl 'she' if she identifies as a boy. This has seen people disciplined, or even dismissed, from jobs.

The very rare intersex condition is a different issue, caused by genetic abnormality or abnormal hormone exposure during pregnancy. The figure of 1.7% of the population being affected can be found on various websites and other sources, but this is a significant overestimate, caused by the inclusion of conditions where the person's gender is clear, such as late-onset adrenal hyperplasia. A more accurate figure is around 0.02% of the population. [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12476264/>]

### **Sexualisation of children**

Across the West and Latin America, there is a drive by liberal educators and sectors of the media to radically change the way our children see the world. They recognise that the battle for young minds is a key component of advancing their agenda - an agenda that is promoted as one of love, care and tolerance, but is in reality intolerant of anyone who disagrees. Sexual content in the media aimed at children, even pre-schoolers, is now widely available. Extremely inappropriate resources are being used in schools, even at nurseries where 'drag queen story hours' are promoted. Much of this material is illegal in some countries, but is being used anyway. Books like *Beyond Magenta* and the comic strip book *Genderqueer* have been routinely placed in school libraries. This is despite their pornographic sexual content, misogyny, extreme fear of femininity, and descriptions of paedophilia in an obvious breach of safeguarding policy and practice based on child protection law. It is difficult to imagine materials that are more inappropriate, but first-hand accounts from friends with children at schools in different countries indicate that their use is widespread.

The concerns have led to certain American states such as Florida banning such resources from schools, and to parliamentary-level debate in the UK. In that debate one MP described how liberal educators were presiding over a system in which often very young teenagers are being given '...graphic lessons on oral sex, how to choke your partner safely and [the existence of] 72 genders.' [<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11874067/GUY-ADAMS-asks-know-whats-childs-school-library.html>]

As a result of that debate, the Prime Minister promised a review of sexual education in schools. There is already updated schools' advice on transgender issues designed to better protect children and ensure parental involvement.

### **What can we do to educate and protect our children?**

As parents and others responsible for children it is vital that we teach truths to our children. We also need to be aware of what our children are seeing and hearing. We cannot assume that mainstream

and social media, schools, and peer pressure will have no damaging impact on them. The world that children are growing up in is radically different to when we were children; it is very different even to that of 10 years ago, the rise of transgenderism being the prime example.

### **So, what truths?**

Children are a blessing from God. Most people see children as a blessing, but there is a trend within the sexual revolution that sees children as a burden, because having our own children demands taking responsibility for them – a demand that limits what we can do.

In the Bible, there are accounts of children rejecting their parents' faith and even the parents themselves - painful reality is never hidden. However, children are consistently seen as a blessing from God, throughout the pages of Scripture.

Women and girls are made in God's image. We need to instil this in both boys and girls. It is a truth challenged by misogyny in heavily male-dominated cultures and in transgenderism. Equally, we should teach that boys and men are made in God's image. This view is challenged by the 'toxic masculinity' cult that views maleness as something to fear and hate.

Teach about women in the Bible. Proverbs 31 shows a strong woman who trades and negotiates, works with strong arms and manages the household, speaks with wisdom and is clothed in strength and dignity. This is a remarkable picture, given that in most societies at the time when it was written, women were often viewed as no more than possessions. Although there is more content about kings and male heroes, there are also plenty of female examples. Some of these functioned in good situations, but so many were heroines in very difficult circumstances. Some examples are the foreign general Naaman's un-named slave girl, Leah the unloved wife cheated into polygamy, Esther the winner of a beauty contest in an absolute monarch's harem, Jesus' group of followers with Mary Magdalene, and of course Mary the mother of Jesus. This Biblical view of women and motherhood is in sharp contrast to the negativity of male-dominated societies, or the parody of womanhood displayed in cross-dressing or men trying to identify as women.

We need to build a sense of God-given identity into our children. Many gender and sexuality problems are caused or exaggerated by insecurity. Whoever we are, we are people made in God's image. God sent His Son to die for us. He loved the world enough to do this – the entire world, not just 'nice' people, but every one of us. Let's help our children to align their thinking with God's view of them. God sees us as complete individuals, not just an identity based on sexual preference.

We need to have discussions about identity, gender and sexuality with our own children. This needs to happen either in response to media and peer influence, or, better still, before others influence them.

As Christians in a pluralistic society, we also accept that we cannot force or even expect others to believe and practice Christian principles. It is good to work this through with our children, and to see what that means, so that they can relate constructively to people who disagree on sexuality, gender identity, or any other issue. Respect and love, even when in disagreement with others, are essential skills that are currently being lost in a polarised 'echo-chamber' social media world.

It is an excellent idea for parents and other concerned individuals to serve on school governing boards, or attend public meetings to promote good moral values. Where illegal materials are being used, ones that break the law on child abuse images and text, this can be challenged. This may be unpopular with aggressive activists, as in some of the fiery school board meetings in the USA, but the protection of our children and their classmates is too important to ignore. If there is no alternative in

some progressive countries and states, the only choices may be to opt for a Christian school or for home schooling, in countries where it is permitted.

As children grow in their understanding and in exposure to the media and other pressures, the dangers and logical fallacies of transgenderism can be explained. For example:

- Our chromosomes state exactly who we are; XX for female and XY for male. Nothing changes that.
- Hormone use is a costly and lifelong process. A male body will always revert to its male look as soon as hormones are withdrawn; it often looks male anyway even with hormone use. The same applies to the female body.
- In children, the natural growth of the body is prevented in a trans-identifying child where puberty-blocking hormone intervention is used.
- Surgery is extremely costly and intrusive. It removes the genitals in males, and breasts in females for 'top' surgery and the uterus and ovaries in the 'bottom' version. In no other case would removal of healthy organs ever be considered ethical.
- The rates of regret after irreversible surgery are very high. There may some who profess to be extremely happy and to have 'found their true self', but they are a minority. There is evidence of widespread regret after other irreversible procedures, such as prolonged hormone use leading to infertility.
- Socially, men dominating women's sport is obviously unfair. The use of protected female spaces by men indentifying as women, such as changing rooms, prisons, and even rape-crisis centres, presents a very significant safeguarding and safety risk.
- Transgenderism plays to stereotypes – it assumes that a boy who prefers poetry to football, or a girl who prefers hammers and saws to playing with dolls, must be transgender. In recent years, stereotyping like this has become less common, but transgender ideology risks steering tomboy girls and more artistic boys towards gender 'transition'.
- There are very high rates of mental health issues. Sometimes these were there before a transgender identity, in other cases a previously person sinks into mental health problems. There are high rates of suicidal thinking and actual attempts to commit suicide

### **Pastoral care and truth**

One of the hardest things for many Christians to work out is the balance between giving pastoral care and maintaining truth. For some Christians, it is easy to emphasise care, so that everything focuses on acceptance regardless of sin. For others, it is equally easy to underline the importance of truth and of condemning sin, in a way that offers little hope. Both extremes are wrong. We face a lifetime of learning how to speak the truth in love [Ephesians 4:15] and of becoming more like Jesus, who was full of grace and truth [John 1:14].

A quotation from the pro-life pastor and writer Randy Alcorn is helpful to finish this article.

*Grace-only folk don't understand why Jesus said, "Fear him who has the power to throw you into hell" [Luke 12:5]. Truth-only folk don't understand why Jesus hung out with sinners, and why He hung on a cross for them. Attempts to "soften" the gospel by minimizing truth keep people from Jesus. Attempts to "toughen" the gospel by minimizing grace keep people from Jesus.*

<https://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Jan/19/grace-and-truth-paradox-finding-balance/>  
<https://store.epm.org/product/grace-and-truth-paradox>

Further references are listed on the next page.

## References

### Pro- LGBT+ activist resources

*Everyday Feminism* website – This site has a lot of articles that are based on woke identity politics. Most of them assume that their message is self-evident and true, but there are a few that explain their worldview to others. A useful resource to see how people within the movement think *Genderqueer* is available as a PDF on-line. This resource is referred to in the article as very inappropriate for use with children, yet has been used in schools. It is listed here for reference, for anyone concerned to see how and why this and similar resources should never be given to children.

### Pro Biblical and traditional values resources: books, websites and videos

*A war of loves*, by David Bennett

This is a personal account from someone who came out as gay in his mid-teens, became an activist, but who later became a Christian. He continues to experience same-sex attraction but remains single and celibate.

David Bennett, along with Anne Witton, who was an active lesbian, answer interview questions in this longer video: <https://www.solas-cpc.org/inclusive-exclusive/>

Andy Bannister of SOLAS speaks on identity in a short video: <https://www.solas-cpc.org/where-do-we-find-our-identity> SOLAS has a wide range of video and written resources on Christianity in contemporary society.

*Irreversible damage*, by Abigail Shrier

This book describes the issues and pressures faced by teenage girls that have led to the huge growth in the numbers identifying as transgender or non-binary.

*That hideous strength: a deeper look at how the West was lost*, by Melvin Tinker

This is a more general summary of the growth in power and influence of Woke ideology in the West.

The Christian Institute website: <https://www.christian.org.uk/> has videos and short articles on all areas of sexuality and gender.

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