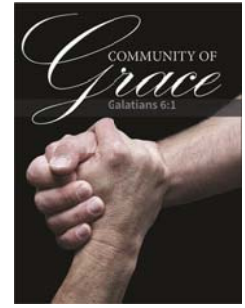


Grace Bible Church
2016 Biblical Counseling Conference
Track Two



Session #9

Counseling Transgender Issues

Introduction

- Out of the news
- The Christian response?
- For our discussion...

Common Definitions (non-biblical terms):

In the current discussion, these are some of the more common terms that are used and their popular meanings. These do not reflect biblical terms or even ideas necessarily. However, these terms should be understood since you are not speaking to a friend, counselee, or relative in a vacuum. These are some of the primary terms but certainly not all of them.¹

- **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
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term for the many ways in which people might experience and/or present and express (or live out) their gender identities differently from people whose sense of gender identity is congruent with their biological sex.
- **Biological Sex:** As male or female, typically this refers primarily to one's anatomy
- **Gender:** The psychological, social and cultural aspects of being male or female (as if it were a continuum and not binary)
- **Gender Identity:** How you experience yourself (or think of yourself) as male or female, including how masculine or feminine a person feels

¹ I primarily used Mark A. Yarnhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing World* (InterVarsity Press, 2015). He deals with many various terms in chapter one. I have reworded some for brevity and clarity.

- **Gender role:** Adoptions of cultural expectations for maleness or femaleness
- **Transsexual:** A person who believes he or she was born in the “wrong” body (of the other sex) and wishes to transition (or has transitioned) through hormonal treatment and sex-reassignment surgery.
- **Intersex:** A term to describe conditions (e.g., congenital adrenal hyperplasia) in which a person is born with sex characteristics or anatomy that does not allow clear identification as male or female.

Two Issues to Consider:

- Imagine the person who struggles with gender dysphoria or identifies as a transgendered person...
- Imagine the common reaction from the church or Christians in general...

Biblical Principles and Themes:

1. God made man in His image as male and female (Gen 1-2).

- Men and women are both equally created in the image of God.
- God created two genders. Adam was a male. Eve was a female.
- God created Eve as a suitable helper to Adam.
- God saw that this was very good.

2. Adam and Eve both fell; now all mankind are fallen and need redemption (Gen 3).

- Adam and Eve sinned which brought on the curse of sin.
- Jesus Christ is the only hope for mankind who suffer from sin (Rom 3:10-26).

- Now men and women both live influenced by the flesh and sin-cursed which creates significant difficulties (cf. Eph 2:1-3).
- All men and women look forward to the future day of redemption (Rom 8).

Implications for Counseling Conversation and Ministry:

1. We must minister with the story of God’s redemption in Christ in mind:

Creation Fall Redemption Glorification

2. We must remember what is happening and what has happened.

re: created person, inner man vs outer man, feeling-orientation

3. We must remember God’s goal.

Bringing glory to God not congruence or comfort or happiness

4. We must speak truth lovingly with all humility and gentleness.

5. We must parent understanding the real problem (Prov 22:15).

6. Steps Forward (Rom 13:11-14):

- Repentance
- Living a life of holiness / righteousness / godliness
- Making no provision for the flesh
- Putting on Christ