

Transgenderism

By Evan Lenow

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments related to Genesis 1:26 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share two attributes of God mentioned in the lesson and describe how we exhibit them in our lives.

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to Genesis 1:27 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What does the creation story tell us about gender?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to Deuteronomy 22:5 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How does the modern practice of gender-reassignment surgery compare to the prohibition against cross-dressing?

Scripture to Memorize

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:27

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will recognize that God created mankind with specific gender and that the desire to change gender is a result of sin.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

As you walk down the hallway, you pass someone who looks familiar. You turn around to do a double take and realize that the girl walking down the hallway used to be a guy. Last year he was Sam, but this year he goes by Samantha. Over the summer Sam had gender-reassignment surgery. What does the Bible say about transgenderism? Should Christians ever consider having gender-reassignment surgery?

Male and Female He Created Them

Read Genesis 1:26–27 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 26. Let Us make man in Our image. The fact that mankind is made in the image of God is crucial to understanding who we are and our place in the universe. No other part of creation bears the image of God. The image of God does not mean we look like God because He is spirit. However, it means we have the capacity for a relationship with Him. It also means we reflect some of His characteristics. Although such traits in humans are not perfect as they are in God, we have similar attributes. God's attributes include such things as goodness, justice, knowledge, love, rationality, mercy, truth and wisdom.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share two attributes of God mentioned in the lesson and describe how we exhibit them in our lives.

Verse 27. male and female He created them. As part of the creation story, we read that we are created with gender. Scripture is specific about the genders God created. **male.** The Hebrew term translated as “male” in verse 27 is specific. It is not a generic mention of mankind. Instead, it is used to speak of the male gender as opposed to the female gender. The Hebrew word is also used to describe males of all ages. **female.** In the same way, the Hebrew term for “female” speaks of gender. There is no confusion between these terms and the generic word for man or mankind.

Some sociologists propose that there are more than two genders. However, such claims contradict what we read in Scripture. God makes clear that He created two genders—male and female. We see a repetition of this binary description of gender in Genesis 5:2 where we read, “Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and named them Man when they were created.” Even after the fall of man in Genesis 3, the two genders remain the way God designed humans to exist.

We also must recognize that gender is connected to biology, just as God designed it. In the description of the first man and woman in Genesis 1–2, it becomes clear that they were designed with complementary biological features. They are both human and bear the image of God. However, their biological parts include differences that allow for procreation through sexual intercourse. We cannot separate gender and biology.

With the benefits of modern science, we can also recognize that such biological differences are tied to genetics. Your chromosomes determine your gender. Certain genetic conditions make

gender difficult to determine from a biological perspective, but the existence of such conditions do not undermine the biological nature of gender.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share an answer to the question: What does the creation story tell us about gender?

Discussion Question

How can Christians minister to those who struggle with transgender thoughts and desires?

Becoming Something You Are Not

The Bible does not speak directly about having gender-reassignment surgery or attempting to change one's gender. Only in the last few decades has it even been possible to have surgery to change gender. Of course, the surgery and hormones do not change one's genetic makeup. Such procedures simply change the look of a body and attempt to promote typical features of the other gender. The clearest example in Scripture of issues related to transgenderism is a prohibition against cross-dressing.

Read Deuteronomy 22:5 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 5. A woman shall not wear a man's garment. The first prohibition in this verse is directed to women who try to present themselves as men. As in most cultures, there apparently were distinctive styles of clothing for men and women. However, this verse is not simply talking about clothing styles. The prohibition is against trying to represent yourself as someone you are not. In this case, the woman was trying to be perceived as a man. We do not know her motivation or why she would try to represent herself as a man, but it is clearly prohibited.

Verse 5. nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak. Moses also directed the prohibition toward men. He instructed them not to represent themselves as women by wearing women's clothing.

In today's culture, we can apply these instructions to the practice of cross-dressing and transgenderism. In both cases the goal of the individual is to be recognized as the gender that does not correspond with his or her biological gender. In the world of ancient Israel, the only way to do this was by dressing in gender-specific clothing. Today, someone can accomplish the same thing through clothing or surgery. In either case, the end result is the same.

Verse 5. abomination. The term *abomination* is perhaps the strongest term of condemnation in the Old Testament. It is often used for sexual sin and idolatry. Thus, Scripture clearly considers the sin of presenting oneself as a different gender to be a serious breach of God's law.

The struggle of not identifying with one's biological gender or the desire to change genders is the result of sin. Just like all other sins, God provided the perfect sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sin and help us fight the temptations of sin during our lives.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to the question: How does the modern practice of gender-reassignment surgery compare to the prohibition against cross-dressing?

Discussion Question

Why do some people want to change their gender?

On Your Own

In the space below, write ways you can pray for people who struggle with transgenderism.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Scripture is clear that we are created with one of two distinct genders—male or female. Cultural differences related to dress and behavior have existed through the centuries, but these two genders have remained constant across all cultures and all generations. The question for Christians is how to address the growing movement of transgenderism.

First, we must remember that God made humans male and female (Genesis 1:27). When the Bible describes gender, it is always within the context of biological and genetic distinctions. There is no difference between the biological composition of the body and how a person feels.

Second, we must remember that we are fallen. When Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3), it affected all of us. The struggle of not identifying with one's biological gender or the desire to change genders is the result of sin. Just like all other sins, God provided the perfect sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sin and help us fight the temptations of sin during our lives.

Third, we must remember that gender identity is not the sum total of who we are. Yes, God made us to express gender. However, we are not simply male and female. We are made in the image of God, and we find our ultimate identity in Him. Therefore, we should not reduce our identity to an expression of gender; we are much more than that.

As Christians, we need to minister to those who struggle with gender identity and transgenderism. However, ministering to someone does not mean approving of sin. We must point them to Jesus and disciple them to exhibit the gender God created them to be.

Follow up Question

What biblical principles can we apply to the question of transgenderism?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.