

Equipping Hour: Feb 1

Feb 1: Sexuality and Gender (pt 2)

Just a quick reminder that we have added a comment and question feature for this class on the church app.

Discipleship is not just learning new behaviors; it's learning to see the world differently, to challenge our worldview assumptions according to the biblical standard we profess but often miss with our thoughts, words, actions, attitudes, desires, and motivations.

Discipleship is about growing in Christlikeness, and this begins in our hearts, in the reality we embrace by faith, then it grows in our beliefs and convictions, shapes our values, and is ultimately displayed in our fruit, our behavior, in the choices we make. If we belong to Jesus Christ, then we must make every effort to contend for this faith through regularly examining why we do what we do, why we value what we value, why we believe what we believe, in order to see whether or not we are living in a manner consistent with God's blueprints for experiencing true freedom, peace, joy, and fulfillment. Jesus said in:

John 10:10

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Christlikeness isn't a list of dos and don'ts. It's about being captivated by God's sheer awesomeness and then embracing and experiencing all that He offers us in Christ Jesus. What does God offer? Abundant freedom, abundant peace, abundant joy, and abundant fulfillment. Abundantly life. This offer comes with His divine blueprints, and there are no shortcuts, cheat codes, or substitutions. You cannot climb in by another way, as Jesus states a few verses earlier in John 10.

Everyone has a worldview. It's the core assumptions, the formative messages we adopt in order to make sense of our surroundings, our reality, and our hearts are filled with thousands of answers to questions these messages leave behind. A secular worldview answers those questions without reference to God or divine design, and instead places authority in the individual self, personal experience, psychological well-being, and human wisdom. When it comes to the discussion on sexuality and gender, last week our goal was to answer the question:

"How did we get here?"

Today we are going to answer the question:

"What does God say about sexuality and gender?"

It's impossible to follow God's blueprints for life if we aren't regularly using those blueprints to answer those worldview questions, in order to examine our hearts. And next week we'll poke at our last question:

“Where do we go from here?”

Let’s remind ourselves of an important principle. People do not begin with sexual ethics; they begin with assumptions about reality. Sexual ethics, like all ethics, are values, what we have determined to be right or wrong. But values don’t exist in a vacuum. They come from somewhere; they come from beliefs. Beliefs, including what we believe about sexuality and gender, flow downstream from deeper worldview convictions about God, human nature, freedom, authority, identity, and meaning. So when we see dramatic changes in sexual norms, they are not random. They reflect a deeper shift in how people understand what it means to be human.

In the absence of a biblical worldview, we will always, always, always adopt a secular worldview because we exist in the middle of a sin-soaked sponge. None of us are formed in a morally neutral vacuum. We cannot afford to take for granted that our minds are still in need of renewing because the messages from the world, the lies from Satan, are incredibly pervasive, subtle, and compelling. Why are they compelling? Because they appeal to our rebellious natures. Satan’s lies, perpetuated through godless philosophies and ideologies, appeal to our rebellious human nature. They appeal to the war within us like Paul states in Romans 7.

Last week we saw that modern views on sexuality and gender have deep social and philosophical roots, which means they have become deep assumptions, worldview assumptions. We summarized the dominant secular worldview of sexuality and gender with several worldview statements. Mind you, these are assumptions at the deepest level, meaning they are taken for granted to be real and generally go unchallenged and unexamined. What are these assumptions?

- The self is sovereign
- Desire reveals identity
- The body has no inherent meaning
- Authenticity is the highest moral good
- Freedom means the absence of constraint
- Psychological well-being defines human flourishing

When we ask what does God say about sexuality and gender, we are essentially asking: What reality does Scripture reveal about the body, identity, sexuality, and gender? This week is not primarily about “issues” or responding to “issues.” That’s important and we will do that next week. This week is about understanding and embracing biblical creation, purpose, and redemption. It’s about taking a giant step back from the behaviors of the world and drilling down to fundamental basics. So let’s ask some basic questions.

Who Gets to Define Reality?

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As we have already explored, from a secular reality:

- Truth is discovered internally
- Meaning is constructed by the individual
- Authority rests in personal experience

In other words, I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul. I decided because I am smart, capable, and in control. Autonomy. Self-expression. Self-empowerment. So what reality does Scripture reveal?

Biblical Reality

- Truth is revealed by God
- Meaning is received, not invented
- Authority rests in the Creator

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Creator God has complete sovereignty over determining reality because He created reality and alone has supreme authority. This is as basic as it gets and most of us will probably cognitively agree, but consider for a moment how often we functionally live as though His authoritative right to rule and determine can be ignored or dismissed. How often do we live and make choices as though His standards are optional? God says this, but I want to do this. It is our very nature to rebel, to push back, to test the limits, to exercise autonomy, to look at the forbidden fruit and consider whether or not God is withholding from us. We demand control, or at the very least answers.

Isaiah 55:8-11

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Meaning comes from God because God creates meaning. He speaks meaning into existence. The clock doesn't decide it's a clock any more than it decides it's a toaster, no matter how strongly it feels like a toaster. Meaning comes from the Creator, and no amount of rebellious rejection changes that reality.

Deuteronomy 8:3

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³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

You live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. He speaks; it happens. He declares your life and existence. The Bible does not begin with human desire—it begins with divine design from divine authority, from the only One who has the power and the right to determine reality. What, then, should be our response to this reality? Awe and worship.

Psalm 139:1-6

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

And in His infinite grace and mercy, He reveals this reality to us through His Word.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Walking blindly through chaos is a choice we make. Christian sexual ethics, meaning values, only make sense when we embrace, by faith, the biblical source: the God who commands reality. Adopting a biblical view of sexuality, like all of reality, begins with recognizing who God is, recognizing His right to rule, and humbly submitting rebellious hearts accordingly.

So what about the body. Does the human body have meaning?

Secular Belief

- The body is morally neutral
- Biology has no intrinsic purpose
- The body is raw material to be shaped by the inner self

Oddly enough, these modern views of the body actually stem from bad theology. To be human means to have two dynamic natures: a physical one and a spiritual one. Both are authentic, and they are connected. If we harm the physical, we can also harm the spiritual. For instance, a traumatic brain injury or habitual drug use can have lasting side effects, like changing a person's personality, memories, and way of being. Physical damage in the brain can have immaterial influence. But a damaged spirit can have physical influence as well.

In Psalm 32, and others, actually, David declared that when he withheld his sin, his bones wasted away, he lost physical strength. A guilty conscience, which is immaterial, can manifest as physical symptoms, such as gut pain, rapid heart rate, and restlessness. A

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crushed spirit, such as grief and sorrow, can result in a lack of energy, motivation, and weakness. David declares his grief and sorrow in such a way in Psalm 22 as his enemies surround him:

Psalm 22:14-15

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

We are embodied spirits, which means the body and the spirit matter. Jesus is definitive proof of this.

As God incarnate, meaning in the flesh, He died in the flesh and was resurrected in the flesh. Not just spirit. Flesh. We are assured of a bodily resurrection, not an eternal disembodied spirit. But shortly after Jesus physically returned to the throne room of heaven, false teachings began to rise, including the belief that the body is evil, the source of evil, and only spiritual enlightenment matters. Spirit good, material bad. But others said not just bad, also unimportant and irrelevant because salvation is only a spiritual change, hence misguided Christians justified visiting pagan temple prostitutes in Corinth. So what does Scripture say?

Biblical View

- The body is intentionally created
- The body has meaning
- The body reveals God's design

Back to the reality spoken into existence by Creator God in Genesis.

Genesis 1:27, 31

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

The body is good. God says so. A good God creates good things. You know what is included in that? Sex. Sexed embodiment is intentional. Gender is not incidental to being human. It's the Creator's design.

Psalm 139:13

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

Job acknowledges God's sovereignty over our creation in Job 10:

Job 10:8-13

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Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether.

⁹ Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust? ¹⁰ Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? ¹¹ You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. ¹² You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. ¹³ Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose.

The human body has meaning. It has purpose. And we don't get to decide what it is. We receive it and choose accordingly. We can choose the world, or we can choose holiness.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Romans 8:22-23

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Christian hope is not escape from the body—but renewal of it. The biblical worldview treats the body not as an obstacle to identity, but as a gift that participates in identity for God's purposes.

So what about gender? How does the secular world view gender?

Secular View

- Gender is self-defined
- Gender may be fluid or detached from biology
- Inner sense of self overrides the body

According to the world, there is no objective truth—only narratives. Over time our society has changed the meaning of words. As a result, biological categories are seen as social constructs that are subjective and constantly shifting rather than objective timeless reality, which means binary distinctions, like right and wrong and male and female, are viewed as tools of oppression. A direct result is that self-identification has become the highest authority. Be whatever you want. Do whatever you want. In the absence of external objective authority, chaos reigns supreme. Ironically, even secular social scientists have come to this same conclusion regarding the current state of our society. So what does God say about gender?

Scripture reveals that gender is given, not asserted.

Biblical Reality:

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- Gender is given by God. Not discovered. Not explored. Given.
- Gender is embodied. It's part of what it means to be human, and your body, not feelings, reveals gender.
- Male and female together reflect God's image.

Again, back to the created order from Genesis.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...

There was zero ambiguity in creation. Zero chaos. Male and female. Not male or female. We'll get to why in a second. But consider that when the Pharisees tested Jesus about divorce, He confronted them with this created reality by answering:

Matthew 19:4-6

"Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh."

Two distinct but compatible parts making one flesh. This only happens when God's blueprint is followed. Jesus does not appeal to cultural chaos but to creation order. He doesn't appeal to desires and He doesn't appeal to feelings; He asserts authoritative reality. When it comes to gender, scripture affirms equality of eternal security and inheritance. It also affirms a distinction, especially in marriage, mirroring the unity of the Trinity. Scripture affirms gender as complementary, not interchangeable.

So what about sexuality? What about sexual pleasure?

Secular Values

- Sexual desire reveals identity, which means expressing yourself sexually is self-affirming of your inner identity
- Sexual fulfillment defines flourishing, meaning do whatever feels good to you because denying yourself of sexual pleasure is psychologically harmful
- Consensual desire is morally self-justifying, meaning it's okay since we both agree it's okay. Two wrongs don't make a right, but three lefts do.

But what does God say?

Biblical Truth:

- Sexuality is purposeful, and it's purpose comes before pleasure
- Desire and pleasure are real but not ultimate. Why? Because sexual pleasure is an earthly gift designed by God to be enjoyed and exercised within the bonds of marriage. It is not an eternal gift. Jesus says so in Matthew 22:30 when the

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Sadducees tried to trick him with a question. Desire and pleasure are real gifts to be exercised within God's covenantal blueprints, but they are not eternal nor ultimate.

- Sex is covenantal, not merely expressive

Back to Genesis 1:

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..."

The unequivocal starting point for sex is, drum roll please, God's glory. Biblical sexuality begins with God's will that humanity be fruitful and multiple, and the way this happens is through the binding union of husband and wife.

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Sexual pleasure in Scripture is:

- Unitive (one flesh)
- Exclusive, meaning fidelity
- Covenant-bound, meaning through marriage

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure.

Pleasure is affirmed in Scripture, like make you blush affirmed. I embrace the awkward, but my wife said no, so we won't look at examples today in Scripture, but trust me, there are numerous. Sexual pleasure is an amazing gift from God, but like all gifts, it must be expressed within God's blueprints, otherwise we are worshiping the gift rather than the gift-giver. We can so quickly take the good things from God and turn them sinful when our desires fall outside His design. Sexual pleasure is never detached from purpose, and that purpose begins with God's glory. Exercising God's gifts the way He has designed them brings Him glory, and when it comes to sexual pleasure, it's never detached from the exclusive covenantal bonds of marriage.

Our deceived hearts cry out, "But it feels right!" Echoing the message of the world, that desire is trustworthy and authentic, but Scripture very clearly reveals that desire is real but fallen. Desire must be discerned through the lens of God's design because, as we know, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick.

James 1:15

Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

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Scripture never denies desire—but it refuses to deify it.

Galatians 5:24

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Why? Because you have a new identity. You have been redeemed from what the world says you are. When it comes to sexuality and identity:

Secular Lie

- Sexuality is central to identity
- Suppressing sexual expression is harmful
- Identity must be expressed to be authentic

But Scripture reveals that:

Biblical Reality

- Identity is rooted in creation and redemption
- Sexuality is part of life, not the core of self
- True selfhood is found in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

That means our most fundamental identity is not:

- Sexual
- Psychological
- Experiential

Our identity is:

- Created
- Fallen
- Redeemed
- Called

Our new identity means the old one is dead and gone. This is where we find freedom. Freedom means alignment with God's design because holiness leads to flourishing as we choose to live with God's protective boundaries.

Galatians 5:13-14

You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

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True freedom is not doing whatever we want—but embracing who we were created to be.
Let me close with a couple of reminders:

The Bible does not tell a story of repression—it tells a story of redemption.
It does not deny brokenness—but it refuses to call brokenness identity.

Next week, we will turn the lens inward and ask:
Where have I adopted secular assumptions without even noticing?
What needs to be unlearned?
How am I to live and respond to a world embracing chaos?