

HUMAN SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND TRANSGENDERISM

POSITION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE

OVERVIEW

From the very first General Assembly in 1906, the Church of God has demonstrated a belief in the Bible as God's Word with timeless truths applicable for us today. The Bible is God's revelation to His people in all areas of life. It applies to people of all cultures and centuries.

The Bible speaks very specifically to human sexuality. It is our primary guide. In addition, the standards of the Church of God are found in its established doctrines, articles of the Declaration of Faith, listing of Doctrinal Commitments in the *Church of God Book of Discipline, Church Order and Governance*, Practical Commitments, and resolutions of the International General Assembly.

CREATED ORDER

God created humankind in His image, meaning we are rational, volitional, and emotional beings. Another distinctive in creation is His creating male and female (Genesis 1:27). God's design isn't accidental: males and females are specific. They complement each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually, thus enabling them to fulfill the commission to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). On this basis, we believe a person's gender is not a cultural or mental construct which can be removed from bodily or biological considerations.

Today, for many, gender identity is associated with these societal constructs and not biological or scientific facts. In their deluded thinking, XX or XY chromosomes are irrelevant to their gender or their gender identity as to how society identifies it.

On the basis of Scripture, we believe gender is determined by one's body, evident at birth. A person's biological sex is binary—male or female as God created them.

While individual freedom is part of the image of God, and thus a good thing to be celebrated, it is not a license to reject God's created order. True freedom must be utilized in keeping with the orders of creation being male and female. Any effort to deny male and female as part of the truths of our biology is not in keeping with the Biblical witness.

SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

Blessed by God, the first man and woman were to unite for the central purpose of sexual intercourse in order to procreate and fulfill God's desire for the entire human race. Their physical union would generate offspring and form a covenant people through whom God would bless the whole world (Genesis 12:1-3).

Marriage is more than a contractual agreement evidenced by a state-issued license. Scripture presents marriage as a covenant of love between one man and one woman blessed by God (Malachi 2:14). It does not include same-sex unions, even when considered legal, they are not the union described by God.

God's design of a man and a woman in a marriage provides for more than procreation. It enables there to be cooperation, companionship, and pleasure. Not only is the image of God reflected in male and female, but their coming together in the marriage relationship is used in God's Word as the most intimate and loving analogy of God's relationship with His people. The love and commitment of a husband and wife is the example Paul portrays when speaking of the love of Christ for the church (Ephesians 5:25-33).

TRANSGENDERISM

As previously noted, humankind is created in the image and likeness of God, male and female. Our God-given sexuality is a sacred gift that we offer back to Him in our devotion and love for our Creator.

Today, the Church of God and our world are witnessing a cultural tipping point known as the transgender revolution. This is a radical, cultural shift that has led to mass delusion. For decades there has been a steady erosion of cultural mores and norms. The revolution did not occur in a vacuum but was influenced by various social changes; most easily to pinpoint, however, is the incessant push by the LGBTQIA+ agenda to deconstruct how people view sexuality and gender.

The LGBTQIA+ agenda has stepped forward with a convoluted view of identity and experience, arguing that Biblical, biological sex is ambiguous. Nothing could be farther from Biblical truth and reality than this unrealistic viewpoint, which has become the mantra of the LGBTQIA+ movement.

Transgender has become an umbrella term reinforcing that biological sex is malleable and subject to alteration so that a person may choose from a variety of gender expressions such as nonbinary, non-gender, third gender, gender fluid, androgynous, gender conforming, etc. This cultural shift in viewing gender identity as unrelated to biological sex has led to a gender ideology that now portrays transgender identities and transition in a heroic way.

Transgender ideology pushes for even children as young as six to have the right to make a biological choice. Besides being against Biblical truth, these proponents totally ignore the harmful effects which are in effect bodily mutilation. Puberty blockers may contribute to a

decreasing of bone density, limit development of a normal sex drive, stop normal growth in height, and possibly lead to infertility.

The participation of transgender athletes in sports has brought harm to biological women. They are forced to share lockers with biological men and to compete against them. Under the guise of human rights, transgender ideology is increasingly removing the rights of biological women in their own sports and bathroom/shower facilities.

The transgender revolution is a destructive, deceptive, and delusional socially constructed view of human sexuality. As more people allow themselves to become entangled in this web of deception, the church as a haven of redemption must remain committed to Biblical truth and sound doctrine (see Romans 1:12-32).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Sex is a gift from God, and like any other gift can be abused or misused. The apostle Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to see how their sexual behavior impacts their union with Christ and the church community (1 Corinthians 6:20). As followers of Christ, we are called to be accountable for our sexual choices and behaviors. This includes avoiding some activities and behaviors which are prohibited by Scripture even though promoted by social/culture norms.

Scripture includes prohibitions such as the following: sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage; extramarital sex; same-sex relations; incest and lewdness; violent sexual behavior along with prostitution and pornography. (See the following scripture references: 1 Corinthians 6:13, 9-11; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5-6; Romans 1:26-27; and Galatians 3:19-21. All of these restrictions/guidelines for sexual behavior fulfill God's purposes and bring human benefits.

OVERVIEW

We believe:

1. God created humans in His image with two sexes, male and female, and established biological complementarianism (Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 21-24).
2. God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman, and it is only in that relationship God has approved for sexual love to occur (1 Corinthians 7:2-5).
3. God calls us to love all persons and resist ideologies that are unbiblical and lead to the spiritual and physical destruction of a person (Luke 10:27; Colossians 2:8).
4. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit which makes believers responsible to their faith community for their sexual behavior (1 Corinthians 6:13-20).

5. The revisionist gay and transgender theological views are contrary to the Bible and our foundational Christian doctrine (Romans 1:21-32).
6. We are called by Jesus to be a “light” in the world, proclaiming the truth and beauty of His design (Matthew 5:14-16).
7. We are called to share redemption through Christ which delivers individuals from sexual brokenness, pain of their bondage, and deception, as well as bringing spiritual, mental, and emotional freedom (John 8:34-36; 2 Corinthians 3:16, 17).