

first
stone

newsletter

"Let him who is without sin cast the First Stone"
And Jesus also said, "Go and sin no more." – John 8

MINISTRIES

First Stone Ministries' Position on Gender Transition for Minors

At First Stone Ministries, we stand firm in our commitment to upholding biblical truths regarding gender and identity. Our belief is rooted in the conviction that God created each person in His image, with a specific and purposeful design for their gender (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7, 18-25). This includes the understanding that biological sex is an essential aspect of identity that aligns with God's intentional creation.

As such, we do not support gender transitions for minors. We believe that minors, due to their stage of physical and emotional development, may not have the full capacity to make irreversible decisions about their bodies and identities. Gender transition, which often involves medical interventions such as hormone treatments or surgeries, can have lasting, unintended consequences, and we believe it is important to approach these matters with wisdom, care, and an understanding of God's design (Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 45:9-11).

Our ministry is committed to offering support and resources for families and individuals who are struggling with issues related to gender identity, and we walk alongside individuals with compassion and truth. We believe in the power of God's love to heal, restore, and guide people toward a healthy, fulfilling identity grounded in His truth.

At First Stone Ministries, we encourage parents, educators, and all who are entrusted with the care of children and young people to approach these sensitive issues with deep consideration, seeking God's guidance and the well-being of the minor above all. We continue to advocate for policies and practices that prioritize the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health of minors while honoring God's original design.

On January 28, 2025, the President signed an Executive Order stating, in part: *"It is the policy of the United States that it will not fund, sponsor, promote, assist, or support the so-called 'transition' of a child from one sex to another, and it will rigorously enforce all laws that prohibit or limit these destructive and life-altering procedures."*

We appreciate this policy's concern for protecting developing minds and bodies. We also recognize that the administration affirms LGBTQ identities in ways that differ from the values of First Stone Ministries.

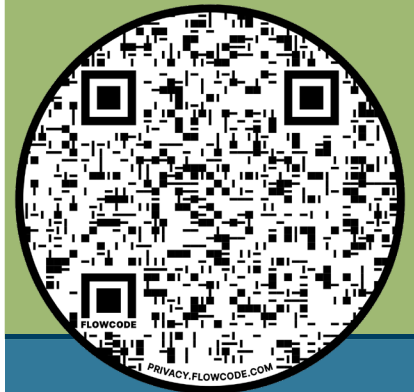
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INSIDE

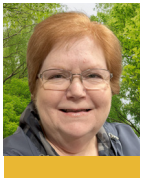
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Healing Wounds



Bronwyn Welch,
Women's Minister

Recently, I was asked a very thought-provoking question: **Do I trust Jesus to heal me?** I think I do, but I like to take questions to God and see what He reveals. God quickly reminded me of His truth in His Word:

Isaiah 61:1b,3b (NLT):

"He has sent me (Jesus) to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that the captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair."

Jesus relates to our woundedness because of His own experience with being wounded. Isaiah 53:3,4b,5b (NLT) reminds us:

"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed."

We are assured of this truth in Isaiah in Hebrews 4:14-16 (NLT):

"So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy [longsuffering, compassion, kindness], and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."

Based on the Word of God and 55 years of life experience walking with Him, I can say: yes, I trust Jesus to heal me. But what does that look like?

Once I decide to trust Him, I must also choose to invite Jesus into my wounded places and acknowledge my need for Him. This isn't a one-time event, it is a daily journey of conversation with the Father.

I recall facing my own sexual abuse, 55 years after the fact. One evening, the Father spoke gently to my heart, reminding me that I had never told Him about the abuse. He wanted me to come to Him and share my experience. It was a precious time of experiencing God's care, concern, and deep love.

I must also let go of coping mechanisms, such as—but not limited to—pornography, overeating, emotional dependency, masturbation, alcohol, drugs, shopping, and cutting. It is so easy to turn to these mechanisms rather

than to Jesus. I catch myself when I do, as the Holy Spirit alerts me that I am resorting to these habits, and I need to turn around (repent) and come to the Father. The Holy Spirit is our helper. We are not left alone on this journey.

Remember, if you find yourself returning to coping mechanisms, you are trusting in your control rather than in God's. Don't hide from God. Go to Him, confess what you are doing or tempted to do, and ask for His help in turning back around to Him. Again, remember: He delights in you and is thrilled to come to your aid.

Because of the wounding, I may believe lies about myself. I must replace those lies with the Father's truth. In other words, take my thoughts captive. Once again, the Holy Spirit is our helper. Time spent in the Word and in conversation with the Father also brings the needed truth for healing.

It is vital that I sit and learn who God really is; otherwise, I will drown under layers of wrong thinking about God and even about myself, and



I may avoid spending time in His Word or in conversation with Him. This stalls—and can even stop—healing.

Healing is hard and messy work. Ed Welch in his booklet *Eating Disorders* encourages us to "start by admitting how reluctant you are... Now listen to what you are saying..." (p. 14).

"I need something."

"I must be in control."

"I am hurt. I want to feel nothing."

"I am angry. I will show them."

"I am disgusting. I will be who I am and do something disgusting."

"I am empty, alone. I want to feel full."

"If only I could be nothing."

The truth is: all you have to do is turn to Him and speak honestly, and He will meet you.

Praise be to our Father God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who are always available, approachable, and never slumber!

The Dangers of Affirming What is Clearly Wrong



**Jim
Farrington,**
Men's
Minister

In 1 Timothy 4, I was recently struck by the phrase **"seared conscience."** Paul warns that in the latter times, *"some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."* He emphasizes that *"The Spirit expressly says"*—this is a divine warning. He then describes those *"having their conscience seared with a hot iron."*

A seared conscience comes from repeatedly ignoring the Holy Spirit's conviction until a person no longer responds to His prompting. This deadens the ability to discern right from wrong.

I considered families drawn into agreement with a prodigal who demands full affirmation of their LGBT identity. If the prodigal's conscience is seared, could their family's conscience also become seared? Before this condition comes *"deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."* If something contradicts God's Word—something Jesus died to save us from—wouldn't embracing it sear the conscience?

I've seen this happen. A mother, once deeply convicted about her son's homosexual sin, chose him over biblical truth. At first, she wrestled with it, but over time, her resistance faded until she fully affirmed everything LGBT-related.

This progression is real. It's rarely discussed, but we must talk about it—because deception leads to a seared conscience, and that has eternal consequences.

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FRIDAYS

July 11th
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With enough interest, we may stream these.



The Great Pronoun Debate: Should I Use Someone's Preferred Pronouns?

by Laura Smalts

One of the most common questions I am asked is, "Should I use the name and pronouns that someone is asking me to?" People often start their questions with, "I know what the Bible says, but..." or "I feel like I'm lying, but..."

First, ask yourself whether you think God cares if someone identifies as male or female. Why or why not? Genesis 1:27 tells us that "God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." There are probably endless reasons God created us this way, most of which we will not learn this side of Heaven. But there are some purposes we know of:

- God wanted us to be fruitful and multiply.
- God wanted the man and the woman to be a gift to one another.
- He gave males and females different characteristics to be a good team together.
- He made men to bear His image in some ways and women to bear His image in other ways.
- He created our entire bodies as either male or female, not just our genitalia.

Be Fruitful and Multiply

God's first command to human beings was to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). We know from biblical studies that the first time God mentions something is significant. His whole point in creating human beings is for relationships. He wanted us to know Him, primarily. But He also gave us the capacity to produce other humans, build relationships with other humans, and teach them to know Him. Our desire and ability to be in relationship with others reflects God's relational nature within the Godhead as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but also His desire to be in relationship with human beings.

The human body is a witness to God's design as male or female. Only a male-female pair can create life.

If evolution were true, why would it be a biological advantage to need a male and a female to procreate? Evolution says that everything is evolving to higher life forms that are more efficient and more advanced. But some simple amoebas and bacteria reproduce asexually, without a sexual partner. It is mostly the basic life forms that reproduce asexually. So, it is not due to efficiency, but intentional, purposeful design, that God created us to produce with an opposite-sex partner.

The Entire Human Body is Created Either Male or Female

God also created the male and female to be a gift to one another. There are over 6,500 biological differences between men and women. Nearly every single cell of the body contains sex chromosomes. As a result, every part of the body has a sex-specific design in some capacity. Although there are many similarities, there are differences in the design that greatly impact function. There are differences in hearing, in the ways the brain communicates and processes, in the muscles, bones, lungs, the heart, and so much more. And all of those differences point to the roles that God gave us.

Why would God go to such great lengths to design the entire body as sex-specific if He did not care if we identified as male or female? If it did not matter to God how we identify, I would say that He would have created us asexually. If the entire body has a sex-specific design, it is evident that it is integral and foundational to our identity. And if it is that important whether we are created male or female, then it is a great sin against God and against that person to affirm them as the opposite sex God created.

God's Glory Revealed in Male and Female

God is also glorified in His design of male and female. Have you ever looked at someone and been unable to determine if they were male or female? This is a growing trend in our society where people are attempting to erase gender by becoming "non-binary" or "gender



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First Stone Ministries will be hosting an in-person watch party of this conference so we can fellowship around the keynotes, testimonies, breakout sessions, and lunch breaks.*

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Washed

* Cost covers group registration. Lunch is on your own.

non-conforming". What happens to your brain if you can't categorize that person as male or female? Many of the proponents of gender non-conformity would tell you that male or female is a confining, societal construct based on stereotypes. They see gender non-conformity as "freeing" people to be their true, individual, unique selves.

However, many studies have determined that the brain automatically tries to determine gender. This is a hard-wired function that fires neurons in the brain to respond based on sex. This is not only found in humans but in many other species. Mice respond differently by trying to mate with females and attack other males, babies respond more positively to the face of a person who is the same sex as their primary caregiver, and gender is one of the first things someone recognizes about another person. So, God designed every part of our body as male or female, designed our body to reproduce human life, and wired our brains to quickly and easily recognize others as male or female.

The Lord began to teach me that not only has He created male and female bodies differently for physical purposes, but that those purposes point to a much greater reality. The entire body of a woman is designed to reflect her relational, nurturing, and comforting nature. This ultimately is a picture to the world of God's relational, nurturing, comforting nature. Man's entire body is designed to reflect his ability to spring into action and problem solve, to protect, to lead, and so much more. This is a picture of God's power, of His leadership, of His protection, and His provision. Both are important, both reflect God's glory. But they do so differently.

Practical Application:

1. I am not going to intentionally embarrass someone. If I notice someone in public may be trans, I do not

"out" them. Sometimes I initially thought someone was trans and was wrong.

2. Most of the time you don't need to use someone's pronouns when talking to them.
3. Use the name they give you unless you have established a relationship. Sometimes I will have a conversation first, listen to their story, share the Gospel, and then ask their name. If they tell you their name, you don't have to call them that. Simply respond, "Nice to meet you!"
4. If pressed on it and they demand that you use their preferred name and pronouns, take Jesus's example, and ask questions when confronted. Engage them rather than give a quick rebuttal.

Endnotes:

1. Goldman, Bruce. "Animal Magnetism: Scientists find neurons that hard-wire brains to recognize the sex of strangers". 2019 June 12. <https://stanmed.stanford.edu/brains-hard-wired-recognize-opposite-sex/>
2. Pickron, Charisse B. and Cheries, Erik W. "Infants' Individuation of Faces by Gender". Brain Sciences. 2019 Jul 11. doi: 10.3390/brainsci9070163. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6680589/>
3. Puiu, Tibi. "When interacting with other people, we first notice race and gender". 2015 March 8. ZME Science. <https://www.zmescience.com/science/when-interacting-with-other-people-we-first-notice-race-and-gender>

Laura Beth Smalts, co-founder of Eden's Redemption with her husband Perry, is the author of Transgender to Transformed, her story of living nine years as a trans man before embracing the woman God created her to be. A former First Stone team member (2019-2023), she boldly proclaims the beauty of God's design in gender.

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Staff

For more information about each staff member, including links to any blogs, please visit firststone.org/staff.



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INFORMATION & APPLICATION

FIRSTSTONE.ORG/LIVING-FREE

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FIRST MONDAY

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Be
STEADFAST
PARENTS GROUP
1 COR 15:58

In Person
THIRD FRIDAY

Administrator's Corner



Joseph Thiessen,
Office
Admin

New Website Coming Soon

In addition to choosing graphics for our newsletter and website, I've been working with our staff on a revised website. It'll have a fresh look, and we're aiming to organize our articles more thoughtfully. Our hope is that it becomes a place where you can confidently find the content you seek.

Your Words Matter

We know how encouraging it is to read others' testimonies and stories of impact — and we'd love to hear yours. We've added a **Reviews** page at firststone.org/reviews where you can share how this ministry has been meaningful to you. Not only is your feedback a huge encouragement to our team, but it also helps others learn about the hope and help available here.



REVIEWS

Online Security Reminder

A recent report found that between September and November 2023, 41% of successful logins on Cloudflare-protected sites involved compromised passwords. That's a strong reminder to use a password manager. A good manager will: 1. Alert you to reused or weak passwords, 2. Warn you if any of your passwords have been compromised, and 3. Help you create strong, unique passwords for each account.

Ideally, you only need to remember one secure master password. I recommend choosing a reputable, paid password manager with strong customer support. Also, avoid using text messages for two-factor authentication. Use your password manager or, better yet, a separate authentication app.

Source: Steve Gibson, *Security Now! Episode #1019: "Why Your Passwords Shouldn't Change"*, [grc.com](https://www.grc.com).



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