

**The Transgender Movement: Part 2**  
**The Christian Faith and Contemporary Challenges**  
**May 16, 2021**

*“A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
 he will faithfully bring forth justice.” – Isaiah 42:3*

*“Jesus will not let fragile people crumble or collapse under the weight of their struggles. Jesus wants to take those who feel they are close to flickering out and help return them to brightness and warmth. Jesus is tender and gentle toward those who think they cannot go any farther.”*

– Andrew T. Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate*

## **I. Introduction**

- A. Two Aims as We Engage the Transgender Movement
- B. The Deep Roots of the Transgender Movement (philosophical, psychological, cultural, and legal)

## **II. A Biblical Anthropology**

### **A. Principle #1 – Man, as the Image of God, consists of a body-soul unity**

#### **1. The body is included in the image of God**

##### **a) Key Texts**

- i. **Gen 1:26–27** – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
- ii. **Gen 2:16–17** – “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**”
- iii. **Gen 3:19** – “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for **you are dust, and to dust you shall return.**”
- iv. **John 11:43** – “**Lazarus, come out.**”
- v. **1 Cor 15:49** – “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”

##### **b) John Calvin and the Westminster Assembly**

- i. Calvin: “And although the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers, yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow.” (*Institutes*, 1.15.3)
- ii. WSC Q. 37: *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.*

##### **c) Herman Bavinck**

- i. “The body is not a prison, but a marvelous piece of art from the hand of God



### 3. Key Points

- a) Adam and Eve's biological sex is integral to their identity and calling as God's image, as that calling reflects God's grand designs for the history of his creation.
- b) The biological differences between men and women provide a necessary condition for how we are to live out our calling as the image of God—namely, as men and women, under the light of his revealed Word (see Gen 1:28!).
- c) Key Texts
  - i. **Gen 1:28** – *“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*
  - ii. **1 Pet 3:3–4** – *“Let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.”*
  - iii. **1 Pet 3:7** – *“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way [lit. ‘according to knowledge’] showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, that their prayers may not be hindered.”*
  - iv. **1 Cor 16:13–14** – *“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. <sup>14</sup> Let all that you do be done in love.”*

### B. Implications

- 1. “Gender identity” must be informed by Scripture, since “gender” just is our sexual identity as God's male or female image “lived out” in God's way!
- 2. Cultural conceptions of “gender” may be good or bad to the extent that they promote and reinforce Scriptural patterns of manhood and womanhood.
- 3. Our biological sex *grounds* our gender, and our gender (as our sex “lived out”) is properly *defined* by the Word of God, though *qualified* by our cultural setting.

## III. Nine Practical Guidelines for the Church

- A. First, every individual, regardless of their sense of self, is the image of God from conception, and remains related to God as a rational creature endowed with dignity and purpose.
- B. Second, Scripture clearly establishes only two sexes and tethers them, respectively, to Scripturally-normed gender identities of men and women (Gen 1:27ff).
- C. Third, your sex, and therefore your gender, are divinely and particularly assigned to you in the womb (Ps 139:13–16).
- D. Fourth, because gender is defined and regulated by God, “gender-bending,” or gender transition, is sinful (Deut 22:5; Is 29:16).
  - 1. Gender-bending – dressing and behaving like a member of the opposite sex, esp. as a form of social activism undertaken to destroy rigid gender roles and defy sex-role stereotypes.

2. Gender transition – Adopting a presentation of the other gender, usually through hormonal treatment or sex-reassignment surgery.
  3. **Deut 22:5** – *“A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.”*
- E. Fifth, because of the corrupting effects of sin, cultural idealizations and definitions of gender frequently conflict with God’s design for gender.
  - F. Sixth, godly gender lived out in real-life situations may have a diversity of expressions, and may not conform to cultural norms.
    1. **Rom 16:16** – *“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”*
    2. **1 Thess 2:5–8** – *“For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. <sup>6</sup> Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup> So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.”*
  - G. Seventh, due to the fall, many people struggle with their gender, but (again) this does not mean we do not owe one another Christ-like love, sympathy, and respect.
  - H. Eighth, the calling for any believer who experiences gender dysphoria is the same as for any sexual struggle: striving to walk in increasing faithfulness and repentance in Christ in fellowship with his body, the church.
  - I. Ninth, the church needs to offer genuine love and fellowship for the struggler, in place of the counterfeit he or she finds in transgender fantasy or the transgender community.

#### IV. Conclusion