

TALKING TO TEENS ABOUT GENDER

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HOW DO I TALK TO MY TEEN ABOUT GENDER?

Romans 1 is a mirror into the depraved heart of man. In that chapter, just before the fruits of man's perversion are laid out in detail, a root cause of man's debased mind is revealed. Romans 1:21 tells us that all our sin originates in man's irreverent, thankless heart. Man's heart "did not honor [God] as God or give thanks, but . . . became futile," and so man's "foolish heart was darkened."

We now live in a world that despises how God made us, male and female—a world that neither honors God's choices regarding our sex nor possesses gratitude for how He designed our bodies. And the world is not content to keep this dishonor and ingratitude to themselves. The world wants the hearts of our children.

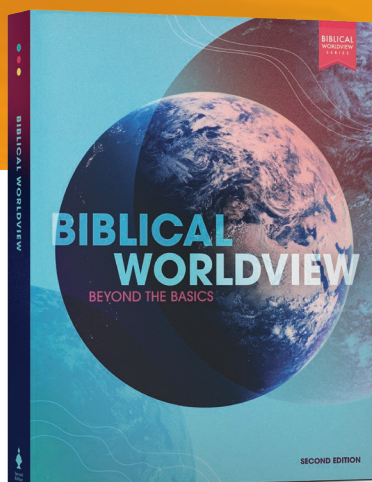
A 2021 national survey found that 70% of adolescents who identified with the LGBTQ+ spectrum had access to "identity-affirming spaces" online. A 2023 study found that 60% of adolescents experimented with their gender identity online before doing so in real life. Grooming is happening through social media, movies, government institutions, and sometimes through friendships. The war on

your child's identity is not merely "out there" anymore. It's making its way into the home.

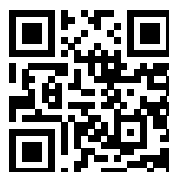
As parents, we are the first line of defense between the darkness of this world and our family. This short book is one more weapon in the battle for your child's heart and mind. The following pages are taken from *Biblical Worldview: Beyond the Basics*, a Bible textbook written by Dr. Bryan Smith, director of Biblical Worldview Shaping at BJU Press and reflect the incredible work he has done to help us in this vital task.

You will learn the terminology that the gender identity movement is using and the origins of its ideas. Most importantly, you will see that God's Word speaks with authority against the evil of this world and in support of the truth that we are to cling to. Using illustrations and lessons that speak to teens, this short book will help you to protect your children and point them back to Christ.

Dr. Renton Rathbun
SPEAKER, BJU PRESS
HOMEFRONT

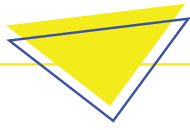


A strong biblical foundation helps us to stand firm in our faith—giving us confidence in what we believe and why.



Biblical Worldview: Beyond the Basics from BJU Press explores all the major doctrinal categories and encourages students to learn how to formulate doctrinal positions according to biblical teaching and apply those positions to their lives.

To purchase this book or video course, please visit bjupresshomeschool.com/bible



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AND WOMANHOOD**

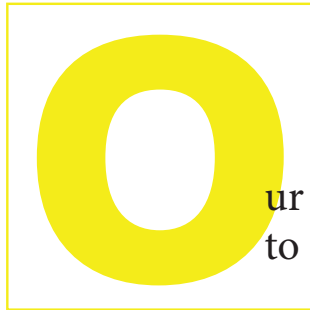
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THE GENESIS OF GENDER

What is God's plan for gender?



Our beliefs about God have everything to do with our views on gender.

For many years, R. W. Connell has been a leading expert in the field of gender studies. In 1987, he published *Gender and Power*. In this influential book, Connell argues that a person's gender is not based on biological sex. It is based instead on what society expects. The notion that men are assertive while women are nurturing has nothing to do with their reproductive organs, he claims. It has everything to do with what a society tells itself about how people are supposed to behave.

Connell's view has become the dominant view in our culture. Connell's book, of course, did not make this change happen. The change came about through a long process. Early in the book, Connell summarizes this process. Surprisingly, the key turning point took place centuries ago.

Sex and gender in the writings of medieval and Reformation intellectuals were, by and large, items in a debate about the *moral* relationships among men, women and God. . . . The first major change in this framework followed the corrosion of the belief that God laid down a path for women and men to follow. Among intellectuals of the Enlightenment, we find the same topics as before, but now secularized. . . . The framework of a secular moralism, with Society in the place formerly occupied by God, could admit a fair range of positions, among them early feminism.¹



GUIDING QUESTIONS

What are two common definitions of gender?

How do men and women differ biologically?

How do men and women differ psychologically?

11.1 The Biology and Psychology of Gender

How are women different from men?

We've come to the most important transition in this course. Chapters 1–10 have been about *formation*: they have focused on the concept of worldview and how a biblical worldview is organized by CFR. Chapters 11–25, however, will be about *practice*: they'll focus on applying CFR to the controversies and issues we all will face for the rest of our lives. This is the reason that Units 5–9 contain three chapters each: the first chapter in each unit is on creation, the next is on fall, and the last is about redemption.

We are now at the beginning of the unit on gender. Our goal in this chapter is to discern the creational norms that hold for this important aspect of life. But we won't be able to get there all at once.

First, we need to look at what people are saying about gender—but not because they are the ultimate authority. God and His Word are the ultimate authority. But we have to *look at* the world if we're going to have God's wisdom for understanding the world.

Second, we need to examine what the Bible says. We need to locate the portions of Scripture that address gender, and we need to make sure we understand what those portions mean.

Third, we need to reexamine gender (and what people are saying about it) from the perspective of Scripture. We need to scrutinize this aspect of life with the glasses of Scripture on. Once we have worked through these three steps, we should be able to discern God's creational norms.

So, we look at the world, we look at the Bible, then we examine the world through the lens of the Bible. This is our creational method. And that's how we will discern creational norms throughout the rest of this course.

Method for Determining Creational Norms



1 Examine the topic.



2 Look at Scripture.



3 Examine the world through the lens of Scripture.

Let's get started, and let's begin with gender.

What exactly do people mean by this word *gender*? The *American Heritage Dictionary* offers two definitions. First, gender is “either of the two divisions, designated female and male, by which most organisms are classified on the basis of their reproductive organs and functions.” Then there's the second definition: “One's identity as female or male or as neither entirely female nor entirely male.”² In the first definition, gender is a synonym for *sex*, the biological difference between male and female. In the second, gender is how people see themselves—male, female, or something else.

What should our view of gender be? To answer that question, we'll start by looking at the world of gender using biology and psychology.

THE BIOLOGY OF GENDER

Biology is the study of living things, particularly of an organism's structure (anatomy) and functions (physiology). Biology is limited—as any science is—because it is the product of human thought and labor. But it is a powerful tool that can point us in helpful directions. When it comes to the question of gender, biology tells us that sex makes a significant difference in who people are and in how they experience the world.

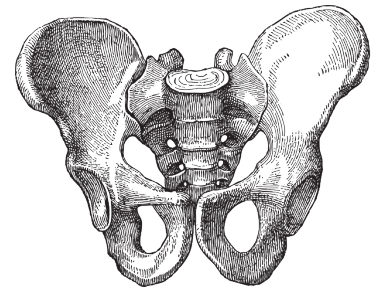
Men and women differ from one another physically. Most obviously, they have different reproductive organs. Men's reproductive organs produce sperm, and women's produce ova. But there are many other differences too. Men have larger, sturdier bones than women, and while men's shoulders are broader, women's hip bones are wider.³ There are muscular differences as well. Men have on average 75 percent more upper body muscle mass than women and 90 percent more strength in the upper body.⁴ However, women tend to have more robust immune systems. They have more white blood cells than men, and their ability to produce antibodies exceeds that of men.⁵

The above differences are well-known and hard for most to miss. But what people often fail to recognize is that there are many other biological differences—differences that extend deep into who we are as people. Scientific research has revealed that sex differences can be found in every part of the brain.

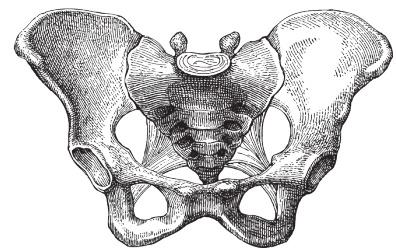
Consider the corpus collosum. This is a network of nerve fibers connecting the two hemispheres of the brain. For women the corpus collosum is larger than for men. As a result, the communication between the two sides of the female brain is more robust than in the male brain. This is thought to be the reason that the female brain can overcome damage to one hemisphere better than the male brain.⁶

And that's just the beginning. Portions of the frontal cortex (where much of our higher cognition takes place) are thicker in the female brain. Also, parts of the limbic cortex (which is involved in how we experience emotion) are larger for women than for men. But portions of the parietal cortex (which helps us perceive spatial relationships) are bigger in the male brain. Additionally, the amygdala (which triggers adrenaline responses when we feel threatened) is larger in the male brain.

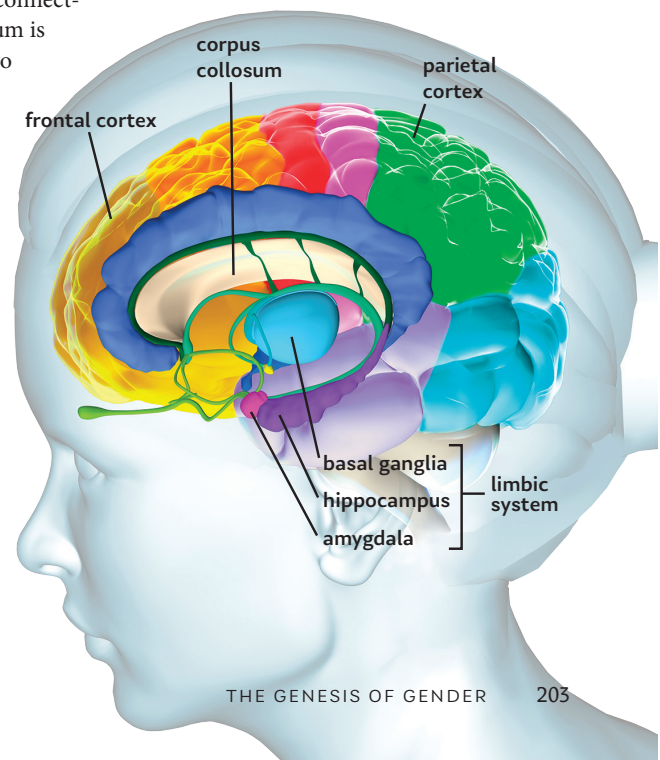
The differences extend also to how these brain structures function. Take, for example, the amygdala. Making use of brain imaging, one study learned that when men and women viewed emotionally disturbing images, different parts of their amygdalae were activated. For men, the right amygdala lit up, but for women, it was the left amygdala.⁷



male pelvis



female pelvis



What conclusion should we draw from all these differences? Larry Cahill, a neuroscientist at the University of California, Irvine, says it well:

The picture of brain organization that emerges is of two complex mosaics—one male and one female—that are similar in many respects but very different in others. The way that information is processed [through] the two mosaics, and the behaviours that each produce, could be identical or strikingly different, depending on a host of parameters.⁸

The point is not that the female brain is better than the male brain, or that one sex is more intelligent than the other. Men and women are similar in their mental abilities, but they arrive at those abilities by different biological paths, by means of different mosaics. Men are not better than women, or vice versa. They are different.

PRIMARY SOURCE

“HETEROSEXUALITY: IT’S JUST NOT NATURAL!”

Current gender theorists would strongly disagree with our brief survey of biology and psychology. They contend that the work of science is always under pressure to conform to cultural norms. So, they would insist that when science declares something “natural,” it’s really just declaring it culturally normative. From the perspective of current gender theory, then, using biology and psychology to show meaningful differences between men and women doesn’t prove anything. Notice how Chrys Ingraham argues for her view in “Heterosexuality: It’s Just Not Natural!”

Heterosexuality is, in reality, a highly regulated, ritualized and organized set of practices. . . .

. . . Rules on everything from who pays for the date or the wedding rehearsal dinner to who leads while dancing, drives the car, cooks dinner or initiates sex, all serve to regulate heterosexual practice. . . . As is the case with most institutions, people who participate in these practices must be *socialized* to do so. In other words, women were not born with a wedding gown gene or neo-natal craving for a diamond engagement ring! They were taught to want these things. . . . Likewise, men did not exit the womb knowing



they would one day buy a date a corsage or spend two months’ income to buy an engagement ring. These are all products that have been sold to consumers interested in taking part in a culturally established ritual that works to organize and institutionalize heterosexuality and reward those who participate.⁹

1. How does Ingraham define *heterosexuality*? Search for definitions of *heterosexuality*. How is this word usually defined?
2. How does Ingraham defend her definition?
3. Do you find Ingraham’s argument convincing? Explain.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER

Now let’s look at gender from the perspective of psychology. Psychology is the study of human personality and behavior. Biology studies the body through surgeries, laboratory experiments, and imaging technology. Psychology, however, conducts surveys, interviews, and experiments examining human behavior. Psychology is more subjective than biology. Nevertheless, it is a powerful tool for describing our humanness.

Many surveys, conducted over several decades in many different countries, have demonstrated differences between the personalities of men and women. These studies have found that, on average, men are more assertive than women and tend to have higher opinions of themselves. Men also show greater interest in exploring new ideas and in seeking exciting experiences. They also score higher in mechanical reasoning. Women, however, tend to be more

tenderminded, more trusting of others, more outgoing, and more anxious. Also, their experience of emotion tends to be more intense, and they are better at picking up on nonverbal cues.¹⁰

These studies do not agree in every detail. For example, in some studies women and men score similarly in anxiety and in self-esteem. There are, however, two traits where we find remarkable consistency: assertiveness and tendermindedness. Men consistently score much higher than women when it comes to boldness, firmness, and decisiveness. Women, on the other hand, consistently score much higher than men in their inclination toward nurturance, affection, and warmth.¹¹

Researchers have investigated these differences across many different cultures, from Canada to the Philippines. They have learned that these gender distinctions are found throughout the world. In fact, contrary to most expectations, these differences are *more* pronounced in wealthy, highly individualistic countries, in places like France and the United States.¹²

Many people, R. W. Connell among them, believe that these studies are observing *nurture* rather than *nature*. They contend that people respond to surveys in these ways

because of prior social conditioning, not because of how they are made. One problem with this argument is that it ignores the fact that these differences transcend cultural boundaries—that they are present in Europe and America as well as in Asia and Africa. Another problem is that these distinctions extend back to birth.

Psychology research has discovered that preschool boys are already better at spatial reasoning than girls their age. Girls, on the other hand, are better at verbal skills.¹³ Researchers have also found that boys typically prefer to play with balls and cars, while girls typically prefer dolls. And many studies have demonstrated that girls in general are more interested in people, whereas boys are more interested in things. While girls are drawn to faces, boys are drawn to mechanical objects. One study found this to be the case with one-year-olds. Another study demonstrated it was true of infants who were only one day old.¹⁴

What we've just described has become controversial in the last few decades, but the differences between men and women are plain to see. These differences are real, and they are not of our own making—not ultimately. The question now is, What does this difference mean?

SECTION REVIEW 11.1

- How do the two definitions of *gender* (from the *American Heritage Dictionary*) differ from one another?
 - One definition sees gender as a social construct; the other presents it as the result of millions of years of evolution.
 - One definition understands gender as a way of coping with stress; the other claims it is a biological fact.
 - One definition sees gender as a synonym for sex; the other sees it as an identity a person chooses.
- Men, on average, have _____ more strength in their upper bodies than women.
 - 70 percent
 - 80 percent
 - 90 percent
- The _____ is a network of nerve fibers connecting the hemispheres of the brain. This structure is larger in the _____.
 - limbic cortex . . . female brain
 - corpus collosum . . . female brain
 - frontal cortex . . . male brain
- The amygdala is larger in the _____. It is responsible for _____.
 - male brain . . . triggering adrenaline responses
 - female brain . . . much of our higher cognition
 - male brain . . . helping us to perceive spatial relationships
- Many studies conducted over several decades have consistently found that _____.
 - men are much better at mechanical reasoning than women and women are much more anxious than men
 - men are slightly more outgoing than women and women have slightly higher opinions of themselves
 - men are much more assertive than women and women are much more tenderminded than men
- True or False: Researchers have discovered that gender-based personality differences are found throughout the world—though they are more pronounced in poorer, highly collectivist countries.
- How would you respond to the following statement: "I know men's and women's *bodies* are different, but *in their brains* they're just the same."¹⁵
- According to the psychology studies cited in Section 11.1, why is it incorrect to claim that all gender differences are the result of cultural conditioning?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What does Genesis 1–3 reveal about the original design for gender?

How do Proverbs 31:10–31 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15 help us understand this original design?

What do Jesus' life and ministry reveal about gender roles?

11.2 Biblical Data on the Creational Design of Gender

Why did God make men and women different from one another?

The Bible is the corrective lens we look through to see our world the way it was meant to be seen. But before we look through it, let's put some effort into understanding how its teachings relate to the idea of gender. To figure this out, let's start at the beginning, with Genesis 1–2.

GENESIS 1–2

The creation narrative makes it clear that gender distinctions go back to our race's first day. In fact, it's nearly the first thing the Bible reveals about us: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27).

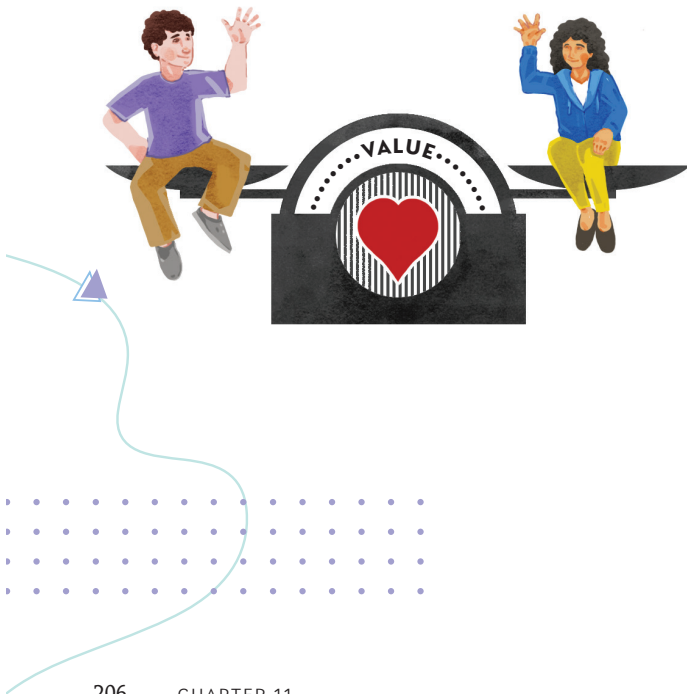
Genesis 2 gives a more detailed account of this brief statement. Here we learn that the man was made first and that the woman was formed only after the man had named the creatures. It is significant that the woman wasn't made from the sea or from a nearby tree. She was formed from the man himself. The marvel of this creative act was not lost on the man. When he saw her, he named her with a poem of wonder:

This is now bone of my bones,
and flesh of my flesh:
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man. (Gen. 2:23)

She was not like the other creatures; she was like him. She was fashioned from his own being, and he welcomed her as his equal.

Equality, however, does not mean sameness. The man and woman have different functions, different roles. This is suggested first in the order of creation. God did not make them both at the same time. He made the man first. This difference is also suggested by the way Genesis 1 speaks of the human race as a whole: "And God said, Let us make *man*. . . . So God created *man*. . . , in the image of God created he *him*" (Gen. 1:26–27; emphasis added). In the worldview of Genesis 1–2, man and woman together may be called *man*, but they are not called *woman*.

The difference between male and female is also suggested by God's intentions for the man and the woman. God puts the man in the garden "to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). The man is to spend his days working with God's world, drawing from it the potential He placed in it. The man is also to protect, "to keep" what God has put in his charge. God's intention for the woman is different. She exercises dominion by assisting. God made her to be a "help meet [suitable] for him" (Gen. 2:18).



GENESIS 3:16–19

The creational design for gender becomes clearer when we move into Genesis 3. As we discussed in Chapter 7, God's curses on humanity correspond to the "fill" and "subdue" commands of Genesis 1:28, and the curses are gender-specific. The woman is cursed to experience suffering and pain in having children (Gen. 3:16). The man, on the other hand, is cursed to experience frustration in working with God's world (Gen. 3:17–19).

From these curses, we learn more about the kind of dominion God had planned for the man and the woman from the beginning. The man is made for work in the wider world. The woman is made for helping, particularly in the home and in the raising of children. These tasks are not, of course, all that men and women are allowed to do, nor is one role better than the other. But it is instructive that when God states very briefly His calling on the human race, this is the general description He gives.

PROVERBS 31:10–31

As the biblical narrative unfolds, we find confirmations and clarifications of what Genesis reveals. In passage after passage, we learn that women are called to a different kind of dominion than men. We get a detailed picture of what this means for women in Proverbs 31:10–31, a passage presenting the Bible's ideal of womanhood.

The woman of Proverbs 31 is a person of action, skill, and influence. She makes items of value and sells them (31:24). Through hard work and careful planning, she creates wealth and achieves financial security (31:18–19, 21–22). With her surplus wealth, she gives to the poor (31:20). She is savvy in her business dealings: she scrutinizes options, purchases property, and then develops it using her own resources (31:16). In all of this, she proves to be a person of wisdom who teaches others with kindness (31:26).

It may be tempting to conclude from this description that the ideal woman is no different from a man. But that would miss one of the main points of Proverbs 31. She is skilled, hard-working, and successful, but she is all these *as a woman*. Her life is not pointed outward; it is instead directed inward, toward her family. She trades with merchants to feed her children (31:13–15). She develops property to clothe those in her household (31:16, 21). She manages her affairs so her husband is respected "in the gates," among the city leaders (31:23). She is busy and active in the world so her home may flourish. And her labors do not go unnoticed: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (31:28). She is not a slave, but neither is she a man. She is a queen.



THE GOSPELS

The life and ministry of Jesus, recorded in the four Gospels, play a central role in our understanding of God's creational design for all of life, gender included. Jesus, as the Redeemer sent from God, points us to the way things were supposed to be "from the beginning" (Matt. 19:8).

One lesson we learn from Jesus' ministry is that He confirmed the creational distinction between man and woman. The second person of the Trinity entered the human race not as a woman but as a man. Jesus came to lead His people to victory over sin, over Satan, and over death (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 28:18–20). He also came to be the "last Adam," to represent redeemed humanity in returning to God, just as the first Adam represented humanity in rebelling against Him (John 17:23; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45). Because the man was made to lead and represent, it was fitting that the Redeemer entered our race as a man, as *the* man. If it had been otherwise, it would have violated God's creational order.

It is also instructive that Jesus' twelve apostles were all men. The apostles were to be the first leaders of Christ's church. They were appointed to be the foundation stones on which the church would be built (Eph. 2:20). They were also given

the task of receiving special revelation from the Holy Spirit in order to authoritatively communicate it to the people of God (John 14:26). And in the coming age, they will rule over Israel from twelve thrones (Matt. 19:28). Jesus, it seems, chose only men to be apostles because the calling of an apostle was a male calling.

Nevertheless, it is clear from Jesus' life and ministry that women were not second-class citizens in the kingdom of God. Jesus chose them to assist Him, and in significant ways. It was by a woman—the virgin Mary—that God became a man. For that reason, "all generations shall call [her] blessed" (Luke 1:48). It was a group of women whose financial support sustained Jesus and His apostles as they preached the gospel (Luke 8:2–3). It was also to women—to Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James—that Jesus first appeared after His resurrection (Matt. 28:9; John 20:14–16). One of the chief tasks of the apostles was to bear witness to Jesus'

resurrection (Acts 1:22), but they were not the first to see Him alive from the dead. Before the apostles could bear witness to the resurrection, they first had to hear and accept the testimony of these women.

1 TIMOTHY 2:11–15

The apostle Paul addresses the role of women in the church in several different passages (1 Cor. 11:3–16; 14:33–35; 1 Tim. 2:11–15; Titus 2:3–5). In 1 Timothy 2:11–15, he says that women should be characterized by "silence" and "subjection" in the gatherings of the church (2:11). He then says that women ought "not . . . to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (2:12).

On the surface, it seems that Paul is prohibiting women from saying anything while at church, but that cannot be what he means given his other statements about women. For example, in 1 Corinthians 11:3–16, Paul gives instructions regarding how women are to address a gathering of the church. In Titus 2:3–5, he encourages older women to teach younger women. So, 1 Timothy 2:11–15 is not claiming that women must keep their mouths shut in a church gathering. What

PRIMARY SOURCE

EQUAL TO SERVE

Some readers of the New Testament contend that Jesus' choice of only men to be apostles doesn't prove anything about gender roles. Here's how Gretchen Gaebelin Hull describes her view in her book *Equal to Serve*:

Some have argued that the fact the Twelve were men mandates only males as leaders, reasoning that if Jesus had wanted to include women, He would have done so. . . . Isn't it possible that the excluding of women from the Twelve was another concession to first-century culture—as well as to decorum?¹⁶

1. Why does Hull think Jesus chose only men to be apostles?
2. Do you find Hull's view convincing? Explain. (Hint: How did Jesus speak of the culturally accepted practice described in Matthew 23:16–17?)

is it claiming? Paul is exhorting women to honor the authority structure God has chosen for the church. Women may minister, but they must do so in a way that does not “usurp authority over the man.”

Paul does not anchor these exhortations in cultural considerations—customs or expectations that come and go with the passage of time. He instead refers to the teachings of Genesis 1–2: “Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim. 2:13). God made the man first; later He made the woman to assist him (Gen. 2:18). The authority structure within the church is meant to reflect this creational order.



SECTION REVIEW 11.2

- The fact that God made the woman from the man suggests that _____.
 - men and women are equal
 - women are not as intelligent as men
 - the roles of men and women are the same
- True or False: In the worldview of Genesis 1–2, men and women may together be called *man*, but they are not called *woman*.
- Genesis 2:15 and 3:17–19 reveal that God made the man to exercise dominion by _____.
 - assisting the woman in her tasks
 - focusing on the home and the raising of children
 - working in the wider world, uncovering the potential God placed in it
- Genesis 2:18 and 3:16 reveal that God made the woman to exercise dominion by _____.
 - protecting God’s world from harm
 - assisting, particularly in the home and in the raising of children
 - developing creation through endeavors like farming and building
- Proverbs 31 presents the ideal woman as _____.
 - a person of action, skill, and influence
 - no different than a man
 - nothing more than a homemaker
- True or False: In Proverbs 31, the woman’s life is pointed outward—toward the needs and problems of society—rather than inward.
- In his instructions regarding church leadership, why does Paul say that a woman should not “usurp authority over the man” (1 Tim. 2:12)?
 - Women are not as intelligent as men.
 - Greco-Roman culture expected women to be silent in public gatherings.
 - God made Adam first; then He made Eve.
- Respond to the following statement: “In the Old Testament, we find a view of women that is oppressive and demeaning. In the New Testament, however, we find a different view. Especially in the life and ministry of Jesus, we find gender distinctions erased. There was no difference between men and women in Jesus’ worldview.”
- According to R. W. Connell, how did our world begin to transition from a “medieval and Reformation” view of sex and gender to a secular view? Why is it important for Christians to keep this in mind?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How should we define gender?

What are four foundational creational norms for gender?

How do these creational norms help us understand the biology and psychology of gender?

How do cultural practices (like gendered colors) suggest a fifth creational norm for gender?

11.3 Creational Norms for Gender

Who chooses my gender?

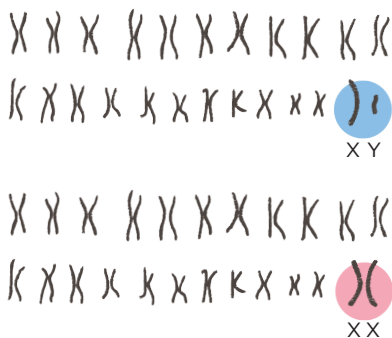
It's time for us to look at the world of gender through the lens of Scripture. In the resulting field of vision, we should be able to discern the creational norms that hold for this part of life.

For any subject—and this is certainly true for gender—the creational norms that could be listed would be a very many indeed. Because our space is limited, we will consider only a few, the ones that are general enough to form the foundation for the many additional norms you may need to discern in the months and years ahead.

CREATIONAL NORMS

1
gender

God has created two genders—male and female—and each is based on a person's biological sex.



Humans have twenty-three pairs of chromosomes. The twenty-third pair will be an X and a Y chromosome if the person is male and two X chromosomes if the person is female.

It is important to acknowledge that the words *sex* and *gender* mean different things—and for good reason. A person's sex has to do with his or her powers of reproduction, whether a person's body is designed to produce sperm or ova. Gender, however, is concerned with how a person behaves. Sex is a biological reality. **Gender** is the way a person expresses that biological reality in the different aspects of life (at home, at school, at work, etc.). This expression is shaped by the expectations of the culture where a person lives, but it should still be based on a person's biological sex.

Today, many people believe that sex and gender are two completely different things. But it's important to recognize that in a biblical worldview, sex and gender are linked. In particular, the former is the foundation for the latter. A person is a man because God made him sexually male; a person is a woman because God made her sexually female.

The Bible leads us to this conclusion from its first chapter. Genesis 1:27 says we were made male and female, and it then connects maleness and femaleness to procreation—to the idea of filling the earth by mothering and fathering children (Gen. 1:28). Scripture further tells us that the male was a man, with certain responsibilities (Gen. 2:15). It then tells us that the female was a woman, also with certain responsibilities (Gen. 2:18, 23).

When we look at our biology and psychology through the lens of Scripture, we find confirmations of this creational norm. Our sex affects every part of our being. We are male and female not just in our sex organs. We are male and female in the structure of our bones, in our muscle development, in our immune systems, and in our brains. The effects of our sex are also seen in our personalities. Women are, on average, more relational than men, and they experience emotion with greater intensity. Men, however, are better at mechanical reasoning and tend to be more "thing-oriented" (rather than "people-oriented"). This is exactly what we would expect if gender is based on sex.

One of the many lessons we learn from this norm is that we ought to base our gender identity on our sex. If we have been made sexually male, we should seek to be masculine in every part of our lives. If we were born sexually female, we ought to strive to be feminine in every part of our lives. This should extend to the clothes we wear and the way we present ourselves (Deut. 22:5; 1 Cor. 11:14). By seeking to live this kind of gendered life, we are not trying to be something we are not. We are instead seeking to be the people God made us to be. To do otherwise would be to unmake ourselves by rejecting one of God's most basic gifts.

2 gender

Both genders equally bear God's image.

It is a great mistake to think that men are made more in God's image than women, or that women are made more in God's image than men. The same verse that introduces us to "male and female" also introduces us to their equality (Gen. 1:27). Both are called "man," and both are said to be made in God's image. Additionally, both are commissioned to the noble work of exercising dominion over God's world. The Creation Mandate was a blessing from God on both the man and the woman (Gen. 1:28). The rest of Scripture supports these claims. Proverbs 31:10–31, in particular, makes it clear that the woman is a partner in the work of dominion, not a servant.

When we look at the world of psychology and biology with the Bible in mind, we see what we would expect to see. Women answer personality surveys somewhat differently than men, but only somewhat. Men are on average more assertive, but women are still assertive. Women are on average more relational, but men are still relational. Also, from biology, we learn that there are differences between male and female brains, but they are slight differences when compared to the brains of other species. Men are men, and women are women. But both are clearly human.

That brings us to our next two norms, which deal with the differences between the genders. According to God's creational structure, how are men and women different?

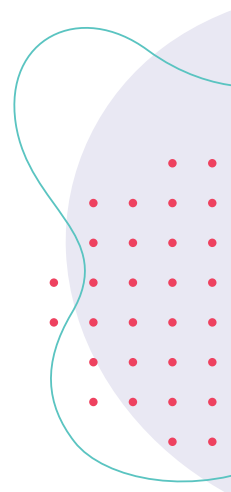
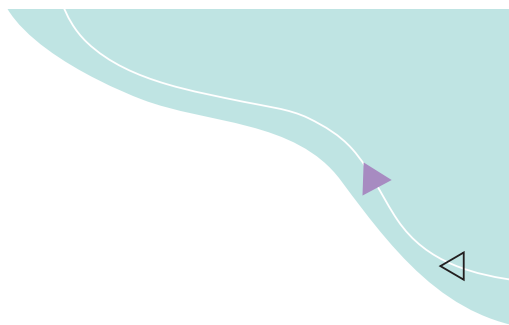
3 gender

A woman is an image-bearer of God created with the potential to be a mother.

This very important statement deserves some clarification. First, when I say, "the potential to be a mother," I don't mean simply "physically capable of having children." I mean instead that women are designed for motherhood and that is the essence of womanhood. Because of the fall, this design may be damaged even to the extent that some are not able to bear children. But even a woman struggling with infertility is designed by God for motherhood. Her whole physical being bears witness to this design, and that design shapes her psychological and social identity. Infertility is a heavy burden precisely for this reason. It's not like a hangnail or even a broken bone. Infertility cuts a woman to her core. It blocks the natural realization of a woman's creational design.¹⁷

Second, by "mother" I mean more than just biologically bearing a child. I mean nurturing others as a mother does her children. So, a woman who adopts a child is still a mother. But also, more generally, a woman who nurtures others is realizing her creational potential, her creational calling. Even if she has no children of her own, she is living out this creational norm, experiencing its blessing and passing it on to others.

These are the ideas Scripture teaches regarding womanhood. Genesis 1 says that God made both the man and woman to reproduce and exercise dominion, but Genesis 2 clarifies that the woman is the man's helper in this task. Genesis 3 then clarifies (in the context of the fall) that the woman will focus on childbearing (3:16). Proverbs 31 helps us understand that this work can involve engagement in culture and society. Always, however, this engagement is to enrich and support the thriving of her family and her home.





Do biology and psychology support these ideas? They do if we look at them through the corrective lens of Scripture. The entirety of a woman's biology is directed toward motherhood. This is most obvious with the reproductive organs: they are designed to bear children. But this is also true of the immune system and the brain. The female immune system is more robust because bearing and raising children make tough demands on a person's ability to resist infection. It's also worth noting that the female brain has more connections between its hemispheres. This gives a woman the ability to accomplish many difficult tasks in culture and society. But it also provides advantages in running a household, something that requires a person to manage a dozen things at once.

A woman's psychology is also directed toward motherhood. Women score high in tender-mindedness, trustfulness, and anxiousness. They also tend to experience emotion (positive and negative) with greater intensity than men. This makes sense if we grant that women were made to focus their labors on the home. In the home, all relationships are close and intimate, and dangers (even small ones) can be very threatening.¹⁸ Also, children need to be nurtured in an environment that is rich in emotion and affirmation. Women are, in general, better equipped to create such an environment.

Before leaving this norm, we need to clarify what it is not saying. It is not claiming that every woman must get married, have children, and remain within the four walls of her house. It is instead saying that the essence of womanhood is motherhood and that, therefore, a woman should seek to honor and develop this identity. There are many different roles a woman may seek in the will of God, but all of them should be informed by the truth that she was made with the potential to be a mother. This will mean one thing for her life at home, something else for her role in the church, and something else for her life in society. In each of these, she should not despise her womanhood, seeing it as obstacle to be overcome. She should instead see it as a gift to be used for the benefit of others and for the glory of God.

CREATIONAL NORMS

gender A man is an image-bearer of God created with the potential to be a father.

Just as the essence of womanhood is motherhood, so the essence of manhood is fatherhood. And just as motherhood is more than biological, so too is fatherhood. Men who never have children of their own are still men because their entire beings are still designed for fatherhood. All men, regardless of their family situation, are made with an outward orientation, even as women are made with an inward orientation. They are made to go out into the world, carry the heavy load of creation, and work hard to discover its potential. They are made to do all this not for themselves but for others, for those who depend on their strength and skill.¹⁹

Scripture teaches that men were made to lead. Genesis 1–2 reveals that God made the man first, and the name God gave him—*man*—is the name He gave to the entire race. Specifically, God made the man to work the garden and to guard it. In the New Testament, we learn that it was a man, *the* man, who came to rescue the children of God from sin and death and to represent them before

God forever. God made the man to lead, but more specifically, He made him to work, protect, represent, and provide for those he loves in a world that is often dark and inhospitable.

A man's biology bears witness to this calling. Men are made to reproduce, but their anatomies allow them to do so without physical attachment to their children. This enables them to go out into the world, work hard, protect, and provide for their own. This is also the reason men have more physical strength than women. They were made to do heavy and hard things for the sake of others.

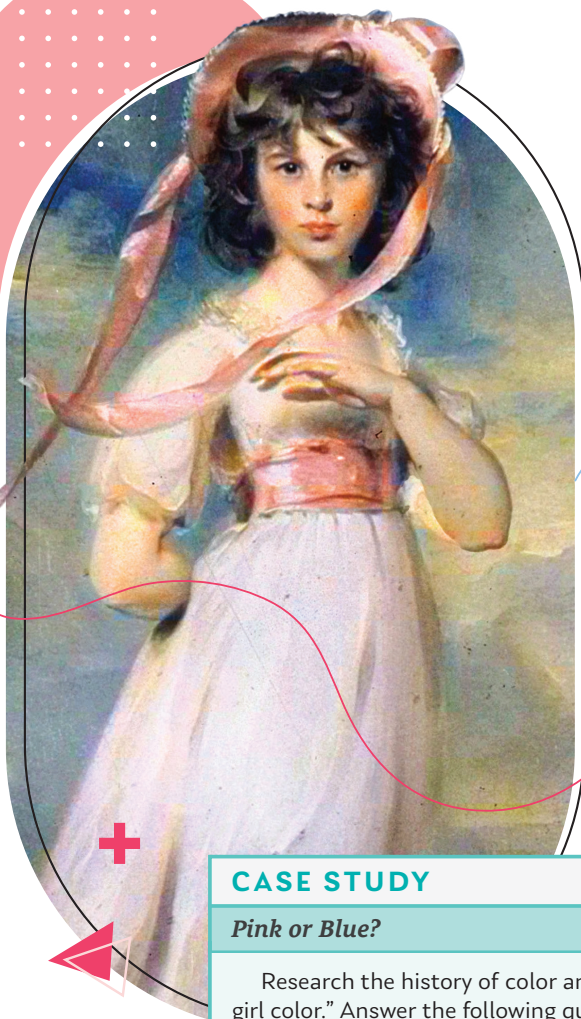
Similar things can be said of a man's psychology. On average, men are more assertive, more open to new ideas, more interested in exciting experiences, more confident in their own abilities, and more inclined toward mechanical reasoning. All these characteristics make sense if men were made to do what the Bible says. If the Bible is true, the pattern we find is the pattern we expect.



There is a deep longing within a man to be a father and to be a good one. A man does not need to have children of his own to satisfy this longing. God's own Son, Jesus Christ, never had children of His own. But He is in a very real sense a father. He is called the "everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6), and God has promised that for all eternity He will have a great progeny (Isa. 53:10). In fact, it is by imitating Jesus, particularly in the way He led His followers (for instance, see Eph. 6:4), that a man—any man—fulfills his calling. Jesus took the initiative to save His own, provide for them, protect them, and instruct them. He did so at great cost to Himself. He was heroic in His opposition to all that would do them harm, but at no point was He proud. He remained meek and lowly.

If you desire to be a real man, be a father to someone. If you want to be a good father, learn to lead like Jesus.

Before leaving this discussion of creational norms, I need to give a warning. We must resist the gender stereotyping that often arises from such discussions and that leads to unfair treatment of the opposite gender. Women are not emotional basket cases that need to be led with a firm hand. Men are not absent-minded oafs who are useless around the house. Men and women are image-bearers of God; they are both God's masterpiece. There are differences between these two genders (and those differences are damaged by the fall—more on that in Chapter 12), but these differences ought not be despised. They should instead be honored for what they are—creations of a good and wise God.



CASE STUDY

Pink or Blue?

Research the history of color and gender by searching for “pink is a girl color.” Answer the following questions.

1. How were pink and blue related to gender in the nineteenth century?
2. When and how did this change?
3. How are pink and blue related to gender now?
4. Some people believe this history demonstrates that gender is simply the result of social conditioning. Do you agree? Explain.
5. From this history, a fifth creational norm for gender can be inferred. How would you express norm 5? (Use Deuteronomy 22:5 in your answer.)

SECTION REVIEW 11.3

1. According to the teachings of a biblical worldview, we should define *gender* as follows: _____.
 - a. "Either of the two divisions, designated female and male, by which most organisms are classified on the basis of their reproductive organs and functions"²⁰
 - b. "One's identity as female or male or as neither entirely female nor entirely male"²¹
 - c. The way a person expresses his or her sex in the different aspects of life (at home, at work, at school, etc.); this expression is influenced by culture but based ultimately on one's biological sex at birth

For questions 2–9, choose the creational norm for gender (1–4) that is most associated with each description below. (Norms may be used once, more than once, or not at all.)

2. Women are on average more relational than men, but men are still relational.
3. Our biological sex affects every part of our being.
4. If you desire to be a real man, be a father to someone.
5. The entirety of a woman's biology and psychology is directed toward motherhood.
6. A man's biology enables him to go out into the world, work hard, protect, and provide for his own.
7. The same verse that introduces us to "male and female" also says that both are "man."
8. A woman who nurtures others—even if she has no children of her own—is realizing her creational potential, her creational calling.
9. If we have been made sexually male, we should seek to be masculine in every part of our lives.
10. How would you respond to the following statement about colors and gender?

Did you know that blue was originally the color for girls. It's true: Blue used to be for girls as it was seen as more "dainty," while pink used to be associated with boys as it was seen as the stronger color. It didn't change until the 1950s when some big advertising campaigns pushed pink as a feminine color exclusively for girls. . . .

We have so many examples of stereotypes that are holding both men and women back from being their true, nuanced selves and living up to their full potential. . . .

. . . One of the best things we can do as a society is stop looking at gender as binary opposites. Conversations around what it means to be masculine or feminine often start with an either/or approach: boys are tough/girls are nice, boys are good at math/girls are good at English, boys are rational/girls are emotional, boys like blue/girls like pink, etc. We have to start a new conversation that allows both men and women the freedom to identify with aspects of their personality without feeling too "feminine" or too "masculine." . . .

Regardless of what society says, always remember to be bold, be brave and be *you*—because that's exactly what society needs if we are ever going to get to equal.²²

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11

CHAPTER
REVIEW

CHAPTER SUMMARY

11.1 The Biology and Psychology of Gender

- Sometimes *gender* is defined as a synonym for *sex*, the biological difference between male and female. Sometimes it is defined as an identity a person chooses.
- Biologists have learned that men and woman differ significantly in their bodies and in their brains.
- Psychologists have found that the personalities of men and women differ and that many of these differences cannot be attributed to cultural conditioning.

11.2 Biblical Data on the Creational Design of Gender

- Genesis 1–3 teaches that gender is a creational reality, that both genders are equal in God's sight, and that men and woman were created to fulfill different roles.
- Proverbs 31:10–31 gives us a detailed picture of the Bible's ideal of womanhood. According to this ideal, a woman is a person of action, skill, and influence. But her life's orientation is inward rather than outward.
- Jesus' life and ministry confirmed the creational design for gender presented in Genesis 1–3.
- Paul taught in 1 Timothy 2:11–15 that the authority structure of the church should reflect the creational order of Genesis 1–2.

11.3 Creational Norms for Gender

Term: gender

- God has created two genders—male and female—and each is based on a person's biological sex.
- Both genders equally bear God's image.
- A woman is an image-bearer of God with the potential to be a mother.
- A man is an image-bearer of God with the potential to be a father.
- A fifth norm may be inferred regarding how different cultures express gender.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Recalling Facts

1. Name two differences between the male brain and the female brain.
2. Name two ways in which the personalities of men and women are, on average, different.
3. List from memory the four foundational creational norms for gender.

REVIEW QUESTIONS *CONTINUED*

Understanding Concepts

4. Why is it incorrect to claim that all gender differences are the result of social conditioning?
5. Why is Genesis 1:27 important to the current gender debate?
6. What does Proverbs 31:10–31 reveal about the role of women?
7. Could Jesus have been a woman? Explain.
8. What is the essence of womanhood?
9. What is the essence of manhood?
10. How would you express creational norm 5 for gender? (See the Case Study in Section 11.3.)
11. How would you define *gender*?

Critical Thinking

12. Given what we have learned in this chapter about the differences between men and women, how do you think a female lawyer would pursue her career differently than a male lawyer?²³

Use the Case Study below to answer questions 13–16.

CASE STUDY

The Bible and Current Gender Theory

Traditional views of gender have claimed that men and women are made different from one another and should, therefore, adhere to different roles. These traditional views have been influenced—to varying degrees—by the teachings of the Bible. Current gender theory claims that gender is a social construction and that individuals should be free to choose their own gender.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest LGBTQ+ advocacy group in the United States, says that it is possible to believe the Bible and hold to current gender theory. The following paragraphs are excerpts from an HRC article discussing how the Genesis account of creation should be understood.

If you grew up hearing these stories . . . the existence of transgender people might seem to fly in the face of God's created order. However, when we look just a little closer . . . we find a much more complex and beautiful world. For instance, when God creates men and women in Genesis 1, it's after creating opposites in every other corner of creation—day and night, land and sea, flying birds and swimming fish. Humans, then, are also created in an opposite pair—male and female. But the problem with a literal reading of this text [is] that . . . God's creation exists in spectrums.

In between day and night we have dawn and dusk; between land and sea we have coral reefs and estuaries and beaches; between fly-

ing birds and swimming fish we have penguins and high jumping dolphins. . . . No one would argue that a penguin is an abomination for not fitting the categories of Genesis 1. . . . In the same way, God gives every human a self that is unique and may not always fit neatly into a box or binary. . . . Many [LGBTQ+] affirming Christians recognize that the stories set down in this chapter were never meant to catalogue all of creation (in which case, it would just be an encyclopedia), but rather to point us towards God's power and love. . . .

. . . Moving away from [a traditional view of gender] frees Christians up to explore other biblical alternatives for identity, community and relationship—alternatives based on the example Jesus set and called for in his teachings, rather than on gender difference.²⁴

13. The HRC article claims that though God made humans "male and female," He has made some people who in their gender "may not always fit neatly into a box." How does the article argue for this claim?
14. Do you find this argument convincing? Explain.
15. The article refers to the example and teachings of Jesus. Why is this problematic for the article's argument?
16. How is the history of gender theory—as summarized by R. W. Connell—relevant to the argument of this article?

12



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DISTORTED MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

How has the fall twisted gender?



he fall distorts gender in visible
and invisible ways.

Spanish hurdler María José Martínez-Patiño was on her way to competing in the 1985 World University Games in Kobe, Japan. There was just one problem: she was a man. A DNA test showed that her twenty-third chromosome pair was XY, not XX. Judged to be genetically male, she was disqualified from competing in women's athletics.¹

Martínez-Patiño was stunned. She had never thought of herself as a man, nor had she ever undertaken any medical procedures to become one. She looked like a woman and had lived as a woman; she was engaged to a man. Soon, however, she learned that she suffered from a rare genetic defect known as androgen insensitivity syndrome. Her body never produced the receptors needed to admit testosterone into her cells. Her male sex organs never fully developed. Since her body did produce estrogen (as both males and females do), her body appeared female—though she did not have a uterus or ovaries.

Martínez-Patiño protested her disqualification. She argued that her condition gave her no unfair advantage. Furthermore, as she told a reporter sometime later, “I knew I was a woman . . . in the eyes of medicine, God, and most of all in my own eyes.”² Eventually, she was reinstated, but it was too late. She had lost many of her friends, her fiancé, and her athletic momentum.

This tragic story has proved to be a gift to current gender theory. People like Anne Fausto-Sterling have used it to claim that “scientists create truths about sexuality. . . . [T]hese truths, sculpted by the social milieu in which biologists practice their trade, in turn refashion our cultural environment.”³ Our sexuality, Fausto-Sterling claims, is a human creation—a creation by biologists. But who are they to tell the rest of us who we are? We are all individuals. Don't we have the right to create our own identities?



GUIDING QUESTIONS

What are today's most significant gender controversies?

How are these controversies related to each other?

How have these controversies affected our society?

12.1 Gender Troubles

Why has gender become confusing?

In the previous chapter, we studied the creational bases of gender. Our goal was to figure out the creational norms that hold for this aspect of life. Now we must reckon with how gender is damaged by sin. So, in this chapter, we need to focus on discerning how this part of life has been bent away from its creational norms. You could say that we determined *structure* in Chapter 11; now, in Chapter 12, we will determine *direction*—fallen direction.

We won't be able to figure this out in one step. First, we need to consider what people are saying about the problems related to gender. In other words, we're going to begin by looking at the fall's effects on this part of creation. Second, we need to examine what the Bible says about the fall and its effects on gender. Third, we need to reexamine the fall's effects on gender with the glasses of Scripture on. At the end of this process, we should be able to explain—in a biblically faithful way—what is wrong with this aspect of life.

Gender—the way men and women live out their distinctive identities—is fallen. The biology that stands behind gender is fallen: our bodies are cursed because of sin. Jesus Himself acknowledged that the fall makes some people sexually disabled (Matt. 19:12). But the physical effects of the fall are only the surface of the problem. Because our hearts are sinful, we do not think, feel, or talk about gender as we

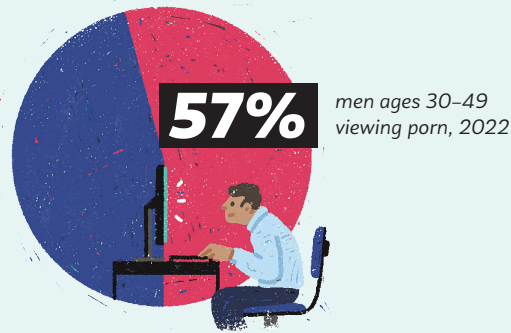
were made to. We never have. All through history, our wayward affections have poisoned how we perceive gender and how we live it out. This poisoning has led us to treat others with contempt and to engage in behaviors that lead whole societies into confusion.

When debates erupt about gender, the following controversies usually come to the fore.

MALE CHAUVINISM

Chauvinism is the belief that a person's group is superior to all others. **Male chauvinism** is the belief that men are superior to women, usually in terms of intelligence or overall ability.

As we learned in Chapter 11, men are on average physically stronger and more assertive than women. Men also cannot bear children; so they are more likely to be able to pursue a career for several decades without interruption. These characteristics give men a competitive edge over women in public life. In a fallen world, this edge is often exploited for selfish purposes. Historically, when women have attempted to enter society—often through the workforce—they have done so as a minority, usually a powerless minority. Men have tended to use their advantages to hold women back from advancement, exclude them from decision-making, deny them equal standing before the law, and sometimes treat them as less than human.



One way many men show contempt for women is through pornography. Pornography presents people not as human beings but as toys for sexual pleasure. Because of the internet, pornography has become easy to access, and men are by far the main users of it. A 2022 survey revealed that 57 percent of men in their thirties and forties admit to viewing pornography in the past month. This behavior is an ugly expression of male chauvinism.⁴



Currently, the ugliest expressions of male chauvinism are sexual harassment and violence. For women in the United States, these experiences are tragically common. A 2018 Pew Research survey revealed that 59 percent of women said they had experienced sexual harassment (unwelcome sexual advances).⁵ A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that “1 in 5 women experienced completed or attempted rape during her lifetime.”⁶ The world is not a safe place for women, and male chauvinism is the main reason this is so.

FEMINISM

The harsh realities of male chauvinism call for a response. Over the last century and a half, that response has come primarily from feminism. **Feminism** is the belief in and advocacy for the full equality of women with men in every part of life. The main goal of feminism has always been to challenge and overcome **patriarchy**, male domination of public life or private life.

The history of feminism is usually analyzed in terms of three waves. The first wave took place in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The main concern at that time was women’s suffrage (giving women the right to vote). The second wave was during the 1960s and 70s. It focused on women’s equality in the workforce. It sought to restructure society to free women from the burden of raising their own children. Second-wave feminists advocated for abortion rights and government-funded childcare. Third-wave feminism began in the 1990s and continues to this day. These feminists have sought to extend equality to women of all kinds, including lesbian and transgender women.

Each wave of feminism has attempted to correct the very real problem of inequality, but each has done so in a way

that produced new problems. First-wave feminists opposed traditional religion, especially Christianity, and condemned marriage as an unjust institution. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the movement’s leaders, famously said, “We need an expurgated edition of the Old and the New Testaments . . . if we wish to inspire our children with proper love and respect for the Mothers of the Race.”⁷ Second-wave feminists played a leading role in expanding access to abortion and in separating children from their mothers. Third-wave feminists—by supporting transgenderism—called into question the whole idea of womanhood. If a man can be a woman, then what is a woman? In a world where that question is deemed unanswerable, how does anyone advocate for women’s rights?

Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Women’s suffrage parade, Fifth Avenue, New York City, 1913

PRIMARY SOURCE

“OUR REVOLUTION IS UNIQUE”



Betty Friedan was the most influential leader in second-wave feminism. In 1966, she founded the National Organization of Women (NOW). In 1968, she delivered an address at a NOW convention titled “Our Revolution Is Unique.”

NOW was the first organization to speak on the basic rights of women on the question of abortion. We said that it is the inalienable human right of every woman to control her own reproductive process. . . .

What right has any man to say to any woman, “You must bear this child”? What right has any state to say it? . . .

This question can only really be confronted in terms of the basic personhood and dignity of woman, which is violated forever if she does not have the right to control her own reproductive process. And the heart of this idea goes far beyond abortion and birth control.

. . . To enable *all* women . . . to participate in society we must confront the fact of life . . . that women do give birth to children. But we must challenge the idea that a woman is primarily

responsible for raising children. Man and society have to be educated to accept their responsibility for that role as well. And this is first of all a challenge to education.

In Sweden I was impressed that these expectations are considered absolutely normal. The need for child-care centers is accepted as so important . . . that every major young politician has it high on his agenda. . . .

. . . Eight years ago they decided that they were going to have absolute equality, and the only way to achieve this was to challenge the sex-role idea. . . . In the elementary schools boys and girls take cooking and child care, and boys and girls take shop. . . . In the universities the dormitories are sexually integrated. They all have kitchens and boys and girls learn to live together, to cook and study as equals. . . . If Sweden can do it, the United States can do it.⁸

1. Why does Friedan advocate for abortion rights? What do you think of her reasoning?
2. According to Friedan, how should feminism advocate for women’s equality (other than by supporting abortion rights)?
3. How would Friedan’s vision for society affect the lives of children?
4. How would her vision affect the lives of women?

TRANSGENDERISM

Third-wave feminism has led to the rise of transgenderism. **Transgenderism** refers to people who believe their gender identity to be different from their sex at birth. The most common are transgender women (men who identify as women) and transgender men (women who identify as men). But some claim there are over seventy genders.⁹ One can be demiflux, omnigender, bigender, or something else. There are also many degrees of transgenderism. Some transgenders simply think of themselves as being different from their birth sex. Others dress according to their desired gender. Others take hormone therapy in order to develop some of the physical characteristics of their desired gender. And some undergo surgery.

Until recently, transgenderism was considered a condition requiring psychiatric treatment; it was called “gender identity disorder.”¹⁰ Over the past few years, however, most in the psychiatric and medical communities have come to see it not as a disorder but as an identity that must be affirmed. Several studies have been published recently claiming that “gender-affirming care”—treatment that often involves hormone therapy and surgery—is effective and safe.



Transgenderism has grown dramatically over the past decade—especially among young people. A study in 2021 indicated that the number of American high school students considering themselves gender-diverse could be as high as 9 percent.¹¹ While medical professionals in the United States tend to be supportive of this growth and of the effectiveness of gender-affirming care, there is a growing concern that these trends may not be good. *The Economist*, a British newspaper, investigated studies claiming to favor gender-affirming care and concluded that the “evidence to support medicalised gender transitions in adolescents is

worryingly weak.”¹² Researchers working with the Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine came to a similar conclusion. They recently gave this warning:

Until gender medicine commits to conducting high quality research . . . , we must be skeptical of the enthusiasm generated by headlines claiming that yet another “gender study” proved benefits of transitioning youth. . . . [T]he history of medicine is replete with examples of “cures” which turned out to [be] far more harmful than the “disease.”¹³

CASE STUDY

The T in LGBTQ+

Martina Navratilova is a former professional tennis player. She was one of the best, winning the Wimbledon singles title nine times. She is also a lesbian and a longtime advocate of equal rights for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.

In December 2018, after learning that transgender women were competing in women’s sports, Navratilova tweeted, “You can’t just proclaim yourself a female and be able to compete against women.” She was quickly enveloped in a firestorm of controversy by transgender supporters, who called her “transphobic” and demanded an apology. Surprised by the harsh response, Navratilova decided to hold her tongue and research the issue. In February 2019, she broke her silence in an article for *The Times*.

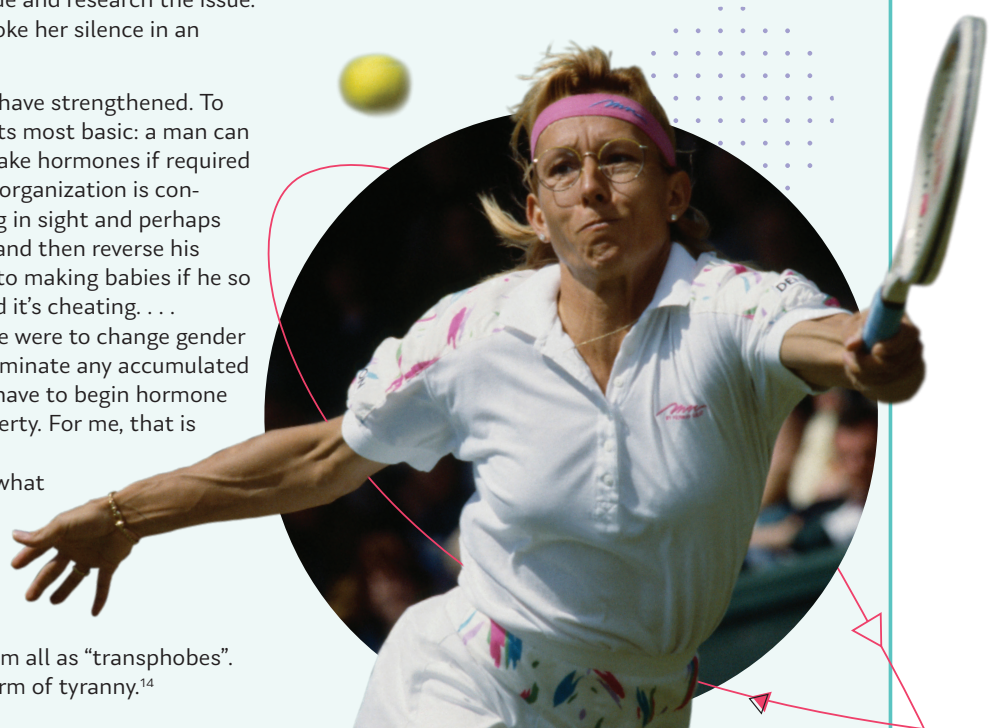
If anything, my views have strengthened. To put the argument at its most basic: a man can decide to be female, take hormones if required by whatever sporting organization is concerned, win everything in sight and perhaps earn a small fortune, and then reverse his decision and go back to making babies if he so desires. It’s insane and it’s cheating. . . .

. . . Indeed, if a male were to change gender in such a way as to eliminate any accumulated advantage, he would have to begin hormone treatment before puberty. For me, that is unthinkable. . . .

But I also deplore what seems to be a growing tendency among transgender activists to denounce anyone who argues against them and to label them all as “transphobes”. That’s just another form of tyranny.¹⁴

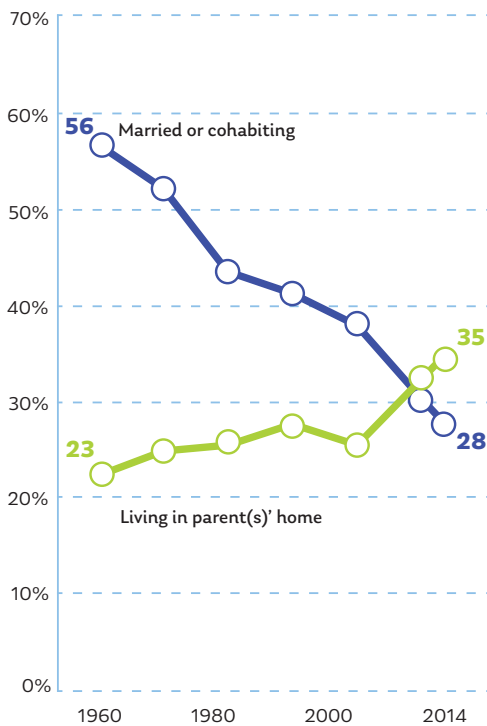
Many were offended by Navratilova’s statements. Athlete Ally, an advocacy group for LGBTQ+ athletes, removed her from their advisory board, calling her comments “transphobic” and “based on a false understanding of science and data.”¹⁵

1. Why is Navratilova opposed to transgender women competing in women’s sports?
2. What does this case study demonstrate about the LGBTQ+ movement?
3. How is this situation different from the controversy involving María José Martínez-Patiño?



Our culture is not heeding these warnings. The reason has little to do with science but a great deal to do with philosophy. Our society has embraced a belief philosophers call **expressive individualism**. This is the belief that people have their own desires and viewpoints and each person must be allowed to express those in order to be authentic—in order to be true to oneself. According to expressive individualism, life is not about conforming to norms (a society's or a religion's). It is about discovering who you are inside and then living that out in whatever way seems right to you. To criticize another person's lifestyle choices is, therefore, to question that person's right to be who he or she is—even if those choices involve harmful hormone treatments and surgery.¹⁶

Men Married or Cohabiting vs. Living in Parent's Home



MALE PASSIVITY

If life is about being the person you feel you are on the inside, then why even bother to grow up—if that's not who you really are? More and more, that is what many men are doing.

Historically, men have left their parents' home around the age of twenty, married, established themselves in a career, and raised a family. Now, however, many men never mature beyond their teen years. Some psychologists call this the **Peter Pan syndrome**, because these men remain attached to their childhood and refuse to conform to the demands of adulthood (as Peter Pan did in J. M. Barrie's story).¹⁷

How many men are living in their parents' basements? More than you may think. In 2014, 35 percent of men ages eighteen to thirty-four were living with their parents. That same year, only 28 percent were married or living with a partner.¹⁸ Of course, not all of those living with their parents were Peter Pans. Some were going to college or transitioning from one career to another. Nevertheless, the overall picture is grim. These days, a man in his twenties or early thirties is more likely to be living with his mom than his wife.

What kind of world will such men help to produce? Eric Madfis, a criminal justice professor at the University of Washington, says a world of senseless violence. Note what he has to say in the following quotation:

Mass murderers tend to be people who have failed throughout their lives in myriad ways. People who were bullied or picked on in school . . . who didn't get to date as many people as they wanted or the people that they wanted to. . . . They are often people who haven't performed their masculinity in ways that we traditionally value. . . . It's an alternative route to achieve your masculinity by committing a mass act of violence.¹⁹

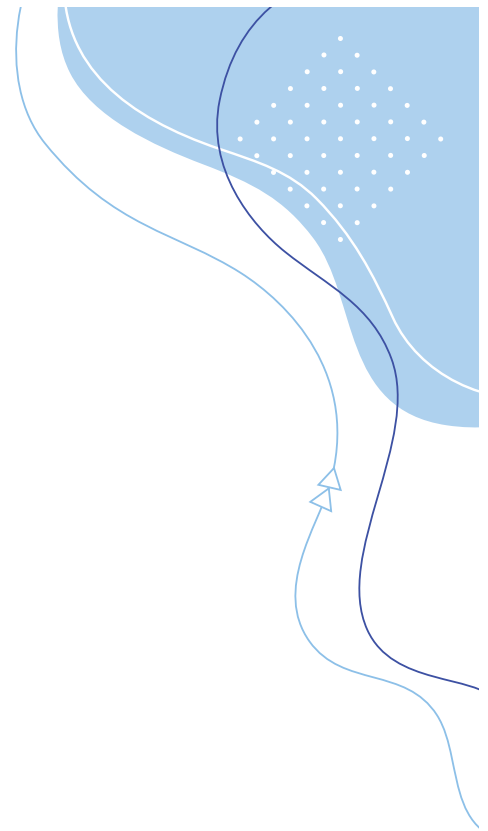
Madfis has studied mass shootings and discovered that some men who fail to launch into adulthood develop a sense of male grievance. They come to believe that they are *victims* rather than *failures*.

Of course, I am not claiming that every man living in his parents' house is a mass murderer. Those who engage in such acts are a tiny percentage of the group I'm describing. Most Peter Pans struggle with staying employed or maintaining a committed relationship; thoughts of violent acts are far from their minds. The problem, though, is that this group is huge. When men in these numbers choose

a life of passivity—often consuming large doses of misleading social media—the outlook for society is not good.

SECTION REVIEW 12.1

1. Currently, the ugliest expressions of male chauvinism are _____.
 - a. unequal pay for women and limits on their advancement
 - b. restrictions on birth control
 - c. sexual harassment and violence
 - d. all the above
2. What has feminism attempted to accomplish?
 - a. voting rights for women
 - b. abortion rights and government-funded childcare
 - c. equality for all women, including lesbians and transgender women
 - d. all the above
3. What explains the stunning rise in popularity of transgenderism?
 - a. a growing body of scientific data demonstrating it is good and healthy
 - b. the widespread acceptance of expressive individualism
 - c. the prevalence of genetically modified foods
4. How has Peter Pan syndrome caused problems in our society?
 - a. It leads some men to develop a sense of male grievance that may result in acts of violence.
 - b. It encourages men to be disrespectful to their parents.
 - c. It contributes to the spread of substance abuse in a community.
5. How has third-wave feminism undermined the cause of advocating for women's rights?
 - a. By advocating opposing marriage, it has left women confused about their role in society.
 - b. By securing equality for women in the workplace, it has placed undue burdens on women.
 - c. By extending women's rights to transgender women, it has called into question the whole idea of womanhood.
6. Expressive individualism is the belief that _____.
 - a. all individuals have the same value and each person should have equal standing before the law
 - b. each person has his or her own desires and viewpoints and each person should be allowed to express those without fear of disapproval from others
 - c. individuals should be free to make their own decisions but should also be held accountable for those decisions
7. How would you respond to this statement: "I disagree with the second and third waves of feminism, but I agree with the first wave. It was right for people to advocate for women's suffrage. I consider myself a first-wave feminist!"



GUIDING QUESTIONS

What does the Bible say about the fall's effects on gender?

Why is Romans 1:26–28 important for our understanding of gender and the fall?

12.2 Biblical Data on the Fall's Effects on Gender

Are same-sex desires sinful?

As the preceding summary demonstrates, issues related to gender have become very confusing and complex. How are Christians to make sense of these issues? They should begin by examining what the Bible teaches about the fall and how it has affected gender.

GENESIS 3:16–17

When God confronted the first man and woman in their sin, He revealed how sin would affect their relationships in the long road of fallenness that lay ahead.

Unto the woman he said, . . . Thy desire shall be to [or, contrary to] thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, . . . cursed is the ground for thy sake. (Gen. 3:16–17)

Here we see three ways in which sin damages gender. First, it convinces men to abandon their leadership role and become passive. God had called the man to protect the garden (Gen. 2:15). But when Adam was confronted with the serpent's attack, he capitulated to it. He did not lead; he followed. Second, sin often arouses in women a desire to resist the leadership God has placed in their lives. Here, the woman's leader was her husband, and God said that she would regularly have a desire contrary to him (3:16). Third, sin twists male leadership into male domination. The man was made to lovingly lead his wife, but when he faces resistance from her, sin will ignite in him a desire to "rule" her.

We see in this brief passage a toxic chemistry that often distorts male-female relations in our world. In the face of real threats, men often choose laziness and passivity. As problems then mount, women lose faith in their male leaders and seek to undermine them. Men then engage with the problems before them with wounded pride, and in so doing become harsh and cruel.

DEUTERONOMY 22:5

Toward the end of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses gave God's people various laws regarding how they were to live in the land He had promised them. These laws remain significant for us today because they reveal the kinds of behaviors God loves, and those He hates.

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God. (Deut. 22:5)

Because of the fall, people sometimes resist God's decision to make humans male and female (see Gen. 1:27). They show their rebellion by wearing the clothing of the opposite sex. God calls those who engage in it an "abomination." To God, such people are rejecting one of the most basic elements of His creational order.

It is important to acknowledge that this verse does not name a particular kind of clothing or a particular style. Clothing is different from century to century and from culture to culture. Each culture expresses "masculine" and "feminine" somewhat differently. But in each culture, there are patterns (or norms) for expressing masculinity and femininity. The point of Deuteronomy 22:5 is that

individuals ought to discern how their culture expresses creational norms for masculinity and femininity, and they should attempt to live by those cultural norms—unless those cultural norms are themselves violations of creational norms.

DEUTERONOMY 28:56–57

In the final chapters of Deuteronomy, Moses listed the curses God would pour out on His people if they proved unfaithful to the Mosaic Covenant. One of the most severe curses concerned what women would do when their cities were besieged (Deut. 28:56–57). The wording is so severe, I've decided not to quote it. But here's the point: women will become so desperate that they will eat their own children and do so greedily.

This curse is more than a description of extreme hunger. Most women in this situation would rather face starvation than eat their own children. But when God abandons people to their own sinfulness, they do terrible things. When a society falls under the judgment of God, women, instead of sheltering and nurturing their young (see Isa. 49:15), sometimes turn on them and make them the victims of their own selfishness and greed.

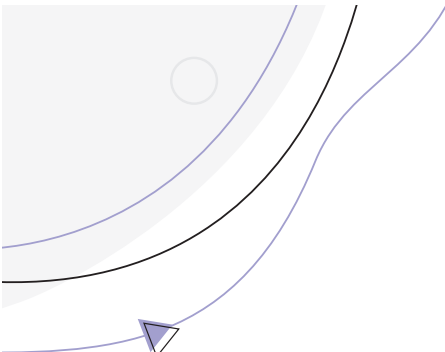
JUDGES 4:8–9

During the period of the judges, God's people repeatedly wandered into sin and idolatry. Early in that period, God raised up a woman named Deborah to serve as a judge in Israel. One day, God told Deborah to speak to a man named Barak and tell him to amass an army that would fight against the Canaanites and their captain, Sisera. Here's what happened next:

And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. (Judg. 4:8–9)

God made men to lead, but because of sin, they often choose not to. When that happens, God sometimes has a woman fulfill the leadership role that creationally belongs to the man. In such situations, the woman has not done the wrong thing. She may have, in fact, shown remarkable courage and faith. But the entire situation is a rebuke to the man (or men) that has shirked his responsibility.





ROMANS 1:26–28

Paul's letter to believers in Rome begins with a description of how sin corrupts the lives of individuals and of whole societies. People begin by trying to find a God-substitute (Rom. 1:22–23). As they persist in this sin, God turns them over to more and more humiliating sins. Eventually, they sink into debauchery and confusion:

God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. (Rom. 1:26–28)

When males desire sexual relations with other males, they are going against nature. They are sinning against the creational order that God has put in place. God wants males to be masculine in every part of their lives. That's why Paul tells the Corinthian believers that it is a sin to be "effeminate" (1 Cor. 6:9). Likewise, when females desire sexual relations with other females, they are sinning against God's creational order. He wants females to be feminine in every part of their lives, their sex lives included. Same-sex desires are wrong because they are unnatural desires—desires aimed at throwing off God's creational order. Same-sex sexual acts are wrong because they violate God's creational norms for masculine and feminine behavior.



CASE STUDY

Side A and Side B

Since the 1970s, the Gay Christian Movement has attempted to bridge the divide between what Christians have traditionally believed about same-sex relations and what many Christians feel about their own identity.²⁰ People within this movement have claimed that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality per se. It condemns lustful, loveless, violent, or uncommitted homosexuality. They believe it is acceptable for a Christian to be a practicing homosexual, provided he or she is in a committed and loving relationship.

In the last decade, a similar (but different) movement has emerged. It calls itself "Side B," to distinguish itself from the older movement (which it calls "Side A"). Side B believes that some Christians have same-sex desires that they will never be able to change. These people are gay, and they always will be. But since the Bible clearly teaches that homosexual behavior is wrong, Side B believes that gay Christians must not act on their sexual desires. They are called to a life of celibacy. They are not called to deny their gay identity—that would be harmful and dangerous. But they are called to refrain from homosexual sex.²¹

1. How are Side A and Side B similar? How are they different?
2. How does Romans 1:26–28 address the claims of Side A?
3. How does the same passage address the claims of Side B?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:14–15

In the middle of 1 Corinthians 11, Paul teaches that God’s will regarding gender extends even to a person’s hair: “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” (11:14). But, Paul says, it is just the opposite for women: “If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her” (11:15).

Paul doesn’t explain what exactly he means by “long.” Is it over the ears? Shoulder length? We don’t know. What we do know is that men are different than women, and this difference should be reflected in how they wear their hair. It is not just our clothing that should be aligned with our sex (see Deut. 22:5); it is also how we care for our bodies and how we present them to others.

When people ignore this truth, they bring shame on themselves because they are violating nature—they are departing from the creational norms for gender.

SECTION REVIEW 12.2

For questions 1–6, choose the Bible reference that best fits with each summary statement below. (Answers may be used once, more than once, or not at all.)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A Genesis 3:16–17 | B Deuteronomy 22:5 | C Deuteronomy 28:56–57 |
| D Judges 4:8–9 | E Romans 1:26–28 | F 1 Corinthians 11:14–15 |

1. It is disgraceful to dress like the opposite sex because it is a rejection of one of the most basic elements of God’s creation.
2. Men often choose passivity; women often respond by resisting male leadership; men then often respond by being domineering.
3. When a society falls under the judgment of God, women sometimes turn on their own children and make them the victims of their selfishness and greed.
4. Men are different from women, and this difference should be reflected in how they wear their hair.
5. God wants females to be feminine in every part of their lives, their sex lives included.
6. When men fail to lead, God sometimes calls a woman to fulfill the leadership role that creationally belongs to the man.
7. How would you respond to someone who said the following: “God doesn’t care what you wear. That’s why He told Samuel, ‘Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart’ (1 Sam. 16:7).”

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does the Bible address each of the gender controversies mentioned in this chapter?

How do these controversies violate the creational norms for gender?

How does the Bible's teaching on the fall help us respond to current issues related to gender?



Remember:

CREATIONAL NORMS / gender

- 1 God has created two genders—male and female—and each is based on a person's biological sex.**
- 2 Both genders equally bear God's image.**
- 3 A woman is an image-bearer of God created with the potential to be a mother.**
- 4 A man is an image-bearer of God created with the potential to be a father.**
- 5 Cultures express masculinity and femininity differently, but each expression must still be within the bounds of creational norms 1–4.**

12.3 Evaluating Current Gender Controversies

What do feminism and male chauvinism have in common?

Now that we've examined the Bible's teaching regarding the fall's effects on gender, let's put on our biblical lenses and evaluate the controversies we considered at the beginning of this chapter. As we said earlier, everyone recognizes there's something significantly wrong in those controversies. Our goal here, however, is to determine what is wrong *from a biblical worldview*. In particular, we want to discern how each controversy evidences some departure from the creational norms for gender.

MALE CHAUVINISM

The essence of male chauvinism—ancient and modern—is the belief that men are superior to women. It interprets the very real differences between men and women as reasons to treat women as less human than men. Because women are—on average—not as strong as men, are more relational than men, and are more emotional than men, they are not as human as men.

Clearly, this thinking is a denial of creational norm 2 for gender. Male chauvinism rejects the teaching of Genesis 1–2, of Genesis 1:27–28 in particular. Men and women are both image-bearers of God, and both are called to rule over God's world. Male chauvinism, then, is an instance of God's tragic prediction to the woman: "He shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16).

The consequences of male chauvinism are many. I will focus on the one that seems to me to be especially troubling from a biblical worldview.

Male chauvinism distorts our view of humanness. Biblically, being relational, emotionally sensitive, and nurturing is just as human as being assertive, inclined toward abstract reasoning, and self-confident. When people fail to understand this truth, their view of human flourishing becomes twisted. They come to think that maleness is strength and femaleness is weakness. They then seek to shape society, their workplaces, and their homes by this distorted view. To them, leadership is about driving people (often against their will), work is about productivity, and love is about sexual pleasure. In the end, human life becomes an ugly caricature of what God made it to be.

FEMINISM

Each of the three waves of feminism has sought to right the wrongs of male chauvinism. Each has done so by asserting that women are equal with men—which, of course, is true. But feminism has defined equality as *sameness*. Women and men are the same, the feminists tell us. But the

same as what? The same as *men*. Feminism has attempted to bring justice to the sexes not by elevating femininity but by making the feminine masculine.

For this reason, feminism—like male chauvinism—violates creational norm 2. It doesn't violate it in the same way, to be sure. Male chauvinism claims that women are not as intelligent, as talented, or as worthy of respect as men. Feminism certainly disagrees with that. But by defining equality as sameness, feminism shows that it makes the same basic error: it assumes that the essence of humanness is masculinity.

If we look at feminism through the corrective lens of Genesis 3, we realize that it is an instance of the tragic promise God made to the first woman: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband" (3:16). Feminism envies men for the calling they have received from God's creational design. God has made men with an outward orientation. He has made them to go out into the world, overcome the difficult challenges of creation, and then bring the benefits of that victory to those they love. Feminism wants to claim that calling for women.

By doing this, feminism violates creational norm 3 for gender. Women are called to motherhood. This is often a difficult and humbling task, mainly due to the suffering and pain brought about by the fall (Gen. 3:16). Nevertheless, it is a crucial task. Nurturing young people so they are mentally, spiritually, and morally prepared for life is essential for the survival of any society. Feminism, however, despises this calling because it keeps women from living the life of a man.

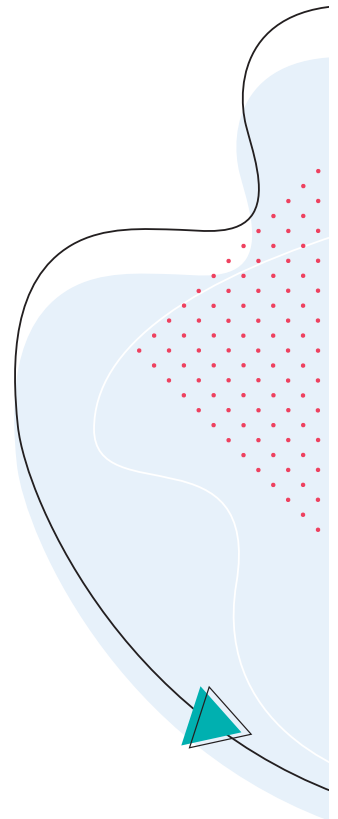
What a siege could do to women in ancient Israel (Deut. 28:56–57), feminism has done to the modern woman. Feminism has convinced millions of women that their children are not their responsibility. Children ought to be raised by people other than their parents. And if these children are not yet born, they may be killed and discarded with no pang of conscience. If male chauvinism hates women, feminism hates children.

TRANSGENDERISM

The transgender movement in our culture believes that biology has very little to do with a person's gender. Committed to expressive individualism, transgenderism believes that whatever a person thinks and feels on the inside ought to be expressed on the outside—and that everyone else is obligated to respond to this expression with affirmation. Transgenderism is, then, a clear violation of creational norm 1 for gender.

According to a biblical worldview, a person's gender is a creational reality, as firm and as fixed as the earth itself. This is the reason a woman should not wear men's clothing, and a man should not wear a woman's (Deut. 22:5). This is the reason that men should wear their hair in a masculine way, and women should wear theirs in a feminine way (1 Cor. 11:14–15). This is also the reason that men should not be effeminate (1 Cor. 6:9), and that homosexuality is wrong—whether it is a desire or an action (Rom. 1:26–28). God made males to be masculine and females to be feminine. To depart from this plan is to deny the reality God has made and to claim for ourselves the right to make creation what we want it to be.

We can try to usurp the Creator's role—people often do in a fallen world. But we cannot succeed, and we will never find the happiness we are looking for. We will instead find frustration and confusion. A transgender woman is not a woman; he is a man who is trying to become what he can never be. A transgender man is not a man; she is a woman who is also trying to achieve what is not possible. Since our culture is ruled by expressive individualism, my frank words sound strange these days, even dangerous. But our world still belongs to God, and the current acceptance of transgenderism does not prove that expressive individualism is right. It instead proves that our culture is under the judgment of God (Rom. 1:28).



MALE PASSIVITY

Given how individualistic our culture has become, we should not be surprised that many men decide never to face the challenges of adulthood. Adulthood requires a person to work hard and take risks. If you're a man, it requires you to lead. In today's culture, that means facing the feminist criticism that you are chauvinistic and even toxic. So why not live a life of passivity?

The problem with that thinking is that it goes against creation. When men avoid responsibility, they are violating creational norm 4 for gender.

Fatherhood is about leadership. It is about taking responsibility for the welfare of those who are not yet able to take responsibility for themselves. It requires a man to discern right from wrong, figure out a path toward the right, and muster the courage to lead others up that path. A father has to know how to take criticism, how to learn from it, and in some cases how to ignore it. A father persists in this endeavor—even in the face of unfair opposition—because he loves those under his charge more than he loves his own comfort, more than he loves his own reputation.

This is what manhood requires, and this is what terrifies many men these days. They are like Barak from Judges 4. They do not want to bear the burdens of masculinity, and they will do so only if someone like Deborah comes along to take charge. In the end, they will be denied the respect that every man craves: “The journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour” (Judg. 4:9).

Some men cannot bear this loss of honor, and it motivates them to shake off their passivity and move into action. Sadly, however, it is an action cast in the mold of Genesis 3:16: “He shall rule over thee.” Instead of embracing the role of a father, they become a misled hero. They think the wrong is the right, they reject the criticism they should heed, and they go on a fool's errand of harming others to prove that they really are men.

We live in a crazy, fallen world. Nowhere is that more obvious today than in issues related to gender.



CASE STUDY

The Happy Days of Masculinity

Happy Days was a sitcom that ran from 1974 to 1984, becoming the number one television program in 1976 and 1977. The show presented a nostalgic view of life in the American Midwest during the 1950s, through the eyes of a teenager named Richie Cunningham.

During the second season, the show struggled with poor ratings. So, the producers decided to shake things up and emphasize the role of a secondary character: Arthur Fonzarelli (“Fonzie” or “The Fonz”).

Fonzie was a high school dropout who had become a friend of Richie and the Cunninghams. Everyone thought of him as a man’s man: good-looking, emotionless (usually), a whiz at all things mechanical, and often disrespectful of authority. He wore a T-shirt and a leather jacket in most episodes and rode a motorcycle. He was the epitome of cool, *and* he was a ladies’ man. Pretty girls followed him adoringly.

Emphasizing the Fonz made all the difference. *Happy Days* rocketed to the top of the ratings, even as Fonzie merchandise and Fonzie catchphrases (“Ayyy” and “Sit on it!”) came to dominate American pop culture.



1. How did Fonzie portray masculinity in *Happy Days*?
2. Do a Web search for “Fonzie snaps his fingers.” How does this gag make women look?
3. What does the success of *Happy Days* reveal about how American pop culture viewed masculinity in the 1970s?
4. How was this view a departure from creational norm 5 for gender?

SECTION REVIEW 12.3

For questions 1–4, choose the Bible passage that is most associated with each controversy listed below.

1. Male chauvinism
2. Feminism
3. Transgenderism
4. Male passivity

- A** Genesis 3:16
- B** Deuteronomy 22:5
- C** Deuteronomy 28:56–57
- D** Judges 4:8–9

For questions 5–9, choose the creational norm for gender (1–5) that is most associated with each statement below. (Norms may be used once, more than once, or not at all.)

5. Male chauvinism claims that because women are different from men, they are not as human as men.
6. Feminism defines equality as sameness. For that reason, it does not seek to elevate femininity; it seeks to make it masculine.

7. Transgenderism rejects the idea that males ought to be masculine and females ought to be feminine.
8. When a culture expresses masculinity in ways that are contrary to creational norms, many people are led astray, and several forms of oppression result.
9. Many men these days are afraid to accept the leadership role God has given them. They are like Barak from Judges 4.
10. Proponents of transgenderism claim that María José Martínez-Patiño’s tragic story demonstrates that our sexuality and our gender are merely social constructions. What do you think her story demonstrates?

12

CHAPTER

REVIEW

CHAPTER SUMMARY

12.1 Gender Troubles

*Terms: male chauvinism | feminism | patriarchy | transgenderism | expressive individualism
Peter Pan syndrome*

- Male chauvinism is the belief that men are superior to women. Currently, its most common manifestations are sexual harassment and violence toward women.
- Feminism is the belief in and advocacy for the full equality of women with men in every part of life. Over the last century, it has unfolded in three waves.
- Transgenderism refers to people who see their gender identity as different from their sex at birth. The popularity of transgenderism has grown dramatically due to the rise of expressive individualism.
- Male passivity is the tendency of many men to avoid the responsibilities of adulthood. In 2014, more men in their twenties and early thirties were living with their parents than were living with a spouse.

12.2 Biblical Data on the Fall's Effects on Gender

- The Bible teaches that because we are fallen, we tend to resist the gender roles God has assigned to us as men and women. The Bible also teaches that God judges those who rebel against this aspect of His creation.
- Romans 1:26–28 teaches that same-sex desires—not just same-sex sexual relations—are sinful.

12.3 Evaluating Current Gender Controversies

- Male chauvinism is a violation of creational norm 2 for gender.
- Feminism is a violation of creational norm 2, but it also violates creational norm 3.
- Transgenderism rejects creational norm 1.
- Male passivity is a twisting of creational norm 4.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Recalling Facts

1. What are the three waves of feminism?
2. Define *expressive individualism*.
3. What is the “toxic chemistry” described in Genesis 3:16–17?

Understanding Concepts

4. How do we know that male chauvinism is still a problem in our culture?
5. How are feminism and male chauvinism similar?
6. How does transgenderism undermine feminism?
7. Why has transgenderism gained widespread acceptance in just a few years?
8. Why are Deuteronomy 22:5 and 1 Corinthians 11:14–15 important for evaluating transgenderism?
9. How would you explain the following statement: “If male chauvinism hates women, feminism hates children”?
10. Why does male passivity sometimes turn into male grievance?

Critical Thinking

11. Of the -isms described in Section 12.1, which do you think has been the most damaging to our society? Why?
12. Respond to the following statement. (Use Romans 1:26–28 in your answer.)

God intended sex to be reserved for the lifelong covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. Therefore, God calls all believers (queer and straight alike) to the vocation of celibacy within community or to a monogamous marriage with a member of the opposite sex. Still this does not [remove] sexual orientation. Therefore queer identity is a healthy way of communicating one’s experience and desires.²²

13. María José Martínez-Patiño told a reporter, “I knew I was a woman . . . in the eyes of medicine, God, and most of all in my own eyes.”²³ How does this statement show the influence of expressive individualism? Do you think Martínez-Patiño was a man or a woman? (Hint: Consider using Matthew 19:12 in your answer.)





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REDEEMING MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

*How should we respond to the
fall's effects on gender?*



When Ryland was three years old, she told her parents that she was a boy.

At first, they thought she was just being silly. But she was persistent and insistent. She didn't like playing with dolls, she hated wearing dresses, and she couldn't stand her long hair. Every morning was a battle, just to get her ready for the day. When Ryland was four, she announced, "Maybe when my family dies, then I can cut my hair, and I can be a boy."¹

That's when Ryland's parents realized they had to do something. They decided to let her transition to being a boy. Because Ryland was so young, no surgery or hormone treatments were needed (yet). What was needed, they believed, was support. They communicated with the extended family that their child was a boy and should be treated like a boy. "If you choose not to support our decision," they wrote in a letter, "please don't expect our relationship to grow from here."²

These parents felt they had no choice. They had read on the internet that 41 percent of transgender people attempt to commit suicide. Ryland's mom said the decision came down to one question: "Do I want a living son or a dead daughter?"³

As the first day of kindergarten approached, they became concerned about Ryland's school. Would the students and the teachers support their decision? "I knew," Ryland's mom said, "that I needed a whole army of teachers protecting Ryland at all times."⁴ The school did indeed gather around Ryland for support and affirmation, and the family's decision was praised. Ryland's teacher later told a reporter, "Thank goodness that this little boy now gets to live as his true self."⁵

Ryland's parents understand that there are many challenges ahead for their child. But whatever happens, they are convinced they're doing the right thing. "If I have to keep Ryland in a bubble for the rest of his life where he's happy here, then I'll do that," Ryland's mom said. But then she acknowledged, "You can only do what you can do and hope that people will open their mind."⁶

What do you think? Did Ryland's parents make the right decision?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What does the Bible teach about identity, grace, and repentance?

How do grace and repentance enable a believer to have victory over sin?

What are five practices of godliness that help believers mortify their sins?

How do we know that believers must learn to mortify their sins?

13.1 Identity, Grace, and Repentance

Is God's grace all a believer needs for victory over sin?

Creation is about *what*. What are the norms God has established for our lives? Fall is also about *what*. What has sin done to God's good world? But redemption is about *how*. How do we press back against fallen direction? How do we bend the pole of gender away from male chauvinism, feminism, transgenderism, and male passivity toward the creational norms that hold for gender?

Like all the redemption chapters in the rest of this course, Chapter 13 will be practical and, at points, painfully personal. As we learned in Chapter 1, worldview leads to action. So, our consideration of redemption won't be complete until we've asked ourselves what individual and cultural actions we are willing to take. Our method will be to examine the key biblical truths that inform redeeming this part of life—in this case identity, grace, and repentance. We'll formulate strategies for pursuing redemptive direction, and then we'll apply those strategies to our lives.



Remember:

CREATIONAL NORMS / *gender*

- 1** God has created two genders—male and female—and each is based on a person's biological sex.
- 2** Both genders equally bear God's image.
- 3** A woman is an image-bearer of God created with the potential to be a mother.
- 4** A man is an image-bearer of God created with the potential to be a father.
- 5** Cultures express masculinity and femininity differently, but each expression must still be within the bounds of creational norms 1–4.





IDENTITY

The fall's effects on gender and sexuality are difficult to deal with because gender and sexuality are deeply woven into our being. For that reason, redeeming gender can feel more like amputation than restoration. “*I am transgender; this is who I am!*” When it comes to issues related to gender, pursuing redemptive direction can feel like a denial of one’s identity.

Our culture, with its heavy emphasis on expressive individualism, makes this feeling seem more real than the earth itself. From animated films for children to advice given by counselors, we are constantly being told, “Just learn to be yourself, and don’t trust anyone who says otherwise.”

People may feel strongly about living contrary to God’s creational plan, but how they *feel* is not who they *are*. They *are* image-bearers of God—we all are. And since we are made in God’s image, we are obligated to live for God and not for ourselves. By virtue of our creation, we are God’s, and He has determined that some of us are men and some of us are women (Gen. 1:27).

This is the truth about our identity. Why do so many people not accept this truth? Sin. Our sense of identity has been distorted by sin. To use the language of Genesis, sin has convinced us that we are gods instead of God’s creatures (see the serpent’s words in Gen. 3:4–5). We have been fooled into thinking that we can make our lives whatever we want them to be. Sin has made us victims of mistaken identity. Sin has left us with a kind of amnesia. We have forgotten that we are—and will always be—image-bearers of God called to serve Him as either a man or a woman. So long as we do not accept the truth about our identity, we will be confused and troubled. We cannot experience God’s blessing if we refuse to accept who He made us to be.



GRACE

We must understand and believe the truth of our status as image-bearers in order to push in a redemptive direction. Knowledge of this truth, however, is powerless to move redemption forward without divine grace. Like the law that God gave Israel at Sinai, creational law by itself does not heal or transform. Without divine grace, law only condemns.

God's grace is the favor He shows to undeserving sinners. *Common grace* is the favor God shows constantly to all people everywhere, even to His enemies. *Saving grace* is the favor God shows in bringing sinners to faith in the gospel and in restoring them, eventually, to all His creational norms.

Saving grace restores in two crucial ways. First, *justifying grace* unites the sinner with Jesus Christ, the perfect image-bearer of God. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, those who repent and believe the gospel are "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3–11). No longer are they condemned in Adam (1 Cor. 15:22). God does not see them clothed in their sins of lust, envy, doubt, and pride. God instead sees them as clothed in the righteousness of Christ. He sees them as completely restored to His plan for them. They are forgiven of all their sins. He hears their prayers and accepts them into His fellowship.

If we are followers of Jesus Christ—if we have repented and believed the gospel—we ought to see ourselves as "in Christ." We are not to "learn to be ourselves" (not in the

way our culture uses these words). We ought to see our identity as being in Christ. We are not gay or transgender, chauvinist or feminist. We are in Christ, accepted before God as the image-bearers He made us to be. This understanding of our identity should fuel our attempts to live more and more by God's plan.

Second, *sanctifying grace* enables us to live for God. Grace is more than forgiveness; it is also power. In the New Testament, *grace* is often used to refer to the strength God gives believers so they can do His will (see 2 Cor. 12:9). Paul taught that God offers this kind of grace in abundance to believers. That's the reason every Christian can live in victory: "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). Because of what Jesus has done, the storm clouds of the law and its condemnation are gone. Now, for the believer, the whole sky above is the sunshine of God's enabling grace. Every moment of every day, God's strength is available for resisting sin and doing what is right.

But it's important to understand that God's grace comes to us through *means*. Just as you have to pull back the curtains and open the windows to receive the sun's rays, so also, to receive the strengthening power of God's grace, you must make use of the means of grace God provides.

Through the centuries, Christians have identified several crucial means of grace (see Acts 2:42). I'll mention three. First, God gives us His grace through Scripture. As we read



GRACE REPEN

the Bible and listen to it preached, we receive supernatural power that can transform our lives by the Spirit's enabling. Second, God gives us grace through prayer. When we pray, we commune with God. This communion adjusts our focus and our desires. And as we ask God to meet our needs and change us, He answers by giving us more grace. Third, God gives us grace through our fellowship with believers. As we talk with other believers about our spiritual needs, our doubts, and our questions, God encourages us with their words and conveys to us the grace we need to grow in our walk of faith.

REPENTANCE

The ideas we have considered so far are often misunderstood. That's because identity and grace must go together with repentance. Without repentance, grace does not work as it is meant to. Grace is short-circuited without repentance. So long as that is the case, a person's true identity will not be realized.

So, what is repentance? **Repentance** is turning away from sin. It consists in hating the sin we once loved and seeking to be free of it so we can love and serve God as we ought. This is what the prodigal son experienced when he came to his senses and realized he would be better off in his father's house than in the pigsty of his own selfishness (Luke 15:17–20). This is how the Christian life begins for every

believer. A person starts to follow Christ by repenting of sin and believing the gospel (Mark 1:15).

But repentance is more than just the beginning of the journey. For the Christian, it is a daily task. The means of grace—Scripture, prayer, fellowship—bring God's enabling power near to us. But old habits, wrong thinking, and evil desires do not vanish automatically. These things must be repented of day by day, moment by moment—as often as they raise their ugly heads. If the means of grace are the windows we must open, repentance requires us to pull the blindfold of our sins from our faces. It's by God's grace that we can recognize our sin and desire to be free of it. But that next step, repentance, must be taken. As one author has said, "You can't bypass repentance to get to grace."⁷ Grace leads us to repentance, and repentance leads us to more grace. But if we fail to repent, we will fail to keep redemptive direction going. The pole will stop moving toward vertical. Soon amnesia will again overtake us.

This is the reason that the Bible presents growth in godliness not as a magical experience but as a battle. God does not wave a magic wand over our sin habits and with a "poof" send them away. He instead gives us weapons to fight sin, and then tells us to use them (Eph. 6:10–18). And the fight God calls us to is a fight to the death. Sin dwells within us, and it longs to have its way in our lives. If we are to live for God, we will have to "mortify" (or "put to death") the evil urges that live deep inside (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5).



People who mortify their sin through daily, moment-by-moment repentance have learned that they need to engage in certain practices of godliness. By disciplining themselves with these practices, they have come to understand that God's grace *fuels* their struggle against sin; it does not *replace* the struggle. These practices can be described in many ways. Here's a way I have found to be very helpful.⁸



1

Starve sinful urges.

Sin cannot feed itself. It lives on the food we give it. For example, sexual sinners feed their sin with immoral relationships or pornography (or both). On the other hand, people who misunderstand their gender identity feed their misunderstanding with the approval of like-minded friends, often through social media. To be changed by God's grace, we may need to make new friends, disconnect from social media, or get rid of our smartphones. We also may need to find a godly, mature friend who can provide us with the accountability we need—a friend who will also help us pursue the means of grace.

2

Deal with underlying causes.

Sins related to gender have their roots in deeper problems. A girl who is convinced that she is a boy may be nourishing the sin of envy. She wants for herself the experiences and opportunities that God has reserved for boys. She will never have victory over this sin of identity until she repents of her sin at its root—the sin of envy. All of us are tempted to think that the surface of our sin is all there is to our sin. Through the graces of God's Word, prayer, and fellowship, we can uncover our deeper sins. We must then learn to repent of each sin as soon as it pops up in our thoughts. If we let sinful thoughts grow, they will become strong and overwhelming. But if we attack them immediately with God's truth and grace, we can overcome them.

SECTION REVIEW 13.1

For questions 1–5, choose the statement that is most associated with the Bible's teaching on

A identity **B** grace **C** repentance

1. Because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, believers are forgiven of all their sins and are given power to live a godly life.
2. We cannot grow in godliness unless we turn away from our sins day by day, moment by moment.
3. People get confused about gender because sin has left them with a kind of amnesia.
4. Scripture, prayer, and fellowship are three indispensable tools God gives believers to enable them to grow in godliness.
5. By virtue of our creation, we are God's, and He has determined that some of us are men and some of us are women (Gen. 1:27).
6. How do grace and repentance work together in believers' lives?
 - a. Grace takes away their hunger for sin and makes repentance the only thing they desire.
 - b. Grace leads them to repentance, and repentance leads them to more grace.
 - c. Grace forgives them, and repentance makes them victorious over sin.

3**Battle against all sins.**

It is easy to focus on the sins we find embarrassing, while we leave the others untouched. A young man who is addicted to pornography may want to be free of his addiction simply because he likes a girl and wants her to like him back. But the boy may have no interest in obeying his parents or getting involved in church. Before he can get victory over the sin he finds embarrassing, he needs to realize that God has no interest in half-measures. Saving grace is meant to deliver us from *all* our sins. To be free of pornography, the boy needs to repent of all known sin.

4**Nurture faith in God's goodness.**

God calls us to hate our sin and destroy it. This is hard work, and the negative emotions sin produces can leave us feeling drained. We need to remind ourselves that God is good. He calls us to fight against sin, but not because He wants us to be miserable. God is like a coach or a trainer. He puts us through the rigors of fighting against sin so we can experience the full life He has planned for us (1 Cor. 9:24–25). One way we nurture faith in God's goodness is by reading the Bible. On every page, Scripture reveals God's kindness and love. The more we drink from this well, the more strength we will have to continue our fight against sin (Ps. 73:23–26).

5**Enjoy good things.**

Because God is good, He gives good gifts to His creatures. In fact, everything that is good in this world comes ultimately from Him (James 1:17). Beautiful music, an exhilarating hike, time relaxing with friends, regular exercise—all of these are good things, and because they are good, they are gifts from our God. In our fight against sin, we can get fooled into thinking that everything we enjoy is wrong and must be avoided. But many of the things we enjoy every day are—or can be—good and God-honoring. Fill your life with these things and thank God for them. As you focus on enjoying good things, you will find they fuel your faith in God's goodness.



For questions 7–11, choose the statement that is most associated with one of the following practices of godliness:

7. Before we can get victory over the sins we find embarrassing, we need to realize that God is not interested in half-measures.
8. Fill your life with things like beautiful music, regular exercise, and fun times with friends, and then thank God for these blessings.
9. To be changed by God's grace, we may need to make new friends, disconnect from social media, or get rid of our smartphones.
10. A girl who is convinced she is a boy may be nourishing the sin of envy.
11. God puts us through the rigors of fighting against sin so we can experience the full life He has planned for us (1 Cor. 9:24–25).
12. How would you respond to the following statement? (Use Romans 8:13 in your answer.) "Grace, and grace alone, gives a believer victory over sin. When you fail, ask God for more grace. If He chooses to give it to you, you will have victory. If He doesn't, you won't. In that case, learn to be content with what He has chosen for you. The important thing to understand is this: God decides whether you will have victory. You don't."

- 1** Starve sinful urges.
- 2** Deal with underlying causes.
- 3** Battle against all sins.
- 4** Nurture faith in God's goodness.
- 5** Enjoy good things.



13.2 Redeeming Womanhood

How does a girl become a godly woman in the twenty-first century?

We live in a society that does not value God's plan for gender. In particular, feminism and transgenderism have severely distorted people's view of what it means to be a woman. But God can overcome even the most tragic distortions. As you read the following two stories, notice the role that identity, grace, and repentance played in helping Grace and Rosaria move toward the creational norms that hold for womanhood.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does the Bible's teaching on identity, grace, and repentance help a person overcome transgenderism and feminism?

How do we show someone that the Bible's view of womanhood is right and that feminism's view is wrong?

What can Christians do to help girls value biblical womanhood?

What should young ladies do now to prepare themselves for godly womanhood?

TRANSFORMING GRACE⁹

Grace was raised in a loving, stable Christian home. Her parents, Seth and Eva, were involved in their church, and they encouraged their children to be involved as well.

When Grace was twelve, her friends invited her to visit the Gender & Sexualities Alliance club at school. In the club, students talked a lot about their bodies and how they wished they looked different. Although Grace was uncomfortable with the idea of transgenderism, she sympathized with the other students' concerns about body image. She, too, felt uncomfortable with her body.

Grace was particularly bothered by the immodesty of the girls in her public school. It seemed that their behavior made all the girls feel like sexual objects. She wished that being a girl didn't mean being sexualized. She began to wonder what it would be like to be transgender. If she wasn't a girl, she could escape the sexual meat market of her middle school. Furthermore, if she was a boy, she could—with the help of hormone treatments—be tall and strong like her brother.¹

1. *How were Grace's motives for becoming transgender a mix of good and bad?*

Eventually, she and her friends decided to "come out." She made her announcement through an email to her parents: "Mom and Dad, I need to tell you I'm not actually a girl."

Grace's parents were devastated. They had no idea she was thinking about being transgender. Eva turned to the school for advice and then to Grace's pediatrician. But they seemed unwilling to help. "They all tell you you have to affirm or your child will commit suicide," she said. "But my background is in education and psychology, and I knew that didn't make sense."

Eva and Seth turned to their church for help, but they found very little support. The leadership was interested but ill-equipped—they had little experience in helping families work through these kinds of issues.

Eva and Seth found their footing when they asked themselves, “What do we know about God?” That question led them to three stabilizing truths based on Scripture. First, God has made us in His own image. Since that’s true, we don’t *invent* our identity. It is a *gift* He gives us. Second, God has woven us together so that we are single, unified beings. He doesn’t mix up male souls in female bodies or female souls in male bodies. Third, God has integrated our sex into every part of our physical being. From our chromosomes to our hormones, to our brains, to our sex organs, to our bones and muscles—we are male or female through and through. So, if we are going to live in the truth, our gender must align with our birth sex.²

2. *How do the previous two paragraphs demonstrate a failure and a success with the means of grace?*

These ideas were logical, and they made sense to Grace. There was, however, still a huge uphill battle ahead. That’s because Seth and Eva weren’t the only people vying for their daughter’s attention.

Grace’s friends and teachers were constantly affirming her decision to be a boy. “Everyone in school was like, ‘You’re amazing! We love you!’” Grace said. “All these kids who I’d previously occasionally said hi to in the hallway were going out of their way to say hi to me. I was cool.” Her new identity also gave her a great deal of power. As she would later observe, “One of the biggest themes is, if your parent agrees with you, you need to be kind and loving. . . . But if parents are opposed, hurt them as much as you like. They aren’t even human beings.”³

3. *According to this paragraph, why was it difficult for Grace to embrace her true identity?*

Seth and Eva did what they knew to do to help their daughter. They continued to talk with her about these issues, and they removed her internet access. But she persisted in her male identity for the next two years. Toward the end of the eighth grade, they discovered she was using the boys’ restroom at school—with the school’s approval. That’s when they decided to begin homeschooling.

Grace hated homeschooling at first, but her parents felt they had no choice—they had to get her away from her friends. It was also during this time that her parents learned how to spend quality time with her. They did things together that she enjoyed—like going to her favorite restaurant. They talked about things unrelated to gender, schoolwork, or any of her “problems.” But Seth and Eva were also firm. They would not let her dress like a boy, they continued to call her “Grace” (instead of “Duke,” her preferred name), and they required her to attend church.⁴

4. *What two “practices of godliness” (Section 13.1) were Grace’s parents trying to implement?*

Eventually, her confidence in her male identity began to show signs of weakening. The first cracks appeared when students in her homeschool co-op asked her why she was transgender. They wanted to know how transgenderism could be real if it was almost unheard of until just recently.

“I decided to come up with irrefutable arguments,” Grace said. “I researched and researched. But I couldn’t do it. I searched and searched for the logic behind it, but there was nothing to find, because there is no logic behind it.”⁵

5. *Which means of grace may have been at work at this point in Grace’s story?*

She began to wonder if she had been wrong, and she started to toy with her former identity. One day, she painted her nails pink. But the next day, she wrote “he/him” on top of them. She didn’t want to believe in something she couldn’t defend, but she also didn’t want to give up on her masculine identity.

Grace never became an atheist. No matter how far she went on her transgender journey, she never doubted that God was real. Her male identity wasn’t a rejection of the idea of God; it was based on her view of the fall and its effects: “I led myself into believing God made me a male, but the brokenness of the world caused me to be in a girl’s body.”

But the more she thought about these things, the more she realized that her view was full of contradictions. That realization led her to seek God: “Logic brought me to prayer, and prayer brought me back.”⁶

6. *Which means of grace is emphasized in this paragraph?*

The crisis moment came one day toward the end of the ninth grade. She was walking the neighbor’s dog, and it hit her: “I knew I couldn’t be a trans kid and a Christian at the same time. . . . I had to choose. Very begrudgingly, I told God, ‘Fine. If you made me to be a woman, whatever. Fine.’”

That was when Grace stopped trying to be a boy and accepted that she was a girl. It was still hard, though. She felt very uncomfortable for a while, but she also felt relief.

Grace’s transgenderism is now in the past, and she’s very glad for that. She and her mom provide counsel for families struggling with these issues. Eva recognizes that not every family’s story will end as hers did. Sometimes a transition becomes cemented deep into the person’s identity. But deeply rooted transitions can still be reversed. God can overcome even the most tragic of distortions.



WEBQUEST

Helping Girls Grow Up Godly

One of the saddest details from Grace's story was the lack of help she found from her church. The church is the hub for each of the means of grace. If the church can't help those who struggle, many people will fail to find the grace they need to overcome sin.

TASK

Let's say you have become concerned that your church is not doing enough to help families raise their daughters to become godly women. Several women in the church have also felt this way and have begun to make plans regarding what the church could do to help families in this area. They know you are taking a worldview course, and they are interested in your opinion. Before the women's group meets with the church leadership, they would like you to give a report on ways the church could help families pursue redemptive direction with their girls.

PROCEDURE

1. Research the struggles girls are facing today by searching for "top ten struggles of girls today."
2. Research what some churches are doing to help girls and their families by searching for "church ministry to girls."

3. Brainstorm ways to relate the four practices of faithful presence (Section 10.4) and the three truths of identity, grace, and repentance (Section 13.1) to the ways your church may help girls and their families.
4. Develop your presentation using the following points:
 - the difficulties girls in the church are facing
 - things our church can do
 - ministering through faithful presence
 - helping girls understand identity, grace, and repentance
5. Deliver your presentation to your class or your family.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this kind of church ministry is not to replace the parents or the home but to help the family function as it should. When temptation and sin assault a family, the regular ministries of the church—guided by the church leadership—can help restore relationships.

Promise Keepers: a Christian organization dedicated to helping men become godly leaders

ROSARIA'S STORY¹⁰

In the late 1990s, Dr. Rosaria Champagne was an up-and-coming scholar in the English department at Syracuse University. She was a proponent of third-wave feminism and an expert in Queer Theory (the study of gay and lesbian lifestyles). She also practiced what she taught, living in several lesbian relationships over the course of almost a decade.

When the Promise Keepers* came to town and used the Syracuse campus for a rally in 1997, Rosaria wrote a critiquing editorial in the local newspaper. Over

the next few weeks, she received many letters, some complementary and some critical. But there was one letter—from a Pastor Ken Smith—that was neither. He didn't agree with her, but his letter was kind, engaging, and full of questions.

Rosaria decided to reach out to Smith. In the conversation that followed, he invited her to his home to enjoy a meal with him and his wife, Floy. Rosaria agreed, thinking that this would help her do research for a book on Christians and their strange beliefs.

Over the next two years, Rosaria would be in the Smiths' home more than five hundred times,¹¹ asking any and every question she could think of. Ken and Floy kindly answered each question.

During that same period, Rosaria read through the Bible seven times.¹² The Bible both captivated her and infuriated her. She was captivated by its epic narrative and the deep and complex way it dealt with philosophical themes. But she was infuriated by its worldview—a worldview in which God was sovereign, men were called to lead, and Sodom and Gomorrah were judged.

She soon discovered, however, that the Bible possessed a power she was not able to resist. The more she read Scripture, the more she was convinced of its truth and of her guilt before God. In February 1999, she attended Smith's church for the first time.¹

That night, I prayed, and asked God if the gospel message was for someone like me, too. I viscerally felt the living presence of God as I prayed. . . . I prayed that if Jesus was truly a real and risen God, that he would change my heart. . . . I prayed that he would give me the strength of mind to follow him and the character to become a godly woman.¹³

1. What do the previous two paragraphs demonstrate about Scripture?



APOLOGETICS

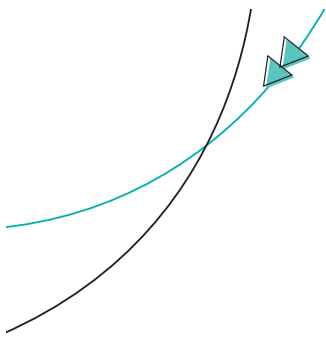
Responding to Feminism

Quoted below is a famous passage from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, a foundational book for modern feminism. If you became friends with someone committed to Beauvoir's thinking, would you know how to show that person the weaknesses of feminism? Could you use the two complementary moves to argue against Beauvoir? (See Section 3.3.)

One is not born, but rather becomes, woman. No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this. . . . Inasmuch as he exists for himself, the child would not grasp himself as sexually differentiated. . . . [Girls and boys] apprehend the universe through their eyes and hands, and not through their sexual parts. The drama of birth and weaning takes place in the same way for infants of both sexes; they have the same interests and pleasures. . . . Up to twelve, the girl is just as sturdy as her brothers; she shows the same intellectual aptitudes; she is not barred from competing with them in any

area. If well before puberty and sometimes even starting from early childhood she already appears sexually specified, it is not because mysterious instincts immediately destine her to . . . motherhood but because the intervention of others in the [child's] life is almost originary.¹⁴

1. What is Beauvoir's main point in this passage? (What is her thesis?)
2. How does Beauvoir support her thesis?
3. What problems do you notice in the way she supports her thesis? (Hint: Make use of Section 11.1 in your answer.)
4. Feminism seeks to advocate for women's rights. Why is Beauvoir's thesis a threat to that goal? (See Section 12.1.)
5. How is a biblical view of womanhood different from feminism? How is the biblical view consistent when it comes to advocating for women's rights?



The next day, when Rosaria woke up, she still felt like a lesbian. In time, she would learn that repentance and obedience must come before changed feelings. Only after repentance does God change how people feel about themselves.

I started to obey God in my heart one step at a time. I broke up with my girlfriend. . . . I started to go to [Ken Smith's] church fully, in my heart, for the purpose of worshiping God. . . . I started to receive the friendship that the church members offered me.¹⁵

In particular, she sought counsel from the godly women in the church. She asked them many difficult and embarrassing questions. They answered each one and assured her of their love. “Slowly but steadily, my feelings did start to change—feelings about myself as a woman and feelings about what sexuality really is.”¹⁶ **2**

2. Which means of grace is emphasized in this paragraph?

Rosaria's change of heart took a long time because, as she would later say, “One does not repent for a sin of identity in one session. Sins of identity have multiple dimensions.”¹⁷ As she dealt with the various dimensions of her sin, she slowly found healing. A steady diet of Scripture was essential: “the word of God got to be bigger inside me than I.”¹⁸ The more she read the Bible and surrendered to its teachings, the more it overcame her former identity. **3**

3. How was repentance involved in Rosaria's reading of Scripture?

Through these difficult weeks and months, Rosaria learned that repentance is more than just the gateway to Christian conversion. It is a way of life. Many years later she reflected on the centrality of repentance to the Christian life by saying the following:

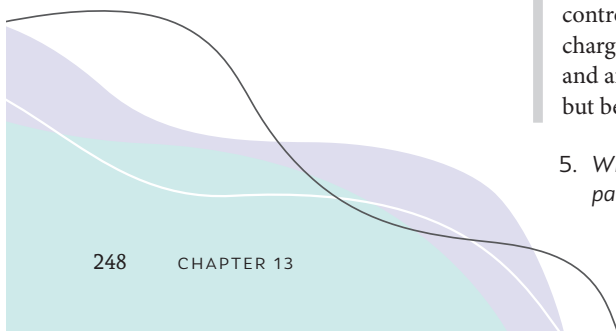
Repentance is not just a conversion exercise. It is the posture of the Christian. . . . Repentance is our daily fruit, our hourly washing, our minute-by-minute wakeup call, our reminder of God's creation, Jesus' blood, and the Holy Spirit's comfort. Repentance is the only no-shame solution to a renewed Christian conscience because it proves the obvious: that God was right all along. To the sexual sinner, repentance feels like death—because it is. The “you” who once was is no longer, even if your old feelings remain.¹⁹ **4**

4. According to this paragraph, how does repentance change a person's identity?

As Rosaria engaged in the daily discipline of repentance, she discovered that her main problem was not sexual. Sexual sin is the result of deeper problems. “I learned,” she said, “that sin roots not in outward behaviors, but in patterns of thinking.”²⁰ She discovered that pride and the desire for control were her besetting sins.

The truth is, outside of Christ, I am a manipulator, liar, power-monger, and controller. In my relationships with men and with women, I had to be in charge. I killed with kindness and slayed with gifts. I bought people's loyalties and affections. . . . [M]y sexuality was sinful not because it was lesbian *per se* but because it wasn't Christ-controlled.²¹ **5**

5. Which of the “practices of godliness” is emphasized in the previous two paragraphs?



She realized that the goal of her daily repentance was not to become heterosexual. It was to be controlled by Jesus Christ, her Lord. But that meant she had to deal with more than her pride. She also had to confront her wrong views of gender: “I could not possibly be a godly woman if I didn’t even know how to be a woman.”²²

Rosaria turned again to the women in her church for help. They pointed her to Proverbs 31. The woman of Proverbs 31 is accomplished, intelligent, and influential—all the things that she had been. But this woman was not a controller. She did not reject the roles God had assigned to men and women, and she did not try to be a man. The woman of Proverbs 31 gave her life to nurturing others.

For a time, Rosaria thought she could be that kind of woman at Syracuse University. Over the next year, however, she learned that this was not God’s will for her life. Eventually, she resigned the job she had loved and began teaching in a Christian college. There, she poured her life into her students, nurturing them as the woman of Proverbs 31. Every Sunday morning, she took a group of students to church. After church, she welcomed them into her small home, where she would answer their questions and offer counsel. Then, in the evenings, they would all return to church for the evening service.⁶

6. *How was Rosaria fulfilling creational norm 3 for gender?*

In the middle of this busy life, Rosaria met Kent Butterfield, a man studying to become a pastor. She was impressed with his commitment to obeying God regardless of the cost. She was also impressed with his kindness, generosity, and love for showing hospitality—even though (as a student) he had very little to be hospitable with. The two developed an interest in one another and started dating. On May 19, 2001, they were married.

Rosaria Champagne was now Rosaria Butterfield. As a feminist and a lesbian, she had scorned marriage as an evil and unjust institution. But on that day in May, she vowed to submit to the leadership of a man whose name she took as her own. This change was not easy, but Rosaria discovered that it was good. She soon learned to receive it as God’s gracious gift.

When you come to Christian marriage from a feminist perspective, the most difficult idea to embrace is that of a husband’s headship and a wife’s submission. When I’m looking at this paradigm from a secular perspective, it smacks of the abuses of patriarchy. But when I’m seeing it through Christ-centered eyes . . . Kent’s headship and my submission have been a source of comfort and solidarity. When Christ is at the center of our marriage, Kent’s headship and my submission have allowed us to be a functional team.²³⁷

7. *How does this paragraph affirm creational norm 2 for gender?*

Hard times, however, still lay ahead. Rosaria learned that she was not able to have children.²⁴ She was heartbroken.

But a woman’s longing to be a mother is not easily set aside. God, in His kindness, showed her other ways to fulfill her calling. Kent and Rosaria applied to be foster parents and began looking for opportunities to adopt. Over the next several years, they fostered many children and adopted four. Their first adopted child was a boy named Knox. He came into their home at five months of age. “I loved him immediately,” she said, “with a love I didn’t know existed.” That is how it has been with all her children.



Rosaria's life is very different now than it was in the 1990s. Then, she was a scholar, exploring the frontiers of a controversial, edgy academic discipline. Now, she is a wife and mom who opens her home every week to friends and strangers alike, cooking for them and ministering to them. How does she feel about this change?

I wish that others knew this: Pastor's wives get the cream of the ministry, even as we sacrifice certain aspects of

our personal, private, and family lives to have this. I have found my life as Kent's wife to be full, rich, amusing, edifying, and exciting. I have tasted a small bit of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I would not trade this life for anything.²⁵ **8**

8. *How would you describe Rosaria's identity now? What caused her identity to change?*

SECTION REVIEW 13.2

1. How did fellowship fail to help Grace in her struggle with transgenderism?
 - a. Her church shunned her and made her feel ashamed.
 - b. The church leaders wanted to help, but they didn't know how.
 - c. The people at her church affirmed her decision to be a boy.
2. What two "practices of godliness" did Grace's parents employ when they started to homeschool her?
 - a. They were attempting to starve her sinful urges, and they were giving her opportunities to enjoy good things.
 - b. They were helping her battle against all sins, and they were reminding her to nurture faith in God's goodness.
 - c. They were dealing with underlying causes, and they were providing her with effective accountability.
3. How did the Word of God and prayer lead Grace to restoration?
 - a. The Word of God showed her just how selfish her old friends were, and prayer gave her hope that she could be happy again.
 - b. The Word of God conveyed a mysterious sense of calm, and prayer reminded her that God was in control.
 - c. The Word of God gave her logical reasons to reject her transgenderism, and prayer brought her back to accepting her birth gender.
4. What role did the Word of God play in Rosaria's transformation?
 - a. The more she read the Bible and submitted to its teachings, the more it overcame her former identity.
 - b. The Bible convinced her of her guilt and left her with a feeling of hopelessness.
 - c. The Bible showed her how to live as a lesbian in a way that glorified God.
5. How did the grace of fellowship help Rosaria change?
 - a. The women in her church helped her understand that the guilt she felt from reading the Bible was a false guilt.
 - b. As the women in her church lovingly answered her many questions, her feelings about her lesbian identity slowly changed.
 - c. The pastor warned her that a practicing homosexual would not be allowed to attend the services of the church.
6. As Rosaria repented daily of her sins, she discovered that the underlying causes of her sexual sin were _____.
 - a. pride and the desire for control
 - b. envy and bitterness over childhood abuse
 - c. feelings of inadequacy and substance abuse
7. Why does Rosaria not consider submission to her husband to be unjust?
 - a. She has found that Kent sometimes submits to her authority, even as she sometimes submits to his.
 - b. She has accepted that men and women are not equal in the sight of God.
 - c. She has learned that God's plan enables her and Kent to be a functional team.
8. How is Rosaria fulfilling creational norm 3 for gender?
 - a. She advocates for women's rights by raising awareness about workplace discrimination.
 - b. She nurtures others through parenting, foster care, and generous hospitality.
 - c. She leads several crucial outreach ministries at her church.
9. How should a Christian young lady prepare herself now for a life of godly womanhood?

13.3 Redeeming Manhood

How does a boy become a godly man in the twenty-first century?



GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does the Bible's teaching on identity, grace, and repentance help a person overcome male chauvinism, transgenderism, and male passivity?

What can Christians do to help young men avoid the traps of male chauvinism and male passivity?

How should Christian young men prepare themselves for godly manhood?

Our world desperately needs real men. Male chauvinism, transgenderism, and male passivity have crippled many men and blinded our culture to what true manhood is. Chauvinism has taught men to see women as toys. Transgenderism has led men to think that masculinity is plastic and changeable. And cultural forces in general—not the least of which is feminism—have convinced many men to be passive. As you read the accounts of Chris and Walt, notice how identity, grace, and repentance helped them experience redemption. As you read about overcoming male passivity, think of what young men today should be doing to prepare themselves for godly manhood.

FROM CHAUVINISM TO FATHERHOOD²⁶

Chris grew up attending a Bible-believing church, but he did not grow up in a Christian home. He heard the gospel from an early age, and he became a believer when he was only five. At home, however, he was exposed to many negative influences, including pornography. Chris loved the Lord, and he loved being involved at church. But he also loved sexual sin. Soon he was leading a double life. When he was at church, he put his sin habit in the back of his mind and tried to be a godly young man. But when he was alone, he indulged in secret sins.

When Chris was in the eleventh grade, he felt God was calling him to the ministry. He decided to attend a Christian college and study to be a pastor. While at college, he fell in love with Jennifer, the girl of his dreams. It now seemed that his struggle with sexual sin was coming to an end. Surely, when he got married and gave himself to ministry, he would rise above temptation and failure.

Chris loved the ministry, maybe too much. He loved Jennifer too, at least to the extent he knew how. But after just a few months of marriage, he found that they were struggling in their relationship. She said they weren't spending enough time together; he was feeling the pull of his old sin habits. Soon he was right back where he had been before, regularly seeking sexual satisfaction in selfishness and impurity.

Chris sought advice from friends in the ministry. But no one seemed able to help. All they could offer were quick fixes: "Pray harder, worship more, memorize verses . . . get saved!" Chris was confident he was a believer. He believed the gospel, but he didn't know how to overcome sexual sin.¹

1. Which means of grace is emphasized in this paragraph? Why do you think it failed?

One Wednesday night, he felt the heavy hand of God's conviction. He was tired of trying to live a pure life and then failing, failing, failing. Exhausted by the constant feeling of shame, he looked up to heaven and prayed, "I give up on living right. I am going to win at something. I am going to be successful with sex. I will give in to it at every turn. If You want to stop me, go for it!"²

2. Which means of grace is present in this paragraph?

Three days later, Chris received a phone call from the elders of his church asking him to meet with them. At the meeting he learned that they had discovered his sin and just how deep into it he had gone. He was immediately removed from his position. A few days later, he stood before the church and confessed his wrongdoing.

Soon Chris was enrolled in a ninety-day rehab program for sex addicts. It was run by people who were once addicts themselves but who had recovered through a rigorous approach to biblical discipleship.

Early in the program, Chris sat with people who were living in a transgender, bisexual, or homosexual lifestyle. As he heard them talk about their struggles, he found himself thinking that these people were really *out there* in their sin. But then he felt God say, "Out where? Where you are as well? You are one of them." Chris had to learn that he, like them, had a predatory view of sex. He saw sex as a way of satisfying his own selfish desires for pleasure—instead of seeing it as a way to give pleasure to someone else—his wife. Chris needed to learn that God alone could be his satisfaction.³

3. How does this paragraph emphasize "dealing with underlying causes"?

During those weeks in rehab, Chris experienced true discipleship. The men who ran the program taught him to think about sin and temptation in a biblical way. They also trained him to use the skills he would need to be victorious. These skills are useful for both male and female believers, but let's explicitly discuss how they apply to Chris's situation and redeeming manhood. Here are some of those skills.

Practicing truth telling

Chris learned he was in the habit of telling himself lies. For example, he had told himself for years that because Jesus paid the penalty for his sin, his sex addiction was bad but not deadly. He thought that if he told God he was sorry for his sin (as often as he committed it), then everything would be fine. Now, however, he learned that sin leads to death—even for the professed Christian (James 1:14–15). He started telling himself that if he did not get victory, he would lose everything: his marriage, his family, his life. Chris made a list of the many lies he had been telling himself (e.g., Victory over sexual sin isn't possible; I deserve a little fun; My sin isn't hurting anyone else; I'm a victim). After each lie, he wrote down a biblical response. He then got into the habit of spending time each day reciting to himself how God's truth contradicted the lies he had believed.

Redeeming fallen emotions

Chris came to realize how much he had been scarred by his sin. He constantly felt numb. He could not feel sadness, happiness, empathy, or love—not as he knew he was supposed to. He had become completely self-absorbed. His whole life revolved around his sin and its consequences.

In rehab he was trained to redeem his emotional life by completing the following sentence several times a day:

I feel _____ because of _____,
and that's why I want to _____.

For example, he might write in his journal,

I feel sexually aroused because of a lewd image,
and that's why I want to give in to temptation.

Or he might write,

I feel despair because of my sexual failure,
and that's why I want to binge-watch television
all night.

The second blank was a circumstance that confronted him with a temptation. The third blank was a sinful course of action that flowed from the temptation. The first blank was a fallen emotion. Chris learned that to have victory over sin, he needed to identify the fallen emotion and then figure out how to redeem it with Scripture.

Chris would write down a biblical statement or principle that corrected the fallen emotion. "Sexually aroused" would become "love and affection for my wife" (Prov. 5:15–20), while "despair" would become "sorrow for sin" and "gratitude for forgiveness" (James 4:9–10; Rom. 5:1–2). Chris would then write about these redeemed emotions in a prayer to God—a prayer asking God to change his emotions so they would be what they ought to be (see Phil. 2:13). He found that the prayers he wrote sounded like many of David's prayers in the Psalms (for example, see Pss. 6, 32, 51).⁴

4. Which practice of godliness did redeeming fallen emotions help Chris engage in?

Pursuing effective accountability.⁵

Christians overcome by selfishness and sin need the help of more mature believers (Gal. 6:1). Chris learned that he could not get victory over sin on his own. He needed a team to provide him with accountability.

5. Which means of grace is emphasized in pursuing effective accountability? How is it different from the previous occurrence of this means of grace?

Chris discovered that effective accountability has three characteristics. First, the accountability team members need to be the right kind of men. They need to be mature Christians, preferably people who have helped others gain victory over this sin. They need to be loving but also firm and committed to a full recovery. Second, there need to be consequences for failure. If Chris failed, he would have to go without something he enjoyed for several days or a week (e.g., a form of entertainment). These consequences were not meant as a kind of penance. Jesus had already paid for Chris's sin. They instead were designed to teach him something he didn't believe yet—that sin always destroys. By having to face practical, meaningful consequences for his selfish choices, he slowly learned to see how much damage sin was doing in his life. Third, Chris gave the team members access to his digital devices. He no longer would have private, unmonitored access to the internet.⁶

6. Which practice of godliness is emphasized in this sentence?

Over the next several months, the team members would call or visit Chris every week. There were many times that he wished these men were not involved in his life. They, however, reminded him that they were providing the accountability *he* had requested. They were not trying to hurt him; they were helping him.



These are some of the skills and strategies Chris would use for the next several years. His journey back to sexual sobriety was not easy. He stumbled and failed many times. But when he failed, he knew what to do; and when he stumbled, someone was there to help him up.

Chris has been living in victory for over fifteen years now. Recently, he attended his daughter's high school graduation. As he sat next to his wife and watched his daughter receive her diploma, his eyes filled with tears. "Thank you, Jesus," he prayed, "for not letting me go." Chris knew that if God's grace had not intervened, he would not be sitting next to Jennifer. He was sure she would have divorced him long ago and found someone else to help her raise their daughter. Chris believed that if he had been in the auditorium at all, he would have been sitting apart from his former wife, regretting losing Jennifer and damaging his relationship with his daughter.

But God did intervene. In His grace, He chose to remake Chris into the father he was meant to be all along—using daily repentance and the means of grace to get the job done. Sin destroys, but grace restores.⁷

7. How does Chris's story demonstrate the truth of this statement: "You can't bypass repentance to get to grace"?

CASE STUDY

Walt's Journey Back to Reality

After suffering abuse as a boy, Walt Heyer struggled with his identity. He wanted to escape the emotional harm done by the abuse. When he was fifteen, he began to think that becoming a woman was the answer. In 1983, Walt underwent surgery and became Laura.

For the first four or five years, his problems seemed to go away. But as time passed, Walt realized he had made them worse, and he became suicidal.²⁷ “The biological fact,” he learned, “is that no one can change from one gender to another except in appearance.”²⁸ Eventually, someone shared with him the gospel. Walt became a Christian and began to seek healing through the Bible and a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Rather than focusing on my dissatisfaction with who I was, I became open to putting my broken life behind me. I could choose to remain self-centered and self-obsessed, but if I did, I would stay isolated from reality. . . .

. . . I stopped thinking that what the surgeons had done to my body defined my identity. I came to accept that gender surgery didn't change me into a woman. I was born a man, and I was still a man; my gender never changed.²⁹

In time, Walt launched the website SexChangeRegret.com. He uses the website to

tell stories of transgender regretters who have found healing by learning to accept their birth gender. He also reports on the growing body of research showing that transgenderism is a disorder needing treatment, not a lifestyle to be praised. For those struggling to overcome emotional pain, Walt gives this advice: “The only way to really escape pain in your life is turn it over to Jesus Christ so that the pain goes away.”³⁰

1. How are the causes of Walt's transgenderism different from Grace's (Section 13.2)?
2. What was the key turning point in Walt's story?
3. What role did repentance play in Walt's recovery?
4. Many claim that transgender desires must be affirmed in order to avoid the risk of suicide. How does Walt's struggle with transgenderism challenge that claim? (Visit SexChangeRegret.com to learn more about Walt's story.)
5. How would you respond to a fifteen-year-old boy who says he wants to become a woman?



THE COURAGE TO ACT

As we discussed in Section 12.1, male passivity has become a huge problem in our society. Men living in their parents' basements are extreme examples of this, but passivity is a problem for all men. Every man, at times, would rather be passive than take action. For that reason, every man—especially every young man—needs to understand what causes male passivity and what it takes to overcome it.

CAUSES OF MALE PASSIVITY

Why are so many men—so many Christian men—failing to take their place in God's world? Let's look at three especially significant reasons.

First, *many young men have unrealistic expectations about the future*. These expectations often come from the secular self-esteem talk of our culture: “You can be anything you want to be!”, “You deserve the very best!” Many young men today expect to be rich, successful, and completely fulfilled in every part of their lives. But when they look at the paths before them leading to adulthood, they don't see one that meets their expectations. So, they sit and wait.

Second, *many young men are afraid of criticism and failure*. Because of the influence of feminism, people in general are suspicious of strong, assertive men. So, for a man to shake off passivity, he will have to be willing to face criticism. He will have to accept the fact that

his motives may be judged, and he may be charged with chauvinism. The possibility of such criticism is too much for some young men. Another problem is fear of failure. To make a decision is to risk failure. What if the car I'm thinking about buying turns out to be a lemon? What if college is too hard? What if that hard conversation doesn't go well? Such men do not realize that while every decision risks failure, passivity makes it certain. Doing nothing is the ultimate failure.

Third, *many young men are addicted to trivial things*. Our culture encourages young men to play. Video games, YouTube, Twitch—boys today move toward manhood filling their days with fun. There is nothing wrong with fun—just like there's nothing wrong with having a doughnut as a snack. But balance is essential. Doughnuts are to nutrition what video games are to dominion. They are simplified (and enjoyable) imitations of the real thing. It's fine to enjoy them from time to time. But if a young man experiences them out of proper balance—if they keep him from fulfilling his obligations at home, at school, or at church—he will not develop a taste for the real thing. Too much play will lead him to expect a life of fun, not a life of God-honoring dominion—a life filled with the hard work (and eternal rewards) of being what God made him to be.

BECOMING A MAN OF ACTION

To grow into godly manhood, young men today need to repent daily of their tendency toward passivity and seek to become the men of action God made them to be. Instead of avoiding decisions, they must learn to act. Of course, they need to make their decisions wisely. They can do that by developing the habit of following four steps, adapted from Kevin DeYoung's *Just Do Something*.³¹



1

Read and meditate on Scripture.

The Bible is God's Word, given to guide us in the way of wisdom (Ps. 119:24). If a man reads the Bible daily, God will use His Word to direct his decision-making. The Bible will not tell him what college to apply to, what job to take, or what woman to marry. It will, however, teach him what a righteous and holy life looks like. And if he reads Scripture in an attitude of submission and reverence for God, it will—over time—transform his character. He will become a godly man. Godly men tend to make godly decisions.



2

Seek wise counsel.

The book of Proverbs repeatedly exhorts young men to seek advice from wise, experienced people (Prov. 1:5; 15:22). If we are eager to seek wise counsel, we will become wise (Prov. 19:20). It is especially important for a young man to seek counsel from people who know him well. When an opportunity for ministry (or for work or for more education) comes along, it is easy for a man to be fooled regarding his own abilities—even if he is a godly person. He may be timid and therefore unaware of his ability to succeed in the opportunity. Or he may be overconfident: he may think he possesses talents he doesn't actually have. But someone who knows him well can give him wise, honest advice. By the way, the people who know you best are, usually, your parents. Don't hesitate to seek counsel from them.



3

Pray for God's help.

Godly men pray about their decisions. They don't pray that God would write answers in the sky. They instead pray for God to help them understand His Word (Ps. 119:34), that He would direct them to the portions of Scripture that most apply to the decision at hand. They also pray for wisdom (James 1:5). They pray

that they would not be misled by wrong information or fail to notice important details. For example, if they are buying a used car, they pray that God will give them the wisdom to see the car for what it is—nothing more, nothing less. Finally, they pray for good motives (Ps. 139:23–24), the kind of motives that characterize a godly father. They pray that they will be delivered from selfishness and pride. They also pray that they will act out of love—love for God and love for others.

WEBQUEST

Helping Boys Become Men

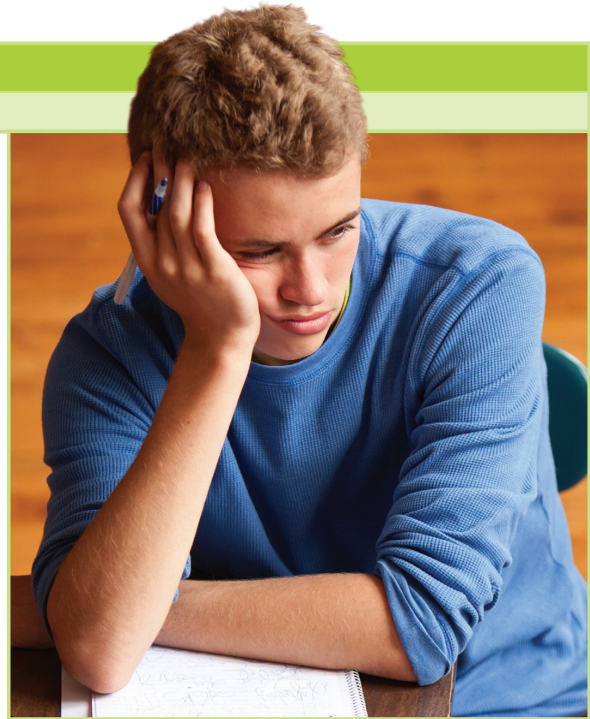
Richard Reeves, a researcher of cultural trends, has found that social programs aiding low-income communities tend to benefit young women far more than young men. “The problem,” he says, “is not that men have fewer opportunities; it’s that they are not seizing them. The challenge seems to be a general decline in agency, ambition, and motivation.”³² Reeves attributes this decline, in part, to the rise of feminism, which has rejected the traditional roles for men but has offered no replacements. Men—especially men in poverty—don’t know who they are or how they’re supposed to live.

TASK

Let’s say you want to start a boarding school for boys that will train them to take their place in God’s world. Because you want your school to be thoroughly and explicitly Christian, you are seeking non-government funding. A donor approaches you offering several million dollars. But before he commits the money, he wants to know your plan for helping young men. You have scheduled a meeting to present your vision.

PROCEDURE

1. Research the struggles young men in poverty face by searching for the article “Why Men Are Hard to Help” by Richard Reeves.
2. Research boarding schools by searching for “characteristics of an effective boarding school.”
3. Brainstorm ways to relate the four practices of faithful presence (Section 10.4) and lessons about redeeming manhood (Section 13.3) to the ways your boarding school may help young men who are growing up in poverty.



4. Develop your presentation using the following points:
 - the difficulty of helping boys become men
 - things our boarding school could do for young men
 - ministering through faithful presence
 - helping boys overcome chauvinism and passivity
5. Deliver your presentation to your class or your family.

CONCLUSION

Schools play a vital role in preparing young people for success in life. Knowledge of academic subjects is key to this success. But far more important than knowledge is wisdom—the skill to use knowledge well and the character to do the right thing. A school that can convey both knowledge and wisdom makes an enormous difference in the life of the child and of the community.

**4****Act—and don't look back!**

The young man who is steeped in Scripture, who has sought wise counsel, who has prayed for wisdom and good motives—that man should not be afraid to take action. In fact, he should make the decisions he *wants* to make, and he should make them with confidence. He should buy the car, take the job, or get involved in the ministry of his choice. If he has truly prepared himself for godliness, his choice will be godly, and he can expect God's blessing. But once the decision is made, he must stick with it to the end. A real man understands that if God leads him *into* a decision, He will also lead him *through* it. When the going gets tough (and it will), the godly man prays for grace to be tougher than his opposition so he can keep his promises.

A boy like that is ready to be a man. He is ready to be a father to someone.

In recent years, the pole of gender has been bent nearly to the ground—for both males and females. The damage caused by this bending is almost impossible to overstate. Marriage, entertainment, technology, government, and education have all been distorted by this departure from creational norms. How should Christians respond? Get involved in politics? Compete with mainstream media by sending distinctively Christian messages on these issues? Those kinds of involvement have their place. But I am convinced that the best thing Christians can do is *live by the norms they profess to believe*. As Christians model for others what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman, they will bear eloquent testimony to the goodness of God's creation and the healing power of God's grace. No law, no movie, and no blog post can do what a redeemed life can do.



SECTION REVIEW 13.3

1. What did Chris learn was the underlying cause of his sexual sin?
 - a. He was not seeking his satisfaction in God, and he had developed a predatory view of sex.
 - b. He was refusing to deal with the pain of childhood abuse.
 - c. He had unresolved anger toward his father.
2. Why was the accountability Chris established in rehab effective but not the help he sought from friends years earlier?
 - a. His friends were struggling with the same sins, so they were not able to give him the help he needed.
 - b. His accountability team threatened him and made him afraid to sin.
 - c. His friends were looking for quick fixes, but his accountability team was committed to the long, hard work of recovery.
3. How did Chris learn to redeem his emotional life?
 - a. He would memorize verses from the psalms of David.
 - b. He would identify the wrong emotions that were motivating him to sin and then replace them with godly emotions.
 - c. He would describe his emotions to a trusted counselor, and the counselor would help him respond in a godly way.
4. How might the practice of “enjoying good things” help a young man repent of being addicted to video games?
 - a. If he fills his life with good music, regular exercise, and quality time with friends, his desire to play video games will lessen.
 - b. By focusing on good things, he will choose video games that are wholesome.
 - c. As he fills his life with good things, he will find ways to use video games to minister to others.
5. How might “nurturing faith in God’s goodness” enable a young man to overcome his unrealistic expectations of the future?
 - a. The more he battles against all sins, the more he will have strength to face the future.
 - b. If he deals with underlying causes, he will find it easier to trust God with his problems.
 - c. As he becomes more confident in God’s goodness, he will be more willing to travel the path God has set before him.
6. How does the Bible’s teaching on identity relate to young men taking action (and sticking with that action)?
 - a. When he is making use of the means of grace, he can expect God will show him His favor.
 - b. When he is becoming the man God made him to be, he can have confidence that God is going to bless the actions he takes.
 - c. When he is repenting daily of his sins, he doesn’t need to fear God’s judgment.
7. How should a Christian young man prepare himself now for a life of godly manhood?



13

CHAPTER
REVIEW

CHAPTER SUMMARY

13.1 Identity, Grace, and Repentance

Terms: saving grace | justifying grace | sanctifying grace | repentance

- No matter how people *feel*, they *are* image-bearers of God, and they are obligated to live for God according to God's creational design. God has made some to be men and some to be women (Gen. 1:27).
- God's saving grace redeems sinners in two ways. First, it unites sinners with Jesus Christ, so they are forgiven and seen as righteous before God (justifying grace). Second, it gives sinners the power they need to be victorious over sin (sanctifying grace).
- God's grace comes through means. Three of the most important means of grace are Scripture, prayer, and fellowship (Acts 2:42).
- God's grace is not effective unless sinners repent daily of their sins. This is the reason that victory over sin is described as a battle (Eph. 6:10-18). Christians must learn to put their sins to death (Rom. 8:13). They can do this by engaging in the following practices of godliness: (1) starve sinful urges; (2) deal with underlying causes; (3) battle against all sins; (4) nurture faith in God's goodness; and (5) enjoy good things.

13.2 Redeeming Womanhood

- Grace recovered from transgenderism when she was removed from the wrong influences, was immersed in biblical teaching, and experienced the power of prayer.
- Rosaria went from being a proponent of Queer Theory to being a devoted pastor's wife as she read the Bible voraciously, repented daily of her sins, and enjoyed close fellowship with believers.

13.3 Redeeming Manhood

- Chris had to learn that he was enslaved to a predatory view of sex. Instead of seeking satisfaction in God, he sought satisfaction in sexual pleasure. He overcame this sin as he learned to practice truth telling, redeeming fallen emotions, and pursuing effective accountability.
- Walt suffered abuse as a boy. To escape the memory of this trauma, he tried to become a woman. After he became a believer, he learned to give his emotional pain to Jesus, who took it away.
- Young men often give in to passivity because they have unrealistic expectations of the future, are afraid of criticism and failure, and are addicted to trivial things. They can overcome passivity by reading and meditating on Scripture, seeking wise counsel, praying for God's help, and then making decisions with confidence.

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