“What is a Biblical View of Transgendered People and Hermaphrodites?”

Hello, I would like to know the biblical insight on transgenderism ***[Definition: appearing as, wishing to be considered as, or having undergone surgery to become a member of the opposite sex]*** **and other sexual defects of the human body. There are lots of issues like hermaphroditism and inter-sexualism** ***[a set of medical conditions where the sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or an internal reproductive system are not considered “standard” for either male or female]*****. Please try to clear these issues up with sound doctrine.**

There are really two issues here: 1) transgendered people and 2) the intersexed (new term) or hermaphrodites (older term).

The first is usually an emotional problem, not really a sexual one. The “transgendered” label reflects a sexual identity confusion and not a true condition. God doesn’t create a person with the genitals of a male and the consciousness and heart of a female. In Genesis 1:26, the Bible says, “And God created man in His image, in His likeness; male and female He created them . . . . and it was very good.” In addition, 1 Corinthians 14:33 says that “God is not a God of confusion but of peace,” so deliberately creating someone with self-contradiction appears to go against the very nature of God.

Maleness and femaleness are God’s choice, determined at conception. But growing into one’s masculinity or femininity and *embracing* it can be thwarted by very early events that prevent children from having a clear sense of their gender. Gender identity is a developmental issue, and it starts at birth. All the many, many layers of affirmation and validation of one’s personhood that contribute to self-understanding (of which gender is a part) start getting laid down the moment one

is born, and they go on hour by hour, day by day, for years in childhood. No wonder so many people think they were born gay, lesbian, or transgendered! They can't remember all the way back to birth when the messages they received about who they were, had yet to be delivered. In addition, some people perceive the messages of parents and family differently than what was intended, and those perceptions ARE their reality.

The biblical view is that God's intent for every male is to grow into masculinity, and for every female to grow into femininity. When that doesn't happen, the culture has come up with new labels to describe something new and different: transgendered, transsexual. I believe God isn't affected by these new labels nor does He have to honor them: He sees the people behind the labels as His precious, broken children. It's only recently that the culture has tried to suggest that "a woman in a man's body" and vice versa is a variation of what is normal and right. The biology of sex alone tells us that homosexuality (under which these other categories of emotional/sexual dysfunction should be put) is not normal. The Bible tells us (Genesis 1:26) that God's intent is heterosexuality, with definite boundaries between men and women in both appearance and behavior. (I can give you more information on this concept if you want.)

I recently attended a national Exodus conference, a gathering of about 900 people who are walking out of homosexuality and those who minister to them. It was interesting to me to see people there who would call themselves transgendered, as well as transsexuals who had had sex-change surgery. They were at the conference because of a growing awareness that they had interfered with God's plan for their lives; God had revealed His intent for their gender at birth. They had been living as the opposite sex in a false self that was tragically far from what God had intended for them, and that explained why the great pains to which they had gone to fix their brokenness didn't bring the peace and relief they thought they would get

through assuming a new identity and/or having surgery.

Concerning intersexed people (hermaphrodites), allow me to share what my friend Rev. Mark Chalemin (now serving as Education Director at Coaches Outreach) and I collaborated on to answer this question for someone else:

> By definition a hermaphrodite is “a person born with both male and female sex organs.” Within this definition there are three labels; true, female pseudo, and male pseudo. The first category is extremely rare with only 350-450 known cases. The second type, and the most common, is female pseudo resulting in 1 of every 14,000 births. The main cause for this is a condition known as Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia. In these cases there is an overproduction of testosterone causing some “masculinized” features in the female. This does not mean that there is any real gender confusion. There is not. As with any female, her chromosome is XX. Any slight mutation, that may accompany is treated early by corrective surgery. The same situation may occur in baby boys with the same treatment. (There is a movement to stop this surgery, which is being called genital mutilation by some of those who have had it, and allow children’s bodies to grow and develop naturally, even if they are different.) It seems that even with ambiguous genitalia, these kids “know” if they are intrinsically male or female.
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> In either situation, the sexual identity, given by God, may perhaps reveal traits normally associated with the opposite sex. For example, the baby girl may grow up to be naturally more athletic or aggressive than the average woman, but she is very much a woman. Similarly, the baby boy may have a naturally heightened sensitivity and/or affinity towards the arts. Nevertheless, he is still very much a man.
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> What is God’s take in all of this?
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> God views every individual as He made them. While He did not

make clones, he did create males and females with certain unique sexual characteristics. He also intended for males to manifest primarily masculine characteristics, and for females to manifest primarily feminine characteristics, although both sexes reflect aspects of both the masculine and the feminine in varying degrees. Along with those traits, He has provided direction on how we are to relate to one another. There is no prohibition regarding a slightly more “masculine” female or a slightly more “feminine” man. God views them as he does anyone else, with love and delight, and He desires that they experience all the freedom all He designed them to have, within the boundaries of the sexual identity God gave to them. The fact that some individuals are born with evidence of mutations in their sex-determining genes doesn’t change their value in God’s eyes any more than someone born with the mutation that causes cystic fibrosis or sickle-cell anemia.

You asked for sound doctrine; I can only respond with the wise and loving boundaries that God has established for sex (which is usually the issue here, right?). All sexual behavior is to be contained within marriage (see the many condemnations of fornication). Men are to act and appear as men, and women are to act and appear as women (Deuteronomy 22:5). Even those born with genital ambiguity are expected to submit to His boundaries. I realize this is a very politically incorrect perspective in a sex-saturated culture that declares sexual expression is a right for everyone. But it isn’t. God wants every person, regardless of their genital or chromosomal condition, to submit his or her sexuality to Him and to glorify Him in whatever state we find ourselves.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

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I was moved by this email I received from someone who lives with the challenges of intersex every day, and wanted to share it here:

A pastor friend was removed from being a pastor due to the nature of his birth (intersexed) in having both male and female parts, but condition helped with surgery, now married with children.

I am at the foundational level of intersexed in being an XXY male, was 53 before learning of my condition, but had gone through the change of life and also excessive breast tissue for a male.

I am always offended when we as intersexed people are spoken of in the same breath with homosexuals or added to their agenda when those of us who follow Jesus are as much opposed to the gay lifestyle as any other who will not compromise God's Word to validate sin or lust. I also believe that a true Eunuch is one who is unmarried and celibate which is only for those with the gift to remain that way.

To this day I have never heard a sermon or teaching regarding hermaphrodites in the church—covered by the same grace but forced into the basement due to ignorance and an imposed shame for being "so born from our mother's womb," something we had no choice about, unlike those acting on their homosexual feelings or those with a mental condition rather than a genetic defect which is temporary.

Your article about "transgendered" was interesting but I am more concerned about attitudes we encounter for being who we are which to me is just unique. Scars today only say that healing happened and no more open wounds. . . Just as Jesus is proud of His scars that say healing happened.

To me there is just the Natural man, Spiritual man and the

carnal Christian, only three kinds of people on the planet with a variety of physical and mental differences. But attitudes we encounter as intersexed people would lead folks to think maybe there is an additional “type” who doesn’t fit any mold or classification or addressed in scripture. But again the only problem I see is attitudes springing from ignorance; one can not love God without loving all the people of God, yet the subject is rarely if ever addressed completely to make us at least feel as if we fully belong among other people more normal than we are and that we are not freaks. The real us is spirit!

I also received this email:

Hi Sue,

Just read your blog on transgendered issues. Agree wholeheartedly. There is a third category that appears as XY = Female. This occurs due to a hormone receptor deformity that renders the fetus insensitive to androgen hormones. The degree of sexual formation differs between females with vagina and partially formed males—though nor hermaphrodite. This category is considered Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (PAIS) and Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (CAIS). To your point, these children are fully female (perhaps extremely so) and there is no confusion regarding their design. Genetically, they test as XY, but physiologically they are female from birth. I should note that they are all sterile and many require a Y-V vaginoplasty to create a vaginal opening and open the musculature for the vagina itself. They also require hormone therapy to complete the appearance of a female (breasts), but remain without follicular body hair with the exception of their head. Most often, whatever gonads they possess are removed early due to the tendency to rapidly convert to cancerous tissue.

Again, I think your point is well made. God does things we may

not anticipate, and sin corrupts the gene pool, but His design is male and female. We do not have the option to decide we do not like what he created us to be.

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