

Breakout Session: Designer Gender or Gender Designer?
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Introduction: Becoming Familiar with the Vocabulary of Our Culture

Biblical counselors should briefly familiarize themselves with the terms and definitions compiled by Joe Carter in the blog post: “From Agender to Ze: A Glossary for the Gender Identity Revolution.”¹

Some of these include the following (slide).

- *Agender* — A term for people who consider themselves to be without a gender.
- *Genderfluid* — A term for people who prefer to be flexible about their gender identity. They may fluctuate between genders (a man one minute, a woman the next, a third sex later in the day) or express multiple gender identities at the same time.
- *Genderqueer* — An umbrella term for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Sometimes referred to as non-binary, gender-expansive, pangender, or polygender.
- *Transgenderism* — An umbrella term for the state or condition of identifying or expressing a gender identity that does not match a person’s physical/genetic sex.

The confusion that all of this has created in the minds and hearts of some people now falls under the label: *Gender Dysphoria*.

Gender dysphoria involves a conflict between a person’s physical or assigned gender and the gender with which he/she/they identify. People with gender dysphoria may be very uncomfortable with the gender they were assigned, sometimes described as being uncomfortable with their body (particularly developments during puberty) or being uncomfortable with the expected roles of their assigned gender.

People with gender dysphoria may often experience significant distress and/or problems functioning associated with this conflict between the way they feel and think of themselves (referred to as experienced or expressed gender) and their physical or assigned gender.²

This gender confusion has resulted in a gross form of child abuse:

¹ Joe Carter, “From Agender to Ze: A Glossary for the Gender Identity Revolution” <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/from-agender-to-ze-a-glossary-for-the-gender-identity-revolution/>, accessed August 25, 2020.

² American Psychiatric Association, <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria>, accessed August 25, 2020.

According to the American College of Pediatricians: Young children are being permanently sterilized and surgically maimed under the guise of treating a condition that would otherwise resolve in over 80% of them. This is criminal. The American College of Pediatricians urges educators and legislators to reject all policies that condition children to accept as normal a life of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex. Facts – not ideology – determine reality.³

The gender vocabulary of today’s culture has changed, due to a major shift in the individual’s identity. This leaves us with some important questions: How has our culture changed? What is the thinking of those whom we may need to counsel? And how can we help confused persons to find and become grounded in a biblical identity?

The following table is a helpful summary of this major cultural shift, and a comparison of where we’ve come from and where we are now.⁴

TRADITIONAL IDENTITY	MODERN IDENTITY
External	Internal
Honor	Happiness
Chosen for you	You choose
Fit in	Stand out
Decisive validator: higher powers/parents	Decisive validators: you
You are your duties	You are your desires
You make the sacrifice for society	Society makes the sacrifice for you
Argument: happens inside (society>>then you wrestle in your heart)	Argument: happens outside (wrestle in your heart>>then go to society and demand acceptance)

Psalm 8
A Foundational Psalm for Counseling People Struggling with
Gender Identity and Related Issues

I. God’s Design in Creation: We were made to glorify Him (Psalm 8:1, 9).

Psalm 8 is a creation Psalm. It is an example of how meditating on the wonder of God’s creation leads to the praise and worship of God. It is also an example of how the observation of God’s marvelous works leaves a person feeling insignificant, compared to the massive scope of the universe, yet significant as he considers God’s own description of human beings as His most

³ American College of Pediatricians, “Normalizing Gender Dysphoria is Dangerous and Unethical”, 27 August 2020/ <http://www.acped.org/normalizing-gender-dysphoria-is-dangerous-and-unethical>. Accessed 27 August 2020.

⁴ Created by Jonathan D. Holmes, used by permission.

glorious creatures. Man is the pinnacle of God's creative handiwork, not because of billions of years of evolutionary progress, but rather because God made him that way in the beginning.

II. Man's Response to God's Design in Creation: Faith or Foolishness (Psalm 8:2).

David tell us that the glory of God's creation is met by two contrasting heart responses.

A. Faith: Reverence for God's Design and Glory (Ps. 8:2a).

B. Foolishness: Rejection of God's Design and Glory (Ps. 8:2b).

III. God's Revelation of His Glory in Creation (Psalm 8:3-8).

The glory of God's creation is met by two contrasting, yet complementary, conclusions.

A. Conclusion based upon man's observation: Man is puny and insignificant (vv. 3-4).

B. Conclusion based upon God's revelation: Man is prominent and full of dignity (vv. 5-8).

God's Redemption of His Glory: The Gospel

Psalm 8 finds its fullest meaning and completion in Jesus Christ. Three times, New Testament writers quote directly from this psalm, applying it to the rule and authority of the Son of God.

Use Psalm 8 to take them to Jesus!

- Matthew 21:15-16 – children praised Jesus on that first “Palm Sunday.”
- Hebrews 2:5-10 – the writer of Hebrews teaches that Psalm 8 is speaking of Jesus, who ultimately fulfills its truth.
- 1 Corinthians 15:27 – refers to final rule and authority of Christ, the King of Creation

The means by which Jesus has earned the right to rule is His work of redemption. Since he was willing to humble Himself by becoming a man and the one-and-only sacrifice for our rebellion against God that He will be worshipped for all eternity (Phil. 2:9-11).

Only Jesus can return us to a right relationship with our Creator.

Seven Gospel Truths for Counseling those Who Are Gender Confused

1. You were created by God, in the image of God, as male or female, for His glory. This is God's good design (Gen. 1:1-28; Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:15-16; Rom. 11:36).
2. Under the influence of the devil, sin entered the world. In Adam, we all sinned and have gone astray from God's original design (Rom. 5:12-14; Isa. 53:6). But God loves you. He sent His Son to reconcile and redeem you, to die in your place, to be raised victorious, and to make you whole (Rom. 5:6-21).
3. Jesus is the compassionate Savior who invites you to repent, to come to Him with your burden, and He will carry it for you (Matt. 11:28-30).
4. By means of the gospel, the Spirit makes you a new creature and God gives you the gift of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:17-21). The Spirit unites you to Christ, which results in a new identity that will never change (Eph. 2:13; Rom. 6). This begins the process of restoring you into the image of your Creator and Redeemer (Phil. 1:6).
5. As a new creature in Christ you are under new ownership, which includes your physical body (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
6. God will continue to progressively transform you into the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit performs this sanctifying work as you behold Christ, the Second Adam and perfect fullness of humanity, while you put off the corrupt desires of the old man, renew your mind, and put on the new man (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:5-10).
7. One day, God will make you fully whole and complete when you see Christ (Phil. 1:6; 1 John 3:1).

The more mankind asserts their independence from God the more we will have to address these issues and help those whom they've taken captive. Let us remember the apostle's all-encompassing doxology:

*For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen.
(Rom. 11:36)*

This reminds us that we were created by God, for God & we are redeemed by God, for God. May God be glorified as we come alongside others with the grace and truth of Jesus Christ!

Further Resources

Books

- Branch, Alan J., *Affirming God's Image* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019).
- Bridges, Jerry. *Who Am I?: Identity in Christ* (Hudson, OH: Cruciform Press, 2012).
Note: This is my favorite counseling tool for helping a believer be grounded in their new identity in Christ, regardless of their personal struggle.
- Roberts, Vaughan. *Transgender* (Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2016).
- Walker, Andrew. *God and the Transgender Debate* (Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2018).

Audio/Video

- Anderson, James, Reformed Theological Seminary, Associate Professor of Theology and Philosophy, "8 Theses That Help Us Think Biblically About Transgenderism",
<https://michaeljkruger.com/8-theses-that-helps-us-think-biblically-about-transgenderism/>.
- Lambert, Heath, "Transgender Confusion and Transformational Christianity."
<https://vimeo.com/201035773>.

Blogs

- Burk, Denny, "Training Our Kids in a Culture that Affirms Transgenderism"
<https://www.crossway.org/articles/training-our-kids-in-a-culture-that-affirms-transgenderism/>
- Challies, Tim. "The Transgender Conversation You Need to Have with Your Family."
<https://www.challies.com/articles/the-transgender-conversation-you-need-to-have-with-your-family/> Accessed 27 August 2020.
- Geiger, Tim. "John Wants to Be Jane: 3 Ways to Counsel a Gender-Confused Child."
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/john-jane-counsel-gender-confused-child/>