

A Guide For LGBTQ+ Christian Teens

Are you a Christian teen struggling with or feeling confused by LGBTQ+ and gender identity issues? Then this is a conversation we need to have...

First of all, know this. You are loved.

The God of all the Universe, the One in whose image you're made loves *you*. He knows you; your innermost fears, your deepest insecurities, and your hopes and dreams for the future. He has counted every hair on your head.

This is the same God who can count the stars by name, who has caused worlds to come into being, and who has decided that no two snowflakes should be the same.

This God is interested in *knowing* and *being known* by you.

There's a beautiful little verse in the gospel of Matthew that tells us just how much God cares for us. In Matthew 6, Jesus says to the listening crowds:

"Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth much more than birds?" | Matthew 6:26 CEV

God cares *for* us and He cares *about* us.

You are of infinite worth to God.

Know this too, He is not astonished by your mistakes. He's not surprised by your fears or doubts and He isn't shocked by the things you've done wrong. There's nothing you've done that He hasn't already seen coming, that He hasn't accounted for, or

that He hasn't already prepared a way through. Your best moments and your worst moments are all known to him.

In fact, he knows exactly how it feels to be human because His Son Jesus became human, just like us. He experienced all that we do; the pressure to conform, the criticism of peers, the rejection of friends, the pull of temptation, the pain of betrayal. He knows and he understands.

You are not alone.

You Might Be Wondering...

Why am I here? What on earth is the point of humanity?

This is a great question and it's really one of life's most basic questions: what is the purpose of human existence?

Well, we're all here for a reason and it starts with God.

God has a plan. I know it sounds a bit cliched but, He really does.

He intends to fill the earth with His glory, with all the amazing attributes and characteristics of Who He is; love, kindness, justice, peace, holiness, beauty... Basically, a perfect, incredible, amazing space, probably better than anything we can really get our heads around! And humanity was created to be a part of this plan; not just as a minor detail but as major character.

Humanity was created to rule over this world and all the creatures that live in it wisely and well, as God's image-bearers. Being an image bearer of God means that when you look at a person, you see God. And, in a collective sense, when you look at humanity, you see God. You see His character, His values, His glory, His holiness; everything about Him. He's the king of everything and we get to represent Him in this good, good world!

Part of this plan specifically involved the creation of male and female, [a gender binary](#) that many people today are rejecting. Yet this is exactly how God designed humanity, it is a foundational part of each of our identities, and, collectively, it's how humanity reflects the completeness of God's image. When men and women (male and female) come together in one, extraordinary collective, we are the complete image of all that God Himself is. Isn't that incredible?

LGBTQ+, The Gender Binary + More...

You might be struggling with the idea of [a gender binary of male and female](#). You may feel at odds with your body; unhappy or discomforted by your physical appearance, or challenged by how your body is changing, without your 'agreement' or 'permission'. You might be surprised at what you look like or sound like, or maybe at how differently people start to treat you. You might feel like you don't even recognise yourself when you look in the mirror.

All this is normal, and ok, *and you will be ok.*

You are transitioning, *as you have been designed to do*, from a child to an adult to becoming a functional and fully-formed man or woman. This is one of life's great crossings, a time of new discovery and development, but also of great upheaval and emotional angst, and it can be a really tough space.

It's ok to feel a bit out of your depth, super cranky with your parents or siblings, or all jumbled up and unsure of *who.you.really.are.*

Think about this for a minute; when a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, it's totally mushed up, taken apart, and reorganised into the beautiful insect that finally emerges. It shouldn't really surprise us that moving from young, dependent children to fully independent adults can feel a bit like this process.

You will feel *a lot of feels*. And while our feelings are real, and they often provide important signals about what is going on in our world, we need to know that *they're not always reliable*. Feelings *alone* are not adequate markers of what might be true.

So it's really important to not rely on *our feelings alone* but to take other things into account as well. These might be things like wise guidance or advice from people we know and trust, and who we know love us, applying a healthy dose of critical thinking to our decision-making and the values we want for our life, and, most importantly, the truths found in God's word and what He has to say about us.

It's really important, particularly during times of transition and change, to remind yourself that you are deeply known and loved by God, even when you feel like you don't know yourself. You have been created with intention and purpose, and God has a hope and a future planned for you. He has taken care of you and he will continue to take care of you, through your good times and (especially) in your bad times. You can take anything to Him and you can ask Him for guidance and help, through prayer and through reading His word. You can trust Him.

Remind yourself, if you are a female, that you have been gifted with unique and diverse qualities, specific to your sex. This is intentional, beautiful, and life-affirming. You are on your way to becoming a woman, with all the inherent and amazing attributes that God has designed for you. It might feel a little scary, a lot unknown, but you can trust that God knows what He's doing.

If you are a male, remind yourself that you have been gifted with unique and diverse qualities, specific to your sex. This is intentional, incredible, and life-affirming. You're becoming a man, with the opportunity to contribute your incredible characteristics and attributes to the purpose of

God, as He has intended for you. You might feel overwhelmed, and more than a bit nervous but you, too, can trust that God knows what He's doing.

(And, just a little note here: one gender isn't better than the other, and neither is complete without the other. We need both men and women to truly image God in this world, as He intended!)

"It is out of the diversity and distinctive separateness of male and female that we humans are called to not only reflect the image and likeness of God, but we also represent God in the stewardship of His good and wonderful creation." (Genesis 1:28-29). | [Focus On The Family](#)

Let's Talk About Sex

You, or somebody you know, might be baffled by a (sudden and new) attraction to someone of the same sex, attraction to people of both sexes, or maybe just confused and overwhelmed by sexuality in general. This is often new and surprising territory for us all when we arrive here.

I want you to know that it's normal to feel these struggles and perhaps even experience confusion and emotional overwhelm. It's actually very common for teens to be attracted to or have sexual thoughts about people of the same sex and/or the opposite sex; it's often part of the emotional and physical changes that humans go through as they mature into adulthood.

The Bible tells us that sex is amazing, that it's been designed by God for the flourishing of humanity, and that it's part of His good creation. You only have to read the [Song of Solomon](#) to realise the Bible isn't shy about talking about sex (some of those passages are certainly blush-inducing!) But, as with everything, sex has been designed for a purpose and to be experienced within boundaries, with our good in mind.

What you need to know is that God has designed sex to be experienced by a man and woman, within the boundaries of a committed, life-long relationship (marriage). This kind of committed sex with a life-long partner provides physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy, and is the foundation for a secure and stable family unit, into which children may be born.

Part of the original intention for humanity in Genesis was 'to be fruitful and multiply' (to have children) and to fill the earth with humans who will all bear God's image. To this end, God created one man for one woman (Adam and Eve) and they were brought together in the union of marriage, giving us the blueprint for healthy and flourishing sexual intimacy.

The bond that is created between a man and a woman in marriage and, particularly, in their physical unity, is a mirror of the character of God, in all its completeness. (The Bible also tells us in the New Testament that marriage is a symbol of Jesus and the church, who is called 'his bride').

God never intended for sex to be experienced by two women together, or by two men together, or outside of the committed, life-long relationship of marriage. Again, this is very counter-cultural to what you might hear around you, what you think your feelings are telling you, or even what your friends might believe. But this is the Bible's truth about sex, and this is God's will for humanity, in order that we (humanity) will flourish.

If you're a teen struggling with your sexuality or a teen trying to maintain God's will in relation to sex (abstinence), please know you are not alone! It's really important that you find people you can trust, who can pray with you, who can encourage you in pursuing God's will for you, for your good and for your flourishing, and that you understand, too, that even when we mess up, God can still forgive us and help us get back on track (more on this in a minute).

You might find [this online message](#) by Ps Mark Lohman, from [The Bridge Church \(in the Chino Valley, California\)](#), on 'The Gospel & Sex' super helpful, and, if this is an area you're struggling in and would like some Christian advice and guidance on, I'd really encourage you to have a watch.

Getting Back On Track (Why We Need Jesus)

Being an image bearer of God means that when you look at a person, you see God. And, in a collective sense, when you look at humanity, you see God.

Well, at least, that's what was meant to happen.

Adam and Eve really put a spanner in the works on that one. You've probably heard the story; a garden, a snake, 'don't eat from a certain tree', a lie, disobedience, sin, punishment, death... It all gets pretty grim, right from the get-go.

And so even though we're made to image God, to be a significant part of His plan, and even though we were created with all the capability and purpose to do this, it gets messed up pretty quickly. The introduction of sin into the world brings about terrible consequences for not just Adama and Eve but for all creation. We live in a fallen world, with the echoes of our intended greatness all around us, but now subject to decay, death, and, in a lot of cases, hopelessness and despair.

But this is how much God loves you, how much He loves me, how much He loves *us*, His creation. *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:8)

God sent His son to die for us! To fix up the issue of sin, to make a way for us to be forgiven for our mistakes, and to show us the way to live in right relationship with Him. He sent Jesus to save us, to redirect our lives towards His good and abundant way of living, and to help us see that our true reality, who we *really are*, is *one beloved of God*, intended

for glory and greatness.

Every other identity – and the world around us has plenty of ‘identities’ on offer – are false and shallow copies of our true identity; a human made in God’s image, intended to reveal His character and glory, and who, in Jesus, can find forgiveness and restoration and become empowered to live this purpose fully.

“God loved the people of this world so much that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn its people. He sent him to save them!” | John 3:16-17, CEV

God already knew how messed up we all are, He already knew the kinds of bad things we’d do, in fact, He’s already seen all the bad things you’ll ever *do*...and yet He still sent Jesus to die for you!

We all need Jesus. There’s not a single person who hasn’t done something wrong, who hasn’t made a choice or taken an action that wasn’t outside of God’s ideal, who doesn’t need Jesus to get back on track. Jesus gives us hope and a future, belonging, homecoming, and the opportunity *to be fully known and truly loved*.

An Invitation And A Challenge

One of the first things Jesus told people when he began his preaching ministry was *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

It was both an invitation and a challenge to the people then, and it’s no less an invitation and challenge for you today, a 21st-century teen.

Will you turn away from your willfulness, from governing your

own life without God's guidance, your persistence in trying to find identity in shallow and dissatisfying deceptions, and will you turn to the maker and creator of all things, the One in whose image you're created and with whom you have been intended to experience eternal and satisfying relationship?

God's story – the one written in the stars and carried on the wind – is the story of who each one of us was intended to be. It's a story that confirms we *were* made for more than just this life, that we're meant to be part of something greater, something eternal.

It's a story of promise; of *knowing and being known*, of being *fully and completely alive*, and this is what following Jesus is all about.

Maybe you've never thought about following Jesus? Or maybe you *have* been thinking about following him and becoming a Christian, but just aren't sure how to take that step. That's a topic I intend to talk about more in my [next article](#) in this series (Letters To My Kids) so look out for that soon!

In the meantime, I'd love to hear from you. Let me know your thoughts on this topic (you can message me publicly or privately here or on my socials), or any questions you'd like answers to on this topic (or anything else) in upcoming articles!

"Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield." Psalm 5:12, NIV

Lord, I ask that You will rescue, guide, and protect our teens today. Answer them when they call on You, and be with them in times of trouble. I know that Your plans for them are good, and not for their harm. Guard and protect them with Your favor as with a shield (Psalm 5:12). Amen." | [Prayers For Teens](#)

Sex + Gender

The world is not the same place it once was.

Certainty has given way to subjective reality. Truth can no longer be pinned down. Common sense doesn't seem quite so common after all.

At times, it feels like the whole world has gone mad.

And perhaps we have...

One of the biggest conversations of our time is the gender/sexuality* debate. It used to be that gender, now a contested term, and sex were largely synonymous. If your sex or gender was 'male' then you were a man. If your sex or gender was 'female', then you were a woman.

Certainly, more is perhaps encompassed in the use of the descriptor 'man' rather than just 'male' (or 'woman' rather than just 'female'), binary terms which refer to a human's sexuality (gender, not 'orientation'), but these terms are nonetheless indelibly connected to one another, two aspects of the same reality.

Historically, most societies have recognised only two distinct genders, a binary of masculine and feminine largely corresponding to the biological sexes of male and female. Simply put, if you had an X and a Y chromosome, you were a male human. Two XXs and you were a female human. Immature undeveloped humans were called boys and girls, respectively. Mature, fully developed humans, were called men and women.

The discovery of sex differentiation chromosomes is a relatively new science but its discovery in 1905 only

confirmed what humans [had believed and understood for millennia.1](#)

“During the first decade of the 20th century, it was established that the sex of almost all many-celled biological organisms is determined at the moment of fertilisation by the combination of two kinds of microscopic entities, the X and Y chromosomes. This discovery was the culmination of more than two thousand years of speculation and experiment of how an animal, plant, or human becomes male or female.” | [Nettie N Stevens And The Discovery Of Sex Determination By Chromosomes.](#)

The Human Genome

This XY sex-determination system is shared by humans, many mammals, insects, and other animals. The perpetuation and reproduction of many species, humans included, is a result of the combining of the chromosomes from one X individual and one Y individual. Humans have forty-six chromosomes (including the two sex chromosomes, XX in females and XY in males), 23 of which are inherited from an individual's father (a male), with the other 23 inherited from an individual's mother (a female).

Our sex chromosomes form only part of the approximately three billion base pairs of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that make up the entire set of chromosomes of the human organism. One of the most significant and ambitious scientific endeavours of our time has been the sequencing of this entire set of chromosomes – the human genome, a project which was begun in 1990 and which, by 2022, had produced the first truly complete human genome sequence.

The [objective2 of this project](#) was ‘to decode the human hereditary information (human blueprint) that determines all individual traits inherited from parents.’ Dr Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, and one of the

world's leading scientists, has long worked at the cutting edge of the science of DNA, which he describes as 'the language of God'. He argues that science and God are in harmony – that, indeed, science is of God, and that the sequencing of the human genome 'was both a stunning scientific achievement and an occasion of worship'.

The sequencing of the human genome only confirmed what many have long believed; that we are *'fearfully and wonderfully made'* (Psalm 139:14). Humanity has been created and brought into being by an intelligent designer, who has carefully constructed the complex genetic material that makes up a complete human, with the ability for that human to replicate and reproduce *in his or her own likeness*. We are not an accident, a vague collection of random cells which have collided together, but a highly complex sequence of chromosomes that have formed a complete human, with a soul, intellect, morals, capability, and purpose.

In fact, the Bible comments in its earliest chapters that we are *made in God's image*. We are unique in all of creation because *we are made like God*. *Who we are* is directly connected to *the One who created us*.

The Emperor Has No Clothes On

Post-modern ideology would try to tell us that there are (currently) 57 genders. Gender, it's claimed, is not something we *are* but something that we *feel*. Not only that, gender is something that is fluid, an experience that can remain static or be in constant flux. Today we may *feel* female. Tomorrow we may *feel* male. Next week, we may *feel somewhere in the middle* or possibly *both at the same time*.

But, we're also told, gender is somehow some kind of social construct, that our gender *is expressed through the roles we take on*, the *expectations placed on us*, *our relationship with*

others, and the complex ways that gender is institutionalised in society. Gender – how we feel and who we know ourselves to be – is unrelated to our biological and physical realities, that is, our sex and our gender are not the same thing.

The historical recognition of two genders – male and female (called the gender binary) is usually based on someone's anatomy (the genitals they were born with), but, we're being told, these markers are unreliable as to the *true person's self* (or gender) which emerges with time (or is forced upon them by society), and which may or may not *match [the gender they were assigned at birth](#)*.³

(At this point, I'm looking around, wondering, *when is someone going to tell the Emperor he has no clothes on?*)

We are more than just our genitals, this is true. But these outward markers are only part of a complex series of chemical reactions that were set in motion the moment that fertilisation took place, the moment that *we began*, and the unique individual that would eventually become *us* sparked into reality. This sex determination, which will include all the physical, emotional, and psychological traits we will uniquely possess happens during fertilisation, and *it doesn't change during the pregnancy*.

“All human individuals—whether they have an XX, an XY, or an atypical sex chromosome combination—begin development from the same starting point. During early development the gonads of the fetus remain undifferentiated; that is, all fetal genitalia are the same and are phenotypically female. After approximately 6 to 7 weeks of gestation, however, the expression of a gene on the Y chromosome induces changes that result in the development of the testes. Thus, this gene is singularly important in inducing testis development. The production of testosterone at about 9 weeks of gestation results in the development of the reproductive tract and the masculinisation (the normal development of male sex

characteristics) of the brain and genitalia. In contrast to the role of the fetal testis in differentiation of a male genital tract and external genitalia in utero, fetal ovarian secretions are not required for female sex differentiation. As these details point out, the basic differences between the sexes begin in the womb.” | [National Library Of Medicine](#)

We are not merely male or female because our bodies say so, we are male or female because our brains also say so; neurochemically distinct from one another as either ‘male’ or ‘female’ brains. While similar in many basic ways, male and female brains show consistent differences that have important implications for each sex. Our sex (most commonly observed and confirmed by our exterior genitalia at birth) and our gender – whether we are male or female – are one and the same, and this differentiation shows up time and time again in the way we think and behave.

Diane Halpern, PhD, and past president of the American Psychological Association, comments that *“there is simply too much data pointing to the biological basis of sex-based cognitive differences to ignore.”* She references a catalogue of human behavioural differences that have been [studied and observed](#)⁴:

“Women excel in several measures of verbal ability – pretty much all of them, except for verbal analogies. Women’s reading comprehension and writing ability consistently exceed that of men, on average. They outperform men in tests of fine-motor coordination and perceptual speed. They’re more adept at retrieving information from long-term memory. Men, on average, can more easily juggle items in working memory. They have superior visuospatial skills: They’re better at visualising what happens when a complicated two- or three-dimensional shape is rotated in space, at correctly determining angles from the horizontal, at tracking moving objects and at aiming projectiles.” | [Stanford Medicine](#)

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Halpen concludes; *“new technologies have generated a growing pile of evidence that there are inherent differences in how men’s and women’s brains are wired and how they work and many of these cognitive differences appear quite early in life.”*

This process of sex differentiation, begun at fertilisation, continues throughout our life, influencing our physical and mental growth and development (bone structure, weight, height, genitalia, brain, and characteristics). The complex process encoded in our DNA resolutely follows the invisible instructions given at fertilisation, and, barring abnormality or mutation, results, without fail, in a *gender or sex that matches our physicality.*

*The **gender/sex of a person** is the final result of unique genetic, hormonal, and morphologic sex-differentiation at fertilisation. It is fixed and it is binary, either male or female.*

Your shy sensitive son isn’t *a girl trapped in a boy’s body*, he’s simply a shy, sensitive *boy*. Your boisterous, energetic, sandpit-loving daughter isn’t *a boy trapped in a girl’s body*, she’s simply an energetic, outdoor-loving *girl*.

While our sex/gender may be fixed and binary, our unique personalities and characteristics are not. Our identity is not the same as any other person on the earth. Even identical twins are not truly 100% identical, with a complex interaction between our genes, our environment, and our epigenetic markers uniquely shaping who we are.

We are truly, each one of us, one-of-a-kind.

Historical gender roles may have played a large part in the troubling place where we now find ourselves as a culture, insisting that all men must behave in certain ways and perform

certain roles (outdoorsy, tough, adventurous..) and, conversely, that all women must behave in certain ways (deferring and submissive, domestic, delicate) (another day, another blog, although I tackle some of this in relation to healthy church function in my article '[Stop Promoting Gendered Hierarchy!](#)').

However, I think a large part of what has contributed to the madness surrounding sex and gender conversations today is the abandonment of the idea of *God*, an intelligent, thoughtful designer who *insists we were created for a purpose*.

What Is A Woman?

One of the most startling, and troubling documentaries in recent times is a project undertaken by Matt Walsh, an American Christian conservative and political commentator. In his documentary, "[What Is A Woman](#)"⁵, Walsh asks questions that many people no longer seem willing to answer.

Can a *woman* be defined? (historically, a woman was defined as *an adult human female*). Is being a woman simply *a feeling* or *behaving a certain way*? Can a woman be *trapped in a man's body*? Does *being a woman* mean anything at all?

In the documentary, Walsh visits a women's march, where placards are lifted high, campaigning *for the rights of women*. Unfortunately, nobody seems able to define what a woman actually is, reducing the impetus of the march to nothing more than a ridiculous farce. Implausibly, many of those he interviews in his documentary seem 'uncomfortable with his line of questioning', deeming his tone 'malignant and harmful'.

The prevailing (or, at least, the most vocal) narrative at play is built on a serious and disturbing detachment from subjective reality. If being a woman is *simply how one feels on any given day*, then being a woman can include everyone and

no one. It's no kind of definition at all.

Gender and sex are no longer something that people are willing to define. Forget science, forget biology; how any one person *feels* is the prevailing truth of the day. And if you have a difference of opinion in relation to the gender + sex conversation, if you even dare to ask questions, you are deemed hateful, phobic, violent, or discriminatory.

As one person interviewed in the documentary comments, "*If you speak up about it ... your life will be over in some way*". Defy the trans groupthink and face profound consequences.

Walsh's long-ranging interview with a gender studies professor finds the star drilling down on a basic principle. Truth. [emphasis mine] One therapist asks, with a straight face, "whose truth are we talking about?" | [Hollywood Into To](#)

What Is Truth?

Truth.

A hot-button topic, to say the least.

And *truth*, it seems, is at the core of the issues we are facing in relation to gender, sexuality, and identity.

Most human activities depend upon the concept of 'truth' as an objective reality, including most of the sciences, law, journalism, and, indeed, elements of everyday life. As Sir Isaac Newton discovered, if you throw an apple up in the air, it (or anything else) will invariably come down. The old adage, '*what goes up must come down*' is attributed to his discovery of this undeniable truth. The science behind this, is, of course, the law of gravity, one of three 'laws of motion' that Sir Isaac Newton formulated.

I have deliberately avoided overly referencing the Bible up until this point, endeavoring instead to defer firstly to

science and reason (who are, in reality, both friends of faith) in my initial comments. But humanity has been long discussing the question, "*what is truth?*" and Jesus himself gave an answer to this question when it was put to him, circa AD33. He replied, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6)

Jesus claimed (and the Bible is in agreement) that truth is not subjective, just some abstract exchanging of philosophical ideas, but rather objective, rooted in the person of God, who has been revealed to us in Christ. Paul the Apostle comments in his letter to the church at Colosse in the early first century that every truthful thing in the universe is found in Christ as the Word, Wisdom and Knowledge belonging to God Himself. Everything that was created was through and for him, he existed before anything else and he holds all things together. (Colossians 1:16-17, Colossians 2:3)

For many, the Bible may seem outdated, irrelevant, out of touch, or even downright dangerous. And I can understand this. The Bible has been misused, misinterpreted, and misunderstood throughout history, often used to control and harm rather than heal and liberate.

The reality, however, is that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God Himself, whereby He has revealed Himself to His creation and through which we are able to understand His intentions. It offers life-giving wisdom, leads humanity to salvation, and provides meaning and purpose for our human existence. In fact, the Bible is the expression of God Himself, who is *all about justice, redemption, and liberation* (and who is utterly opposed to injustice and evil).

As such, the implication is that it is entirely sufficient to answer all our tricky and troubling questions, and, because its author is God, those answers can be relied upon to be true. (I've written more about the accuracy, authority, and authenticity of the Bible [here](#)).

Let's suppose for a minute that the Bible really does have the answers to all our human problems, issues, doubts, and questions. Does the Bible have anything to say about gender and sex? What truths does God communicate to us about these issues?

Made In God's Image | Imago Dei

God is The Subject Of Life. The Centre Of Everything. The story of humanity starts with Him and ends with Him.

As I commented earlier in this article, we (humanity) are unique in all of creation because *we are made like God. Who we are is directly connected to the One who created us.* This belief formed one of the key cornerstones of the early Christian faith and, in many respects, set Christianity apart from other religions of its time; that is, the belief in the intrinsic value and worth of every human *because they're made in God's image.*

Science tells us *how* we're (uniquely and intricately) made (and I've talked about that earlier in this article) but faith tells us *why* (what we're here for and what life is all about). Scripture intends us to understand that we were created intentionally and with a specific purpose in mind; to be God's image-bearers – *imago dei* – on the earth, and to rule it wisely and well on His behalf. Nothing about our creation was accidental, and nothing was left to chance.

One of the first things that the book of Genesis confirms, alongside the commission for which we were created, is the binary nature of our humanity:

*So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; **male** and **female** He created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the*

ground.” Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.” | Genesis 1:27-30, NLT

The narrative of humanity’s creation is further fleshed out in Genesis chapter 2 with our gender binary of male and female being connected to our naming as ‘man’ and ‘woman’. (Genesis 2:18-25) (Interestingly, we are also given the blueprint for marriage in this chapter; that is, a committed and exclusive relationship between a man and a woman).

Jesus himself confirms his belief in and understanding of the creation narrative (when discussing the legality of divorce) in Matthew 19: 4-8, where he says, *“Haven’t you read the Scriptures? They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’”*

The differences between the two genders are unique and distinctive, both designed by God with a purpose in mind. Both genders are intrinsically valuable and precious to God, and we see His characteristics displayed by the perfect merging of both masculine and feminine traits. These distinct genders are the fundamental building blocks of God’s creation and are part of God’s plan for His creation.

God’s original design for humanity was built on equality, cooperation, respect, commitment, and support, with both genders bringing unique and valued differences to the partnership. This mutuality, this joint responsibility, forms part of the great narrative of restoration and redemption that Jesus himself came to inaugurate when he ushered in *the kingdom of God*. Part of this reality includes the binary of

our respective genders, that of male and female (man and woman); deeply embedded into our DNA, the very building blocks that make us *us*.

The Bible insists that we were created for a purpose. It insists that there are two genders; male and female. And it names these genders; man and woman.

“The physical, human body has great significance within Christian understanding, from creation through incarnation to the resurrection and ascension. The Bible recognises and celebrates two sexes. The text does not seem to allow for, and actually on occasion prohibits, identifying as different from your biological birth sex. That said, we need to understand what the Bible means when it says we are made “male and female” and not unwittingly accept society’s stereotypes about sex and gender.” | [Premier Christianity](#)

Responding Pastorally

Unfortunately, for some individuals, gender identity disorder is very real. People with gender dysphoria genuinely have a deep sense of unease and distress at the perception their biological sex/gender does not match who they *feel* they are.

Sensitivity and compassion are crucial in engaging with and in these conversations.

(Additionally, there *are* individuals born with genetic anomalies (sex chromosomes, gonads, and genitalia) which don’t conform to the usual binary of male/female. Known as [intersex**](#), the prevalence of such occurrences is thought to be about 0.018% of the population. People with abnormalities of development should be helped to find their place as they see it best, and it’s not the intention of this article to discuss those particular cases in any detail.)⁶

Yet the statistics would suggest that the reportable numbers

of those suffering from gender dysphoria are between 0.002% and 0.005% of the population, actually a very small number. It goes no way towards explaining the absolute explosion that seems to have happened in recent years, as young children and teens are diagnosed as transgender, rushed into hormone treatments, and, more drastically, undergoing life-altering surgeries.

This is such a difficult issue for families to navigate today. Many of us can feel out of our depth engaging in conversations that use terms and language that have shifted so dramatically from historically accepted definitions.

More seriously, parents are being told that failure to affirm a child who may be suffering from gender dysphoria could result in, worst case scenario, suicide and, in a recent amendment to the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 in Victoria, Australia, non-endorsement by parents of a child who wishes to transition [is considered emotional and psychological abuse \(ie family violence\)](#).⁷

Yet the reality is that affirming a person's belief (they are the opposite gender to that which they were "assigned" at birth), or advocating the use of hormonal or surgical intervention actually does nothing to truly resolve the issue. As Ryan T Anderson, PhD [comments](#), "Sex "reassignment" doesn't work. It's impossible to "reassign" someone's sex physically [because sex isn't something that is "assigned at birth"], and attempting to do so doesn't produce good outcomes psychosocially."

"Cosmetic surgery and cross-sex hormones can't change us into the opposite sex. They can affect appearances. They can stunt or damage some outward expressions of our reproductive organisation. But they can't transform it. They can't turn us from one sex into the other. Transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men. All become feminised men or masculinized women, counterfeits or

impersonators of the sex with which they 'identify.' In that lies their problematic future." | [The Heritage Foundation](#)

Carving up bodies and dishing out synthetic hormones is not the answer. Speaking hope and truth into people's lives is.

"Our minds and senses function properly when they reveal reality to us and lead us to knowledge of truth. And we flourish as human beings when we embrace the truth and live in accordance with it. A person might find some emotional relief in embracing a falsehood, but doing so would not make him or her objectively better off. Living by a falsehood keeps us from flourishing fully, whether or not it also causes distress." (The Heritage Foundation)

John Whitehall, Professor of Paediatrics at Western Sydney University, comments, "People are not interested in discussing the science. We've all got to believe that there's no such thing as a boy or a girl, that we're all somewhere in between. I don't believe that. The good news is that in all the major articles, these children (who may be confused about their gender) will revert to the natal sex through puberty. What we should do then is have confidence in the statistics ***and not mess the child up along the way.***"

A Final Word

Truth. The final word in all of this is truth.

Truth spoken with compassion and care, with sensitivity and love, but truth nonetheless. Encouraging a false narrative will do no one any favours.

We need to confidentially speak what is true in relation to sex and gender, affirming reality, and encouraging acceptance of our physical being, understanding our embodied selves as male or female. Narratives that disguise or distort reality are misguided and do not actually result in human flourishing

or wholeness.

It's not only untruthful to affirm these distortions, it's unloving and harmful to the individual. The most beneficial therapies focus on helping people accept themselves and live in harmony with their bodies.

And I would argue that nothing is more healing than being able to define yourself as one beloved of God, created with purpose (holistically male or female), and that this reality – that you are a child of God – is your true identity. This is the truth that the world needs to hear, the hope that it needs for whole and healthy flourishing, and the reality that we need to be affirming, with love and compassion.

“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.” Psalm 139:13-16, NLT

1 .

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/230427#:~:text=According%20to%20most%20biologists%20and,Wilson%20\(1856%2D1939\).](https://www.jstor.org/stable/230427#:~:text=According%20to%20most%20biologists%20and,Wilson%20(1856%2D1939).)

2 .

<https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/educational-resources/fact-sheets/human-genome-project>

3 .

<https://teentalk.ca/learn-about/gender-identity/#:~:text=There%20are%20many%20different%20gender,or%20a%20combination%20of%20these.>

4.

<https://stanmed.stanford.edu/how-mens-and-womens-brains-are-different/>

5. <https://whatisawoman.com>

6. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001669.htm>

7.

<https://www.hrla.org.au/not-affirming-transgender-children-is-family-violence-in-victoria>

8.

<https://www.heritage.org/gender/commentary/sex-reassignment-doesnt-work-here-the-evidence>

***Historically, 'gender' and 'sex' are words used to describe and define the anatomical and physiological differences between men and women. Modern terminology uses 'sex' to refer to biological characteristics and 'gender' to refer to the individual's and society's perceptions of sexuality, identity, and the concepts of masculinity and femininity. This article is using 'gender' and 'sex', as defined in the historical sense.**

This article is not intended to be offensive or divisive in nature, but rather to open a channel of respectful conversation about a subject that is deeply important to many people. I do not encourage discrimination, hate-speech, or sexism towards anyone, at any time, but, particularly in this instance, towards anyone who does not share this point of view.

****This article also purposely does not address or discuss the issues surrounding chromosomal abnormalities or intersex conditions.**

The Story's Not Over Yet...

"Walking, stumbling, on these shadow feet; toward home, a land that I've never seen. I am changing: less and less asleep, made of different stuff than when I began and I have sensed it all along, fast approaching is the day." | Brooke Fraser

These lyrics are from a song by Brooke Fraser, which I think really speak to our hearts as Christians. When I listen to this song, I feel as if I catch a glimpse of the real world beyond the veil, the world that exists beyond these shadowlands. For a brief moment, it seems as if I catch sight of the home that I know to be an unseen reality, that one day I'll see, in all its fullness, for myself.

God's Story

I want to share a few thoughts about God's Story, the story we see laid out in poetry, prose, prophecy and parable in the book we call the Bible.

We might be inclined to describe the Bible as merely 'the story of the drama of human history' – but, in truth, it's not history yet. History, defined as *"something that happened or ended a long time ago and is not important now, or a person who is not important now, although they were in the past"*, does not accurately describe the reality that is the Word of God.

The Story of God, of which the Bible contains many important aspects, won't become history until the arrival of "the new heavens and the new earth, the passing away of the first earth and the moment a loud voice proclaims *"behold, the dwelling place of our God is with humanity and God is all in all"* (Revelation 21: 1-3, ESV)

It would also be too simplistic to state that the Bible is merely a catalogue of continuous human drama. The Bible isn't just a collection of stories about characters and events that happened in the past, nor merely information about cultures or civilisations that have now ceased to exist. Neither is it simply a compilation of recommended principles by which to live an honest and upright life (although it does contain these things and other helpful advice besides!).

The Bible's overarching story can't be relegated to simply ancient history or human drama alone.

“For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” | Hebrews 4:12, NIV

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” | 2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV

The Bible is the living, Spirit-breathed [Word of God](#), the written revelation of what God has been doing in the past and what He is still doing right now. It's a record of how and when God communicated His intent and purpose with humanity in the past and how He has communicated to us today.

Far from being just black text on white pages alone; this book unveils the purpose, intentionality and creative action of the Eternal One; breathed out, captured by way of quill and scroll by the faithful scribes who heard 'the voice of God', and recorded the Story of God for all to read. The words on these pages capture the historical reality of God's powerful, creative activities throughout the history of humanity.

When Jesus was sent into the world, the story of what the

Creator was doing was demonstrated literally, in Jesus himself, who was the Word-Made-Flesh. Jesus showed to humanity all the fullness and glory of God and His purpose, [embodied in flesh and bone](#) and tabernacling amongst us.

Powerful. Authoritative. Prince of Peace. Emmanuel (*God With Us*).

“On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe... His Word, made flesh and who dwelt among us” | Hebrews 1:1, John 1:1, ESV

By communicating through vision, in person, [through prophets](#) and finally, through His Son, we are challenged to move from simply thinking of the Bible as a book of facts or information and to instead see it as a visual recounting of what God has and is still communicating with us – the Story of God’s rule and reign and the redemption of humanity demonstrated in His Son’s life and death and resurrection.

This Story of God, of which the Bible contains many important details, is still being written, all around us every day. The Bible is simply the paper record of a living transformative event, of the real and ongoing story. It provides the relevant information for us to know and understand this centuries-long event, as participants in that story and as recipients of the invitation to the Kingdom of Heaven. It contains the details we’re supposed to be paying attention to so we can not just understand the story being told but choose which kind of character we’ll be in that story.

The promise – that God will dwell with humanity again – is the great thread of the Bible and it’s the **real story** that’s being written every day, all around us in a thousand different ways.

God's kingdom in the preaching of Jesus refers not to postmortem destiny, not to our escape from this world into another one, but God's sovereign rule coming 'on earth as it is in heaven.' . . . Heaven, in the Bible, is not a future destiny but the other, hidden dimension of ordinary life – God's dimension, if you like. God made heaven and earth; at the last, He will remake both and join them together forever. The end times are not the end of the world – they are the beginning of the real world – in biblical understanding.” | N T Wright

The Story Begins...

The Bible opens with an account about the beginning of all things:

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the [Spirit of God](#) was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created humans in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” | Genesis 1:1-2, 26, NIV

We can tend to read this account as if it's a completed narrative. As if the statement 'Let us create humanity in our image' was a single event that occurred in the past, one which we perhaps give little real thought to today. Yet, if we view it from a different perspective, stretching our minds a little

higher, a little farther, we realise that God is still *creating humans in His image*. This is not history, this is the present reality we are living in and surrounded by.

God is doing magic, right under our noses, every single day!

[God's Spirit](#) is still hovering and continues to move in new and astonishing ways. His Word – His living Word, which brought all of the natural world into being, is continuing its creative work through redemption and regeneration in Jesus Christ, the Word-Made-Flesh. Light is still entering darkness, new life is being ignited and men and women are being reborn in God's image, to become His representatives and perfect image-bearers on this earth.

The Bible is, therefore, the only book in the world which contains snippets and segments of a real-life story that hasn't finished being told. We know what the ending will be, but we're still in it, right now, living and breathing it, every moment of our lives.

The [stories we read about in the Bible](#) then take on new significance. They're supposed to engage all our senses and connect us in very real ways to the people and situations we read about, to help us understand our place in the story that is not just theirs, but ours too. And we know that every story, every moment, has been recorded with intentionality, to enable the reader to participate, but we also know there's plenty more, left untold, that time and space couldn't allow for:

“What else can I say? There isn't enough time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.” Hebrews 11:32, CEV

“And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written.” | John

The Bible Is Our Own Personal Origin Story

Everyone's probably familiar with the idea of origin stories. An origin story is an account or back-story revealing how a character or group of people become a protagonist or antagonist in the main story. It adds complexity to a narrative, often giving reasons for the characters' intentions and choices.

The Bible is therefore our own [personal origin story](#). It tells us where we've come from and where we're going and invites us personally into the main story. The primary character in this story is the King of the Earth, God, revealed in Jesus and the antagonist, the Prince of this World – Sin. There are two kingdoms in this story – one of darkness and one of the Son of God, a Kingdom of Light. We don't get a choice about which kingdom we start out in but we certainly get to decide which kingdom we finish up in

When we read the Bible, we're not just reading **about** a story, we're actually **in** this story and it's unfolding all around us. This is a story of creative magic, impossible realities, futility, despair and death, rescue and redemption, light, salt, allegiance and exaltation. Most of all, it's a story of hope.

It's the story of the creation of the **real world**, not this shadow world that we live in now. It's the story of how God's Will will be done on earth, as in heaven and how God will once again walk with us in paradise. It is the story of the Creator's divine life flowing into ours if we allow it.

This narrative gives shape and purpose to our human experience and [hope for our future](#).

“If we think that this life is all there is to life, then there is no interpretation of our problems, our pain, not even of our privileges. But everything changes when we open up to the possibility that God’s story is really our story too.” | Max Lucado

*“Your life flows into mine, pure as a garden spring. A well of living water springs up from within you, like a mountain brook flowing into my heart! Then may your awakening breath blow upon my life until I am fully yours. Breathe upon me with your Spirit wind. Stir up the sweet spice of your life within me. Spare nothing as you make me your fruitful garden. Hold nothing back until I release your fragrance. Come walk with me as you once walked in your paradise garden. Come taste the fruits of your life in me. I have come to you, for you are my paradise garden! Come walk with me until I am fully yours. Come taste the fruits of your life in me.” |
☐☐Song of Songs☐ ☐4:15-16,☐ ☐TPT☐☐*

Not If, But How?

The question for us all, then, is not ***if*** we want to be a part of this story, but ***how***.

As descendants of Adam and Eve, we’re all born into the kingdom of darkness. Their story is our story and we’re participants in that reality, whether we’re willing or not. But the Master Storyteller hasn’t left the world in darkness. He has crafted a narrative of redemption and light and offers a way, through the sacrifice of His Son, for us to be transferred from that dominion of darkness and into [His glorious Kingdom](#).

Jesus came, preaching that kingdom, urging people to choose a better way and to give their allegiance to him. *“Repent, he said, for the kingdom of God is here. I have arrived, proclaiming God’s rule and bringing His salvation to*

humanity.” (Isaiah 52:10, Luke 17: 20-21, Luke 2:30)

“What I love about the Bible is that the story isn’t over. There are still prophets in our midst. There are still dragons and beasts. It might not look like it, but the Resistance is winning. The light is breaking through. So listen to the weirdos. Listen to the voices crying from the wilderness. They are pointing us to a new King and a better kingdom.” | Rachel Held Evans

If you still belong to the kingdom of darkness, if you haven’t yet given your life and allegiance to the King, I repeat the appeal of Paul to you: *“Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God Himself were making His appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into His friends!”* (2 Corinthians 5:20)

If you have given your life to Jesus through baptism, then Good News: So Glorious! You’ve been transferred into the Kingdom of Light. **Don’t be a passive participant in the Story.**

You are a child of God, a member of the household of faith, a character in God’s story whose name is written in the book of life! (Psalm 56:8, Daniel 12:1, Malachi 3:16, Philippians 4:3)

Boldly take hold of your place in the story. Be [strong and courageous](#) and don’t fear the enemy who surrounds you. [Jesus, your King](#) reassures you: *“In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17, BSB)

“All of their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and title page: Now, at last, they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before. | C S Lewis, The Last Battle