



Body and Soul

Serving Transgenders In Your Church

By

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[This short series came from a recent discussion I had with a Christian friend. Please notice an important word in the title of this series – “serving.” I hope my thoughts will be helpful to you.]

The number of transgender people in the United States is estimated to be [about 1.6 million](#). The data is from one year ago (June, 2022). Determining the number of transgenders who attend Christian churches in the U.S. is more difficult to determine, but many denominational groups and individual churches allow transgender clergy.

35 years after Sky Anderson became the first transgender person to be a Christian minister, a growing number of Protestant churches in Europe and the United States of America ordain transgender people as pastors and teachers of the faith and conduct weddings for post-operative transsexual people in their confirmed gender. [Cambridge.org](#)

What are Transgenderers?

The term “transgender” refers to a person whose sex assigned at birth (i.e. the sex assigned by a physician at birth, usually based on external genitalia) does not match their gender identity (i.e., one’s psychological sense of their gender). Some people who are transgender will experience “gender dysphoria,” which refers to psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one’s sex assigned at birth and one’s gender identity. Though gender dysphoria often begins in childhood, some people may not experience it until after puberty or much later. [American Psychiatric Association](#)

Transgender are members of the LGBTQIA+ community. A 2020 report found that almost 5.3 million adult members of that community are religious — some moderately and some highly religious. According to the report:

Among religious LGBTQ+ adults, there are an estimated 1.5 million Protestants, 1.3 million Roman Catholics, 1.3 million who report belonging to another Christian religion, 425,000 who identify with another non-Christian religion, as well as 131,000 Jews, 107,000 Mormons, and 106,000 who are Muslim.

RELIGIOSITY AMONG LGBT ADULTS IN THE US, **OCTOBER 2020**

Though the report did not break down the number of transgender who are moderately or highly religious, they were included in the overall findings. The fact that many denominations ordain transgender clergy is some evidence that the number may be higher than we know.

The question, I believe, is how Christians who are not LGBTQIA+ should respond to trans people attending their church. The answer, I believe, should be “biblically.” One of the best examples of responding to people *biblically* is found in Ephesians 4 –

“... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:14-16

Speaking Truth In Love

I want to key in on Paul's admonition to *speaking the truth in love*. Because people are both physical and spiritual (body and soul), we know that the Bible will address every aspect of every person's life. What Paul addressed in Ephesians 4 was how Christ gave a group of spiritually gifted individuals (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) to equip the saints for their "work of ministry." The purpose was for the "edifying" of the Body of Christ.

Jesus told His disciples to preach the Gospel "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), to "make disciples of all the nations," and to teach those disciples to observe "all things" that He had commanded the apostles (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus called Saul of Tarsus to take the Gospel to "Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Saul (Paul) took the Gospel of Christ to Gentiles throughout the Roman Empire. That's evidence that there was and is no group that God does not want to reach with the saving message of the Gospel of Christ –

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:16-17

Christians should respond according to what the Bible teaches. That means speaking the truth in love, but how does that affect what Christians say to ‘trans’ people? Many churches and denominations are divided over the biblical way to treat transgenders who want to attend and participate in the life of the church. Many want to attend and serve. Some want to lead. What is the truth about transgenderism, what does the Bible teach about it, and how do you speak that truth in love?

I’d like to offer a couple of ideas for you to consider.

Body

First, let's look at what makes a trans person "trans."

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines transgender as:

of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth ... especially : of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is opposite the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) offers this explanation:

Transgender is a broad term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be when they were born. "Trans" is often used as shorthand for transgender. To treat a transgender person with

*respect, you treat them according to their gender identity, not their sex at birth ... **Gender identity** is your internal knowledge of your gender – for example, your knowledge that you’re a man, a woman, or another gender. **Gender expression** is how a person presents their gender on the outside, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice or body characteristics.*

[NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY](#)

Two important phrases here are “gender identity” and “gender expression.” According to the NCTE, gender identity is a person’s internal knowledge, while gender expression is how a person presents their gender outwardly.

It is the outward or external expression of gender that most people are familiar with when they think of a transgender person. A trans person has made a conscious determination to present their body in a way that is different than the gender they were when they were born. Some trans people do that through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, or voice.

However, some trans people go through a medical process that alters their physical body to a variety of degrees.

Gender At Birth

You may have noticed that whereas the NCTE wrote — “different from the gender they were thought to be when they were born” — I wrote — “different than the gender they were when they were born.” Do you see the difference? One perspective (mine) of gender at birth is based on a newborn’s sex organs and chromosomal makeup. Male and female sex organs are different for a specific reason. God designed that reason, so religious trans people should find that important. The other is based on *gender identity*, which the LGBTQIA+ community believes can be “fluid.”

Harvard Medical School defines gender fluidity this way:

Gender fluidity refers to change over time in a person’s gender expression or gender identity, or both. That change might be in expression, but not identity, or in identity, but not expression. Or both expression and identity might change together.

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL, 2020

Harvard Medical also gives some examples concerning the difference between transgender and gender fluidity:

While some people develop a gender identity early in childhood, others may identify with one gender at one time and then another gender later on. For example, a person who was designated female on their original birth certificate may identify as a girl until adolescence, then identify as a boy for the rest of their life. This person would be considered transgender, but not necessarily gender-fluid.

Another person who follows this developmental arc may only identify as a boy until they are in their 20s, and then identify as nonbinary, and then identify as a boy again later in adulthood. This person could be considered gender-fluid, because they experienced one or more changes in their gender identity or gender expression. It's wise to note, though, that they may

never use the term gender-fluid as an identity label for themselves.

Harvard mentioned the “original birth certificate.” A doctor and the medical team involved in helping a mother give birth to a child have traditionally noted the child’s sex on a birth certificate: male or female. That’s based on the medical observation of what sex organs the child had at birth. However, many in the LGBTQIA+ community believe it has been a mistake to include the physical observation of which sexual organs a child had at birth because the child may not identify that way at a later time.

Many LGBTQIA+ organizations help transgender people in the process of changing their birth certificates, drivers license, and other public records to match the change in their gender identity. Some hospitals are no longer listing the sex of a child on birth certificates. The [American Medical Association](#) came out in support of that a couple of years ago (June 2021). Here are some LGBTQIA+ interesting notes from the AMA about the subject:

Sex designation refers to the biological difference between males and females, which is what is recorded on the birth certificate. While there is no clear standard for defining sex designation, it is typically determined at birth by a child's physician or parents based on external genitalia.

Gender is a social construct that describes the way persons self-identify or express themselves. A person's gender identity may not always be exclusively male or female and may not always correspond with their sex assigned at birth. Birth certificates have changed over time.

REMOVING THE SEX DESIGNATION FROM THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE (RESOLUTION 5-I-19), AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

So, how should Christians respond to Harvard, the AMA, NCTE, and other leading voices about gender identity?

Remember what I wrote at the beginning of this article? “Christians should respond according to what the Bible teaches.” What does the Bible teach about gender?

Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. Genesis 1:26-28

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:21-24

God created "male and female." Interesting. That's what the AMA doesn't want listed on a birth certificate. Why not? Why would any medical group, any hospital, any doctor, any medical professional, not want "male" or "female" listed on a certificate of birth? God created people as either males or females. Seems like a good idea to go with what God said. It's also the "science" that the scientific community promotes everyone following. So, from both a physical and spiritual perspective identifying someone according to their birth sex makes sense.

Just a reminder that we're addressing what the NCTE called gender expression — “how a person presents their gender on the outside, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice or body characteristics.”

Male and female are "body characteristics." Those characteristics can be identified externally and internally. Males are born with a male sex organ. Females are born with a female sex organ. Parents and medical professionals can identify that at birth because it is something that can be "seen" with the eyes. Males are born with one X chromosome and one Y chromosome. Females are born with born with two X chromosomes. Those cannot be seen with the eyes, except under a special microscope.

Chromosomes are so small they can fit inside each of the billions of cells that make up the human body. Chromosomes are made from DNA and protein and are part of making every person unique (one of a kind). However, some people don't identify with who they are. They can't change their chromosomal structure, but they can go through a medical process that will change how their body appears and functions (to a degree).

Is it okay in God's eyes for a person to be whatever gender they choose? If so, why? If not, why not? Whichever way you believe, how will you speak the truth in love to transgenderers in your church?

The 'Trans' Talk

Christians may be surprised that many 'trans' people will be open with them about why they are transgender. The important thing for any Christian is to know what the Bible teaches about sexuality and His love for all kinds of people. I like to remember what Jesus told Nicodemus –

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

Transgenders in churches, along with other members of the LGBTQIA+ community, are usually open to talking about what they believe about their identity and sexuality. As we saw in the first part of our series, the key is to always speak the truth “in love.”

My first recommendation is to *listen*. Ask ‘trans’ people questions about what they believe and why they believe what they believe, then listen to their answers. Asking questions and listening to answers does not mean you necessarily agree with what someone says. It’s how we learn things. It also demonstrates that you are interested in people, what they believe, and why.

I used to be an atheist before becoming a Christian more than 50 years ago. I have strong reasons to believe that atheism is not the correct worldview, but I still ask atheists questions and listen to their answers. Listening doesn’t mean I agree with the atheist, but it does demonstrate my interest in and respect for them as a fellow human being.

When ‘trans’ people attend your church, greet them and get to know them. Your first questions don’t need to be about why they are ‘trans.’ In fact, I recommend you not do that. Ask them the same questions you would ask anyone visiting your church. The conversation can eventually get around to why they are trans, but it doesn’t need to be the first question.

It is possible that ‘trans’ people visiting your church may ask you about how your church or denomination views transgenders. They may ask you about membership and serving in the church. If a trans person asks you that question and you don’t know the answer, be honest with them and recommend that they speak with a pastor or elder. You may also want to have that conversation with your church leaders ahead of time to see what their official position is on the subject.

While it’s good to know your church and/or denomination’s official position on transgenderism, it’s important that every Christian know what they believe and why they believe it. Every Christian should be able to speak the truth in love with anyone about anything. That’s part of being a disciple of Christ – “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Know what Jesus and His apostles taught, then you’ll know how to *speaking the truth in love* on any subject.

Physical Body Reminders

We saw in the first part of our series that every person has a physical body. God created the physical human body to be either “male” or “female” (Genesis 1 & 2). That impacts humans at the chromosome level and the sexual organ level. Some ‘trans’ people get sexual surgery to change some aspect of their body while others don’t. However, there is no surgery or other medical process to change a person’s chromosomes. Males have the X and Y chromosomes, while females have two X chromosomes. That is the *scientific* part of a conversation concerning transgenderism.

However, many transgenderers view themselves as being able to determine their own gender identity. Many transgenderers believe they were born into the “wrong” body. Some trans people change their gender view during their teen years or even as young adults.

Here's how the [Mayo Clinic](#) explains the different views of transgenderism –

People who are transgender or gender diverse include:

- Those who have a gender identity that differs from the sex assigned to them at birth.
- Those whose gender expression doesn't follow society's norms for the sex assigned to them at birth.
- Those who identify and express their gender outside of the gender binary.

The Soul Talk

The number of transgender people in the United States is estimated to be [about 1.6 million](#). Many of them say they are religious, which means you may have the opportunity to speak with one or more religious ‘trans’ people in your lifetime. Their interest in religion opens the door for conversations about the “soul.” Though the human body has an expiration date here on earth (e.g. Psalm 90:12; Job 14:5), the “soul” does not expire. As King Solomon wrote –

*Remember your Creator before the silver cord
is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken,
Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the well.
Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,
And the spirit will return to God who gave it.
Ecclesiastes 12:6-7*

God created the human body and soul. Though our body will return to the earth as dust (Genesis 3:19), our spirit (soul) will return to God who gave it. We also know that our physical body will be raised from death and be reunited with our soul. That's a promise God made many times in both the Old and New Testament (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4).

The 'soul talk' with a trans person is the same conversation you would have with anyone else who said they were religious. Ask questions, listen, pray for wisdom, then share (ALPS).

Find out what they mean by being "religious." The word "religious" is used only twice in Scripture, so you can share that during your conversation.

Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious. Acts 17:22

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. James 1:26

This often surprises people, even Christians, when they learn that being “religious” is not a primary aspect of Christianity. Paul was speaking to pagans in Athens who viewed themselves as “very religious” because of their dedication to polytheism (multiple gods/idols). James was writing Jewish believers who were not behaving in a proper way toward others. The next sentence from James gave believers the definition of “pure and undefiled religion” –

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Other references to “religion” in the Bible tend to be more negative. One example is what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians in the context of legalism –

Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.. Colossians 2:20-23

What the New Testament does emphasize as *primary* is “sin and salvation.” That’s the conversation you want to have with all people to make sure they understand the difference between being “religious” and being a “disciplined follower” of Jesus Christ..

When you meet a 'trans' person who visits your church, your discussion should eventually lead to spiritual beliefs about God. Those are beliefs about a person's relationship with God. If anyone says they believe in God, ask them questions that will help reveal their beliefs -

- Do they believe in the God of the Bible?
- What kind of God is God?
- What do they believe about Jesus Christ?
- What do they believe about the Holy Spirit?

Knowing what someone believes about God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – will help you better serve the spiritual needs of transgenders in your church.

The Transgender Creation View

Many transgender people say they are “religious.” That word can mean a lot of different things to different people, so it’s good to ask ‘trans’ people how they define religion.

Others say they are people “of faith.” That word can also mean a lot of different things, so ask them what they mean by the term(s) they use. Their answer will give you important insights into how to proceed with the spiritual discussion.

Some trans people are well-schooled in the ‘transgender view’ of how God created the first male and female. I suggest Christians become familiar with that view in case it becomes part of your “serving” transgenders in your church. The way ‘trans’ people look at God’s creation of male and female is not the traditional way that most Christians have viewed it for the last two-thousand years.

Many 'trans' people believe that God "affirms" transgender people. One LGBTQIA+ website puts it this way –

"... the Bible's precedent for affirming the full inclusion of transgender, non-binary and other gender-expansive people in the full life of Christian community." [Human Rights Campaign](#)

HRC believes that some Christians believe that to take the Bible seriously requires them to "stand in opposition to the existence, health and humanity of transgender people." That is, of course, not true. However, that may be what a 'trans' person visiting your church believes. If they hear you take what they call a "traditional" Christian view, they may believe you oppose them and even wish them harm. Again, not true.

The key, I believe, is to know what they know and be ready to talk with them intelligently and lovingly. Will you and 'trans' people have disagreements about spiritual things? Possibly. Can you work through those disagreements in a way that serves their spiritual needs? Absolutely.

How Should Christians “Serve” The ‘Trans’ Community?

As I have said before, Christians can best “serve” transgender people by *speaking the truth* “in love” (Ephesians 4). The worst thing you can do is to know the truth but not speak it because you are concerned about offending someone.

I’ve often told my martial arts students that I would not be helping them prepare themselves to defend against an attack if I didn’t point out ways they could improve their martial technique because I was concerned about offending them. How does that help them become better at martial arts or self defense? It doesn’t.

The same is true about spiritual truth. I would be doing a ‘trans’ person or anyone else for that matter a great disservice if I didn’t tell them the truth about their spiritual need.

What is the truth? It's whatever the Bible says. For example, Jesus said that He came from Heaven to earth "to seek and to save that which was lost." Does that include 'trans' people? Absolutely! Are 'trans' people lost and in need of saving because they are transgender? No.

Trans people are in need of saving for the same reason every person is in need of saving – "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). What does that mean? It means that everyone is "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). We have all sinned against a Holy God and have no way to earn or deserve His forgiveness. We must accept His gracious offer by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

You may or may not find agreement from 'trans' people who visit your church. That's why it's important to spend some time getting to know them and discover what they believe about God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. If they say they believe in God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ, then be prepared to open God's Word and share with them the reality of everyone's need for saving –

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God

*prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
Ephesians 2:1-10*

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one

man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Romans 5:12-19

There are, of course, many other Scriptures you can share with people, but these are two sections that demonstrate that all people are sinners, under God's wrath, and in need of His rich mercy and grace.

Showing someone from Scripture that they are a sinner, under God's wrath, and in need of salvation may not be something they are ready to hear or accept as true. Speak the truth "in love." Be patient. Be kind. Remember how patient and kind God was with you when you first heard that same message. If you were a teen or adult, you may not have liked hearing it. You may have even rebelled against it. Don't forget that. If someone doesn't like what you share with them from Scripture, keep talking with them. Continue to show them Christ's love. The love of Jesus and the

“drawing” power of the Holy Spirit are powerful (e.g. John 6:44; 16:8).

I rejected God’s offer of salvation until I was as an adult, but the day came when God’s Spirit overwhelmed me with my sense of the need to be saved. He convinced me through evidence that God existed, the Bible was trustworthy, and Jesus Christ was real and alive. On the day I believed that was the day I was no longer an angry atheist. Loved by God .. saved by grace .. blessed beyond measure.

That is the same message you share with all people. There is not one message for “good” people and another for “bad” people. Everyone is the same –

There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one. Romans 3:10-12

We serve transgenders, and others in our church, when we *speak the truth in love.*

A transgender person visits your church. You have what I pray will be a friendly and fruitful discussion with them about spiritual matters. Let's say that it appears to you, and to your pastor and elders, that this 'trans' person is saved. The trans person then asks about church membership. They may also ask about "serving" in the church, and even church "leadership." How do you respond? How do your pastors and elders respond? Does your church and/or denomination have a position on the involvement of 'trans' people in the "assembly of saints?"

The answers to all of these questions can be found in the Bible, but we've already seen how many members of the LGBTQIA+ community interpret portions of the Bible differently than Christians who they call "traditional." So, is there an answer that will please everyone?

Pleasing God

The answer is simple – do what pleases God. But what if Christians differ on what pleases God? They shouldn't if they are “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). That means “handling the Word of God correctly.” It means studying the text of the Bible in context. It means knowing the meanings of the original languages of the Bible (e.g. Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek). You don't have to be a language expert to learn about the original meanings of words. You can find Greek-English and Hebrew-English books and online helps. We will include some of those in the "Resource" section in the last part of this series.

The answer is simple, but I would never claim that the process of getting to the answers of tough questions are simple or easy. Here's a complete sentence Paul wrote – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Notice the words **diligent**, **approved**, **worker**, and **ashamed**, that lead up to the phrase “rightly dividing the

word of truth.” None of those words offer any hope of finding an easy answer to many of the tough questions of living as a Christian. The context of the text makes that pretty clear –

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of

the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 2 Timothy 2:1-10

Did you see it?

- be strong
- endure hardship
- good soldier
- engaged in warfare
- competes according to the rules
- hardworking farmer
- suffer as an evildoer
- endure all things

Does that look like a 'walk in the park'? A 'day at the beach'? A 'stroll in the moonlight'? I don't think so. What I read Paul telling Timothy, prior to telling him about "rightly dividing the word of truth," is that serving God is going to be difficult. Paul suffered greatly for preaching the Gospel, debating

against pagans and Jews, and establishing Christian churches across the Roman Empire.

Paul was days or weeks from dying a martyr's death when he wrote 2 Timothy, so he wanted to remind Timothy of what he would face after Paul died. Timothy would also have to "be strong." He would also have to be a "good soldier." He would also be "engaged in warfare." He would also work "hard" like a farmer. He would also "suffer" as an evildoer in the eyes of people he was trying to reach with the Gospel. He would also have to "endure all things."

So, what does this have to do with 'trans' people in your church and "pleasing" God? Here are more insights from Paul's writings that may help you understand what's at stake

—

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing,

therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. 2 Corinthians 5:9-11

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:9-14

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness— God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a

burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-9

The Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be changed – not even a little bit. Even though Christians have to suffer for the Gospel, our responsibility is to be “bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.” It’s our job to speak the truth in love “not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.” No Christian should try to make the Gospel look different than it really is by using “flattering words,” or a “cloak for covetousness.”

Answering Questions

Answering questions about church membership, service, and leadership for transgenders must be according to what pleases God, not what pleases people. There are billions of people, so pleasing all of them is impossible. However, there is only One God. Pleasing Him is possible.

First, let me ask you an obvious question. What pleases God? What pleases God about a person who wants church *membership*? What pleases God about a person who wants to *serve* in the church? What pleases God about a person who wants to *lead* in the church? Everything you want to know to answer those questions is found in the Bible. Everything. Nothing is left out. God has told us everything we need to know.

So, back to serving transgenders in your church. What are the biblical requirements for church membership? What are the biblical requirements for church service? What are the biblical requirements for church leadership?

Begin by reading and studying the Gospels. Next, read and study the Book of Acts. Then, read and study the letters of the apostles. Finally, read and study the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the seven churches in Asia. Once you've read and studied the New Testament, you will be able to answer my questions.

Keep foremost in your thoughts that our primary purpose as God's people is to love and serve Him. It is as we love and serve God that we can best love and serve our neighbor. That includes transgressors and other members of the LBGTQ+ community. To serve our neighbors in ways that are contrary to God's Word is not how we please God. God must be first in our hearts and minds.

But, you say, transgenderism is a very touchy subject these days. What if people don't like how I answer their questions? What if I have to suffer some personal loss for holding a particular view that's unpopular?

If you know what the Bible teaches about a particular subject and people hate you for it, the answer is straightforward – **endure**. Here's what Jesus said –

And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. Matthew 10:22

I want to remind you of that because the answers you and your church give to questions about transgenderism may cause you to be hated for Christ's sake. Why do I say that? Because church membership, service, and leadership do not allow for *sexual immorality*.

Whoa! Why would I bring up sexual immorality in the context of serving transgenderers in church? Because that's a line we must not cross, and according to the clear teaching of Christ and His apostles transgenderism crosses that line. It's not my line. It's God's line and He said not to cross it. I realize many in the LGBTQIA+ community will disagree with me even though they have no foundation upon which to stand.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the

righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:24-32

The best thing we can do for ‘trans’ people in our churches who are saved is to teach them what God says about sexual purity and the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To withhold that vital information from someone who believes in Christ and is in the LGBTQIA+ community is to do a great disservice to them, Christ, and His Church. It is also unloving. Loving people means telling them the truth.

Read Romans 1. Read 1 Corinthians chapters 5 and 6. Read 1 Corinthians 10. Read 1 Thessalonians 4. Read Jude 1. What do you see? God’s warnings about sexual immorality.

... as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after

strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude 1:7

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of

them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 1 Corinthians 10:6-11

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 1 Corinthians 6:18-19

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. 1 Corinthians 5:11

Those are just some of the words Christ's apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to church "members." What do you think God will expect of His people who serve and lead the church? Do you think God's standards will be the same? or even higher? I know the answer because I've read it in God's Word. God expects those who serve and lead the members of a church to be an example of holiness.

A bishop then must be blameless .. he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given too much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as d e a c o n s , being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for

themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 3:2, 7-13

For a bishop must be blameless ... a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict ... To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. Titus 1:7, 8-9, 15-16

The term 'transgenderism' is fairly recent (1971), but men dressing like women, and women dressing like men is nothing new. Moses wrote about it thousands of years ago because the Israelites were going to live among people who did those things – thus the warning:

*A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God.
Deuteronomy 22:5*

Other terms from the 20th century you may have heard include 'transvestite,' 'transsexual,' and 'polygender.' Homosexuality used to be illegal in England, punishable by imprisonment. The term 'androgynous' goes back to the 16th century in England. We now have dozens of different terms to describe a wide variety of 'genders.' Some people say they are "gender fluid," which means that the gender a person identifies as being often changes.

Your View

What's your view? What do you believe about gender varieties? What do you believe about non-binary and gender fluid? I ask because your personal view will determine how you "serve" transgenders and other members of the LGBTQ+ community who visit and possibly join your church. Your church or denomination may have a position on the subject, but that's not my question. What's your view? I hope it agrees with God's view, which He has established forever in His Word.

You may find yourself at odds with your church, denomination, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even members of your own family. That's why I want to share some reference materials that may help support you in what you believe.

References

The first and most important reference is your Bible – a solid translation, not a paraphrase. Paraphrases are people's opinions about what God said. I'd rather hear directly from God Himself. Get a good translation (e.g. NKJV, KJV, ESV, NASB) and use it every step of your journey.

Here are other references that you can use. I don't necessarily agree with everything you may read or hear in these resources, just as I'm sure the authors won't all agree with me, but the materials are basically solid biblically and should help you as you serve the needs of transgressors in your church. The primary thing is to understand the Bible and compare anything else with it. God is always right.

Articles

[5 Things Every Christian Must Know About the Transgender Debate](#)

[7 Facts About Christianity and the Transgender Debate](#)

[A Christian Case for Transgenderism?](#)

[Biblical Christianity Has the Most Loving Response to Transgenderism](#)

[Biblical View on Transgender Identity: A Primer for Parents and Strugglers](#)

[“Born that way” and transgenderism: How should Christians respond?](#)

[Christian Ethics and Transgenderism](#)

[Gender and Sexuality](#)

Helping Kids Stand Firm While Navigating the Ever-Changing Landscape of Transgenderism

How Do Christians Respond to the Transgender Movement?

How Should Christians Respond to the Transgender Phenomenon?

How Should Christians Think About The Transgender Movement?

How to Talk to My Child About Transgenderism

Humanity as Male and Female

New Resource for Parents: “Responding to the Transgender Issue”

Talking to Your Children About Transgender Issues

The Christian Response to Gender Dysphoria

‘Trading My Sorrows’ – A Story of Healing From Transgenderism

Transgender Identity—Wishing Away God’s Design

Transgenderism: A Christian Perspective

Transgenderism: Blurring the Lines

What the Bible Says about the Idea of Transgenderism

Books

God and the Transgender Debate

Videos

5 Reasons Why THIS Caused me to Homeschool my Children

Alistair Begg talks to the CI on LGBT issues and 'conversion therapy'

Help! I Don't Know How To Answer My Child's LGBT Questions

Homosexuality and Transgender – Pastor Voddie Baucham

How Christians Should Respond to Transgenders

Is it Harmful to Not Affirm Someone's Chosen Identity?

Navigating the Transgender Discussion

The Church and Transgender Persons

What Christianity Offers to Transgender Persons

What is a Christian response to transgenderism?

Language Helps

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament:
Coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers

The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of
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Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New
Testament Words

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.
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