

Gender and Sexuality: Parent Guide

Section 1: LGB-T (This section focuses on *society's* view of sexuality and gender).

- Some of the letters in LGBTQQIAAAP have to do with who someone is attracted to romantically, other letters have to do with one's sense of identity.
- The discussion of gender at its core is a discussion of identity.
- Gender Identity as defined by Human Rights Campaign (not by the Bible): One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither. How individuals *perceive* themselves and what they call themselves.
- Gender Dysphoria: A distressed state arising from conflict between a person's gender identity and the sex that someone has (or had at birth).
- Younger generations are questioning the traditional model of gender and sexuality.
- The internet plays a huge role in today's self-discovery process (people who identify as LGBT spend on average 45 more minutes per day on the internet - *Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network*).
- The popular idea is that we should be able to define ourselves according to what we feel.

Section 2: The Church's interactions with LGBTQ+ Community.

- The Church's interaction with the LGBTQ+ Community has been often characterized with harshness, overgeneralization, and lack of empathy.
- Some people have been abusive in their language toward gay people, but this behavior does not reflect Christ - this calls for a posture shift (but not a theological shift).
- The opposite of homosexuality is holiness.
- Some affirming believers point to the "good" fruit of same-sex relationships, vs the bad fruit of some non-affirming believers. But we believe that this bad fruit stems from Christian cruelty and the idolatry of romance. Non-affirming doctrine produces good fruit when paired with compassion and true worship (view images on page 3).

Section 3: The effects of a worldview without God.

- One's response to Gender and Sexuality is shaped by their worldview.
- Evolutionary Naturalism believes that there is no God - our bodies were formed by random mutation. If there is no God, then it is up to us to decide the truth about sexuality and gender.
- Physical changes to the body (i.e. transitioning from one gender to another) does not deal with the root of the identity issue.

- Many people who begin sex-reassignment surgery or hormone therapy find that it doesn't provide the answers they were looking for.
- "Between 80 and 95 percent of children who say that they are transgender naturally come to accept their sex and enjoy emotional health by late adolescence" - Amici Curiae submitted by Dr. McHugh, Dr. Hruz, and Dr. Lawrence in 2017.

Section 4: Scripture and Stereotypes

- Genesis 1:27 "God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- "In biology, an organism is male or female if it is structured to perform one of the respective roles in reproduction" - Ryan Anderson (*When Harry Became Sally*).
- God created male and females to be biologically complementary, and marriage exists because of this complementarity.
- Denying same-sex relationships does not keep something essential from same-sex attracted people; marriage and romance are not essential to your human flourishing.
- Gender stereotypes can sometimes worsen a sense of dysphoria or isolation for those struggling with same-sex attraction (this does not mean that there are no differences between men and women, though).

Section 5: Bearing Burdens

- Mandatory celibacy is a heavy weight for Christians with unchanging same-sex attractions; they need the love of community to help them bear it.
- People are not guaranteed to be delivered from temptations (i.e. same-sex attraction) in this lifetime (2 Corinthians 12). But God has empowered His children to live Holy lives, even in the face of temptation (2 Peter 1).
- The labels we accept for ourselves often shape who we become; this is true for when we make same-sex attraction a core part of our identity.
- It is good to celebrate identity, but our identity is not found in our sexuality or gender - our identity is found in Christ; God gives us a new label, and a new self (Colossians 3).
- God designed us to be strengthened and refined by persevering during challenges.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What kinds of interactions have you seen between the church and the LGBT community? Have they been positive? Negative? Both?
- 2) Think of a time when you weren't sure whether Jesus would be enough to fulfill you. Did you look to something else for fulfillment? How did that turn out? Share that story with your teens.
- 3) Christopher Yuan wrote, "God never said, "Be heterosexual, for I am heterosexual." He said, "Be holy, for I am holy." What is your reaction to that quote? Why do you feel that way?
- 4) Crash wrote, "Your good will didn't end my suffering, it increased it... your kindness led to more scars, not less." Why do you think Crash and others don't find the fulfillment they're looking for in a "sex change"?
- 5) Evolutionary theory says species pass on traits that promise reproduction and survival. So, could evolution explain the prevalence of homosexuality without contradicting itself? What would be Christianity's explanation?
- 6) We discover (and don't get a decision) about some aspects of reality, like gravity. Other aspects can change, like our cultural customs. Which category should masculinity and femininity fall into? What about marriage?
- 7) Kathy Koch said that "consistent sin temptations" could actually be what is best for someone, because God intends us to be strengthened by persevering. Have you ever thought about perseverance in this way?

