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## The Faith We Believe, Share, and Defend Part 3 - Creation & Evolution, Male/Female & Transgenderism, Suffering & Evil?

### ON CREATION & EVOLUTION

#### Evolution

##### Problem of Macroevolution

The problem of evolution we need to address is specifically macroevolution, rather than microevolution.<sup>1</sup> Macroevolution is the theory of species transformation. The evolution of living organisms through their progeny whereby one species becomes another species.

The diversity we see in the world needs to be accounted for because of its remarkable diversity. "Biodiversity refers to every living thing, including plants, bacteria, animals, and humans. Scientists have estimated that there are around 8.7 million species of plants and animals in existence. However, only around 1.2 million species have been identified and described so far, most of which are insects."<sup>2</sup> Tigers and toads. Sharks and shellfish. Carrots and cockroaches. Roses and roosters. Giraffes and germs. Hamsters and humans. How did all this come about? "Macroevolution is the idea that they came about naturally by means of gradual transformation from simpler forms each having its place in a complex but common genetic tree stemming from a primordial blob of life. The diversity of life forms all came in a naturalistic process from a common blob, or it came supernaturally from a common God."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Microevolution is the alteration of form or function within a species.

<sup>2</sup> National Geographic, "Biodiversity." <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/biodiversity/> accessed Mar 29, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Greg Bahnsen, "Answering Evolution" lecture 29 of 30 from Seminary Level Apologetics Course. <https://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=8883>

The problem for us is that many believe, both inside the church and in the world, that the theory of evolution has been established scientifically. "We all know evolution is a matter of science."

##### Answer According to Folly<sup>4</sup>

Pointing up the science that refutes evolution is an internal critique of the theory - this is to answer the fool according to his folly.

The theory of evolution is a hypothesis. The theory of evolution cannot be said to be strictly scientific because it has not been empirically demonstrated. It is not only religious people that have opposed the idea of evolution. Scholars, from mathematicians to chemists to geologists to paleontologists, have shown the challenges to and the inadequacies of evolution as a scientific theory.

There are three classes of people you can talk to you when it comes to evolution. The first is a very, very narrow slice of academics in the university that knew the state of the debate. There is another class of people who are living out the theory of evolution professionally (because their way of doing economics, sociology, history depends on evolution) people who hold onto this tenaciously as a worldview. This group assumes the first group knows what they're talking about and that evolution is well founded and when you engage this group in debate, they defer to oh well you need to talk to somebody in the biology department who

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<sup>4</sup> This methodological approach, the "how do we defend the faith?"-approach, is summarized in Proverbs 26:4, 5: "4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." That's a two step approach. Prov 24:5 (answer a fool according to his folly = enter into the unbeliever's worldview in order to point out its contradictions). Prov 24:4 (answer not a fool according to his folly = answer the unbeliever according to the Christian worldview).

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can answer that. And then your third class of people is your every day person who thinks that because everybody at the university believes in evolution it must be well founded.<sup>5</sup>

For a scientific refutation of the theory of evolution see James Tour's recent 13 part lecture series, "Abiogenesis and Common Misconceptions."<sup>6</sup>

### **Answer Not According to Folly**

*What does the Bible **affirm** in Genesis 1?*

The first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1, says, "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*"

God is the Architect of creation and thus his creation has a specific design. Genesis 1 further reveals that the revelation of his creation contains a specific design too.

**Genesis 1:2-13 (Days 1-3)** - Day 1 is described in vv.3-5. God creates light and dark, day and night. And it says God SEPARATES the day and the night. Day 2 is described in vv.6-8. God creates the waters and the sky (the sky is the waters in the above expanse). And AGAIN, it says God SEPARATED the waters and sky. Day 3 is described in vv.9-13. God creates the dry land. And, God did this by SEPARATING the waters from the dry land. Days 1-3 describe the SEPARATING and the bounding of these vast entities = boundaries! Earth is separated and structured into three realms: day 1 is about the realm of day and night; day 2 is about the realm of the seas and the sky; and day 3 is about the realm of dry land.

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<sup>5</sup> Greg Bahnsen, "Answering Evolution" lecture 29 of 30 from Seminary Level Apologetics Course. <https://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=8883>

<sup>6</sup> James Tour, "Abiogenesis and Common Misconceptions." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71dqAFUv-v0&list=PLEaCiDPeZESji1paGjPBGzisS31pA8ow3>

**Genesis 1:14-31 (Days 4-6)** While "separate" was the buzz word in Days 1-3, the buzz word in Days 4-6 is in vv.16 and 18 and that word is "rule." Days four to six are talking about different rulers.

So, for instance, the sun and moon rule over their realm by regulating their domain of day and night, the day-night cycle (cf Ps 136:7-9). (BUT, quick note here, the stars, these astral bodies are NOT divine rulers, like you read about in pagan mythology. The stars themselves are creations of God, serving mankind with illumination and calendar signs (cf 104:19-23)).

In vv.20-23: The birds of heaven (v.20; cf vv.26,28,30) and the creatures of the sea were given the realms of day 2, the sky above and the waters below to rule. *How do the birds and fish rule and have dominion over their realm?* V.22 says that God blessed them and that their dominion was that of occupying their realm through multiplication, and it's God who blesses them with that blessing of fertility.

Day 6: mankind and animals are given rule and dominion over the land-realm. How does mankind vs the animals fit into the scheme of things? He is a king. And he is a king not just over the kingdom immediately opposite to him but he is over all the works of God's hands. And man is a king not over just the kingdoms but he is also the king over all the other kings of creation. But that is not the end of the story because there is a 7th Day.

### **Genesis 2:1-3 (Day 7)**

The 7th Day is the story of the Great King, the King of Kings of whom all of the kingdoms have come and of whom all the kings have come including man himself.

*SO what is Genesis 1 affirming?* There are **kingdoms** and there are **kings** in God's

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creation. Genesis 1, by design, is not organized chronologically but THEMATICALLY.

Genesis 1 is NOT legendary, it is not mythical. It is history, but it's told in epic style<sup>7</sup> and Gen 1:1-2:3 intentionally has a very particular structure to it; a very particular design, a very particular framework to it and it's a work of genius. Its particular framework is a figurative framework. This is what's known as the Framework Interpretation of Creation. And this framework orders all the data of creation in a logical, topical, structural grouping that is full of meaning. This is the structure - the events are grouped into two triads of days.

What is being portrayed in Gen 1 are ordinary days with their evenings and mornings. That's the language, that's the picture being portrayed. These are regular days, not ages. But the question is: is this picture of a week of normal days as a whole to be understood literally or figuratively; is the whole thing a figure? This picture of a normal week is NOT to be understood literally but figuratively. Think of the parables Jesus tells. Think of the parable of the sower, Mt 13, Mk 4, Lk 8. What's the literal picture there that Jesus paints for us? The literal picture is that the farmer goes out with real seed and he sows the seed and some of the seed falls on the path = birds eat it; some falls on rocky ground = the sun scorches the seeds; some falls on thorny ground = the thorns choke the

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<sup>7</sup> The ESV Literary Study Bible explains the literary genre of Gen 1 is the epic tradition. "A long narrative having the following characteristics or ingredients: expansiveness and grandness; the story of a nation or group (nationalistic emphasis), not simply an individual; a unifying hero; motifs of warfare, conquest, kingdom, rulership; presence of supernatural characters and events (what literary critics have traditionally called 'the marvelous'); exalted style. Epics are very important to societies; in fact, they sum up what a whole culture wants to say about itself and about life."

seedlings; but some seed falls on good soil and produces a crop. Is Jesus talking about agriculture? Is agriculture the point of his parable? No. Literally, that's the picture that he paints for the people listening but the point of that whole parable is the Son of God going forth and preaching the gospel. It's not about agriculture at all.

Day 1: **kingdom** day and night parallel to

Day 4: **kings** sun, moon, stars that "rule" over the day and night.

Day 2: **kingdom** water and sky (atmospheric waters above and terrestrial waters below) parallel to

Day 5: **kings** sea creatures and birds that "rule" over the sea and sky

Day 3: **kingdom** of dry ground with its vegetation parallel to

Day 5: **kings** of animals and Mankind

**Genesis 1 Chronology** - Even though Genesis 1 is not primarily organized chronologically, there is some very important chronology. The build up to the seventh day is crucial. God works for 6 days and when his work is completed, on day 7 God rests. God tells Adam to imitate Him in his work (1:28ff): multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, have dominion and reign over all the kingdoms and kings. Remember God creates Adam in his own image which means man is supposed to imitate God. And the pattern God lays out for Adam is simple: 1) Do your work and 2) then you get to rest. Adam was given a work to do that would have ushered mankind, whom he represented, into God's sabbath, eternal rest of glory. Where the first Adam failed, the Second Adam, Jesus, prevailed.

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**Does the Bible affirm Adam and Eve were historical people?**

The Bible affirms God's special creation of Adam and Eve as real, historical individuals (Rom 5:12-14; 1Cor 15:21-22, 45-49), and deny that Adam and Eve were the products of evolution from lower forms of life.

### Problem of Theistic Evolution

Theistic evolution, generally defined, is “the belief that natural processes sustained by God’s ordinary providence were the means by which he brought about life and humanity. It often entails a common ancestry for all living things, macroevolution, and some version of polygenesis.”<sup>8</sup>

William Dembski explains: For young-earth and old-earth creationists, humans bearing the divine image were created from scratch. In other words, God did something radically new when he created us—we didn’t emerge from pre-existing organisms. On this view, fully functioning hominids having fully human bodies but lacking the divine image never existed. For most theistic evolutions, by contrast, primate ancestors evolved over several million years into hominids with fully human bodies. (God and Evolution, 91)

According to some proponents of theistic evolution Genesis 2:7 is a reference to God’s work in history whereby he made Adam into a spiritual being in the image of God, instead of the lesser sort of being he was before. This approach still insists on the historicity of Adam and Eve and their real fall in the Garden. But, on this view, Adam may not have been the first human:

And what’s wrong with this approach? Why can’t we say Adam was a real person and the first person to know God, but not the only human on the planet? Aren’t we still in the realm of

historic orthodoxy even if Adam evolved from other beings and may not have been the physical father of all living persons? I am raising these questions not to suggest a single blog post and a few quotations obliterates evolution. The point rather is to examine whether full-blown evolution can be reconciled with complete allegiance to biblical authority.<sup>9</sup>

### Answer According to Folly

For a scientific refutation of the theory of theistic evolution see “Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique.”<sup>10</sup>

### Answer Not According to Folly

Listed below are problems Wayne Grudem finds with theistic evolution. I realize he may not be an authority on these matters, but in typical fashion he distills the main points nicely and explain succinctly what unbiblical conclusions we must reach for theistic evolution to be true.

(1) Adam and Eve were not the first human beings, but they were just two Neolithic farmers among about ten million other human beings on earth at that time, and God just chose to reveal himself to them in a personal way.

(2) Those other human beings had already been seeking to worship and serve God or gods in their own ways.

(3) Adam was not specially formed by God of ‘dust from the ground’ (Gen. 2:7) but had two human parents.

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<sup>8</sup> Kevin DeYoung, “What’s Wrong with Theistic Evolution?”, 2012. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-d-young/whats-wrong-with-theistic-evolution-2/>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique” edited by J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, and 24 more, 2027.

(4) Eve was not directly made by God of a 'rib that the Lord God had taken from the man' (Gen. 2:22), but she also had two human parents.

(5) Many human beings both then and now are not descended from Adam and Eve.

(6) Adam and Eve's sin was not the first sin.

(7) Human physical death had occurred for thousands of years before Adam and Eve's sin—it was part of the way living things had always existed.

**Federal theology falls apart: How can we uphold the special dignity and majesty the Bible accords human beings when we are only qualitatively different from other life forms and continuous with the rest of the animal world?**

**How can God impute sin and guilt to all humans along the lines of federal headship when some of us have no physical connection with Adam?**

**Likewise, if we are not all descended literally from one pair, how can we all have an ontological connection with Christ who only assumed the flesh of Adam's race?<sup>11</sup>**

## Creation and Providence

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<sup>11</sup> Kevin DeYoung, "What's Wrong with Theistic Evolution?", 2012.  
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-d-young/whats-wrong-with-theistic-evolution-2/>

- 1) Genesis 2:4ff<sup>12</sup> confirm providence is at work in creation. This is an argument by Meredith Kline and you can read about it in full in his article "Because It Had Not Rained." Westminster Theological Journal, 20 (1957–58): 146–57. Kline argues that the period of creation was a definite, fixed period of time and it's closed at the end of this 6th Day. Within that closed block of six days of creation, however long they actually were, all the significant variety of stuff that God was going to create he created within that block of time. Were there acts of absolute origination, definite absolute supernatural creation? Of course! And along the way one of those zaps of God creating something out of nothing was the creation of man. There is no room in the Bible for the concept of macroevolution including the creation of man. The creation of man is a direct supernatural act. The body of man is not the development of a biological continuum as if he were produced from some advanced hominid form in a living biological process. Gen 2 is clear that God supernaturally creates Adam from the dust of the ground and then supernaturally creates Eve from the rib of Adam. How many zaps were

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<sup>12</sup> Genesis 2 is NOT another creation account or a different creation account as some want to argue. Meredith Kline in [Kingdom Prologue](#) explains, "Gen 2:4 must be understood as the superscription not for an account of the origins of the heavens and the earth, but rather for an account of their subsequent "family" history. Genesis 2:4 is not the heading for a second creation story *per se*, but for the sequel to the story of the origins of the heavens and earth and all their hosts" (9). Moses, the author, is choosing to intentionally back up in the story he's told thus far in order to further highlight the relationship between God and man.

there in creation and God creating something out of nothing? How many zaps for each kind of fauna, for each kind of flora? We don't know. A thousand? A million? More? We need to be ready to accept whatever number of acts of supernatural production on God's part there were. And now a separate question is this: during this period of creation, however long it was, once God has created something does providence come into play? Yes. The Bible does NOT say there was a period of creation and once that period was over THEN providence comes into play. The Bible is clear that providence was at work during God's supernatural acts of creation. Providence simply describes the relationship of God to that which he has produced as he relates to it as its Governor, its Preserver, and Sustainer. During these 6 Days of creation, however long they were, what was the method of God's providence? Did God act in terms of preserving life in the world according to procedures that we today would recognize and refer to as something like "natural law?" Or was his providence as supernatural as his acts of creation? Every creation view has to answer this question. But no other view (including the Literalist 24 Hour Day Calendar View nor the Day Age view) that says the narrative sequence is the historical sequence can accommodate the answer that's given to the question in Gen 2:5ff.

- 2) That passage explains that God did not resort to supernaturalism to keep things alive once he had made them.

God followed the natural procedure that he put in place when it came to preserving life that he had created. It says that God didn't make certain life until he had the kind of environment they could exist in a normal way. Gen 2:5 says, "When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up..." - pause - OK no vegetation at this point. Why no vegetation at this point? Simple explanation in the second part of v.5: "for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground." The Bible's explanation is that there's no vegetation at this point because God has not caused it to rain yet AND because there's no man around to dig a canal and provide irrigation to make up for lack of rain because man hasn't been created yet. Here's where it gets tricky. There is a translation problem. The ESV translation we use translates v.6, "AND a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground." But this translation makes it look like there's a contradiction v.5 that says there's no supply of water to make the plants grow. This translation of v.6 seems to say when there was no supply of water, there was a terrific supply of water with this mist. The NIV, KJV, RSV, and NET avoid this contradiction by correctly translating the conjunction at the beginning of v.6 in the contrastive sense: "but." But, we should go farther in getting at the correction translation. You have to translate the verb tense correctly. There are only 2 verb

tenses in Hebrew to do the work of 12 verb tenses in English! This verb should be translated in the inceptive sense of beginning to do something. It's exactly what the context is leading to. "That was the situation there in v.5 and v.6 gives you the solution." And the solution is that God begins to provide the supply of water. The solution here is translated mist but again that's not the best translation of this word. The best translation is simply rain-cloud. Again the context makes that clear - "because God has not caused it to rain yet...". And these rain-clouds that God provides, in his good time, water the whole face of the ground. Gen 2:5-6 should be translated: "When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup> a rain cloud began to go up from the land and watered the whole face of the ground." And then v.7 tells us how God supernaturally created the first man: "—then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." If you believe in the harmony of Scripture how can you square Gen 2:4ff and what it says about God's providence during creation and other views like the Literalist 24 Hour Calendar Day View or the Day Age View that says there were plants and vegetation before there was a sun?



## ON TRANSGENDERISM

### Problem

“What does the Bible say about men and women? Is Christianity good or bad for women? Does following Jesus mean you have to fit in with everything people expect of boys and girls? Should Christians be free to identify as the opposite sex, or with neither sex, if our bodies don’t match how we feel inside? What does the Bible say about people who are born “intersex”—with bodies that are not typically male or female? What does it mean to be a man or a woman?”<sup>13</sup>

### INTERSEX

What about people born intersex? What about people who are born with bodies that are neither fully male or fully female?

A few years ago, a good friend of mine had a baby who was born intersex. The baby looked physically more like a girl. But when the doctors checked, they found the baby didn’t have a uterus (the organ designed to carry a developing, new baby) but did have testes (the organs that produce sperm). My friends are raising their child as a girl. Right now, this child seems comfortable as a girl. In fact, she seems to like all the things that our culture usually associates with little girls. But we don’t know how she will feel when she grows up, and her parents are ready to give her lots of space to work through that as she gets older.

In Jesus’s day, some people were also born intersex. Other people were born male, but had their testes removed so they could do particular jobs—like sing with a high voice or

protect a king’s wives. This is a horrible thing to do to a child, but sadly it was quite common in the ancient world. People who had had this done to them were called eunuchs. One of Jesus’s first followers was a eunuch (Acts 8:26–40), and Jesus talked about eunuchs, right after he taught that marriage was between one man and one woman for life (Matthew 19:3–12). Jesus valued marriage. But he also valued singleness and taught that people who don’t get married or aren’t able to have children are very valuable in his kingdom too. So the fact that intersex people are often unable to have children doesn’t make them any less precious in Jesus’s sight or any less useful in Jesus’s mission. Jesus himself never had kids, and he is the perfect human!<sup>14</sup>

The Bible also says singleness is a gift from God. In 1 Corinthians 7:7 Paul says, “I wish that all were as I myself am [SINGLE]. But each has his own **gift** from God, one of one kind and one of another.” Singleness is not only NOT a bad thing, it’s also NOT just this thing. Singleness is a GIFT from God. Each has his own one of one kind, one of another - marriage is a gift and singleness is a gift. Jesus was single all his life. And he was not alone in life. He had incredible friendships, deep relationships. His life was full of joy, connectedness, fulfillment, passion, and committed relationships. The gift of singleness allows you to live a maritally-distraction-free life with more freedom to give yourself to Jesus and others.

### TRANSGENDER

What about people who identify as transgender?

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<sup>13</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 135-136.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 144-145.

Some people argue that because babies are occasionally born intersex, “male” and “female” are not clear categories, but that everyone is on a spectrum with completely male at one end and completely female at the other.

They also say that our bodies don’t have to define whether we are a man or a woman, but that if someone’s feelings don’t match their body, they should be able to decide whether they want to be recognized as male or female—or perhaps as “non-binary” or “gender non-conforming,” meaning they don’t want to be recognized as either a man or a woman.

Someone who was born with a male body but later identifies as a woman would be described today as a trans or transgender woman and someone who was born with a female body but identifies as a man would be described as a trans or transgender man. Transgender people often take new names. For example, someone called John might switch to Jane and ask people to talk about “she” or “her” instead of “he” or “him.” Someone who identifies as non-binary or gender non-conforming might ask to be talked about as “they.”<sup>15</sup>

Some people choose to dress in ways typical of the opposite sex. They might also take medicines or have surgeries to make their bodies look like the opposite sex.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 145.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 146.

### How do we defend the Christian faith against transgenderism?

Remember, first things first - in sharing and defending the faith it is important to listen to other people to try to understand what they’re saying, what they’re feeling, and what they’ve experienced. Like you, everybody wants to be heard and understood and to feel like someone cares about them. Some people feel like the body they were born with does not match with how they feel on the inside. And usually they are laughed at and bullied. It is never right for a Christian to mock or bully another person, even if they’re making bad decisions or living in sin. Jesus calls us to love our neighbor and our enemy!

And, it’s not surprising that if people reject the Bible and that it says God made mankind male and female in the image of God - then it’s not surprising that our culture is now redefining what it means to be male or female. So we need to listen and if we listen we’ll hear they’re struggles but we’ll also hear the problems with their problem.

#### **Answer a Fool According to Folly**

The following excerpts are taken from “The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self” by church historian, Carl Trueman.

On the Loose Coalition of the LGBT

The L and the G cannot be intrinsically united because bodies, and bodily differences, are important. Put simply, women experience the world differently because they are physically different from men. The link here between lesbianism and feminism is significant—a feminism, that is, that assumes bodily distinctions between men and women are important and that experiences unique to the female body, such as

menstruation, pregnancy, and so on, are vital to the feminist cause.<sup>17</sup>

#### On the Rise of Transgenderism

For transgenderism to be coherent, the society in which it occurs needs to place a decisive priority on the psychological over the physical in determining identity. For it to be coherent also involves a correlative downplaying of external authority, whether that of the person's biology or of traditional social expectations. Biological and cultural amnesia must be the order of the day. In addition, its credibility is fueled by a powerful individualism and facilitated by the technological ability to manipulate biological realities. All these factors are present in contemporary Western society. To these we might also add the notion that gender is separable from sex.<sup>18</sup>

#### On the Contradiction of Transgenderism

One obvious question at this point concerns why the body is so important to gender identity (in terms of the administering of hormones and surgery), when the whole point of transgenderism is that the body is not important to gender identity. That is, I am not what my body says I am; I am what I think I am. To put the question more concisely, if gender is merely a social construct, then why the need for physical treatment?<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Crossway, Wheaton 2020), 343.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 351.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, footnote 24 (Joanne Herman, *Transgender Explained for Those Who Are Not* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009)), 51; quoted in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, 79), 352.

#### Therapy Supplants Morality

I have noted this point numerous times in this book. Where a sense of psychological well-being is the purpose of life, therapy supplants morality—or, perhaps better, therapy is morality—and anything that achieves that sense of well-being is good, as long as it meets the rather weak condition that it does not inhibit the happiness of others, or that of a greater number of others.<sup>20</sup>

#### Answer a Fool Not According to Folly

##### What Do “Man” and “Woman” Mean?

**Problem:** “Our bodies don’t define what is male or female - it’s however a person identifies.”

**Problem with the Problem:** If we no longer let our bodies tell us if we are male and female then male and female don’t mean anything - culture decides what’s male and female. But culture is always changing so why listen to how culture defines what male and female are right now? “If we no longer let our bodies tell us if we are male or female, stereotypes are all we have left.”<sup>21</sup>

Earlier this year, the actor (Daniel Radcliffe) who played Harry Potter in the films of J. K. Rowling’s books made a public statement: “Transgender women are women.” When he said this, he meant that people who were born with a male body but feel like they belong in the world as a woman should be recognized as women just as much as people who were born with a female body. Daniel Radcliffe said this in response to J. K. Rowling herself

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 360.

<sup>21</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 149.

saying that—while she personally thinks it’s okay for people to live in the world as the opposite sex—the bodies we are born with and grew up with still matter, and that someone who was born male should not be treated as female in every situation. Some people were very angry with J. K. Rowling for saying this, and Daniel Radcliffe wanted to make clear that he didn’t agree. But Daniel Radcliffe’s statement highlights an important question: What does “man” or “woman” mean?

Up until recently in our culture, for me to say, “I am a woman” would mean—first and foremost—that I was born with a female body. There are significant differences between male bodies and female bodies. Even beyond what we can see with our eyes, scientists could tell whether you were a boy or a girl by examining a single cell from anywhere in your body. But if Daniel Radcliffe’s claim that “Transwomen are women” is true, and being born with a female body isn’t at the heart of what it means to be a woman, then what does it mean to be a woman? Does it mean wearing dresses and makeup, or wearing your hair long rather than short? Some women in our culture do those things, but no one would say that was the definition of being a woman. Does it mean other people thinking you were born with a female body? If so, then the identity of a transgender person would depend on people not knowing the truth about his or her past.

In conversations about transgender questions, people often talk as if there is something deep inside of us—not connected with our

bodies—that defines whether we are male or female more than our bodies do. But while some people struggle with their gender identity throughout their life, others who feel uncomfortable with their bodies as teenagers find that those feelings change as they get older.<sup>10</sup> If there was something other than our bodies that more truly defined us as male or female, we would expect that sense of identity always to stay the same throughout someone’s life. Many people today think that Christians are foolish for believing things that cannot be measured with the tools of science. But the idea that there is a thing deep within us that tells us if we are male or female against the evidence of our physical bodies does not line up with science at all. And we are still left with the question: What does it mean to be a man or a woman, if it doesn’t relate to our biological sex?<sup>22</sup>

**What are we supposed to say as Christians to someone who is transgender?**

#### **Gospel Answer**

First, we know that Jesus cares a lot about our feelings. He knows us from the inside out. He knows what we love and what makes us scared or sad. He knows when we feel like we don’t fit in and when we wish we could be different. He loves us so much that he died for us! So if you are a boy, but you desperately wish you were a girl, or if you are a girl who longs to be a boy, Jesus sees you and knows you and loves you with an everlasting love.

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<sup>22</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 149-151.

Second, the Bible tells us that God created everything through Jesus (John 1:3). Jesus made you. If you were born a boy, he meant for you to be a boy. If you were born a girl, he meant for you to be a girl. This doesn't mean that it will always be easy, or that you have to do everything other people expect from girls or boys. As we saw earlier, Jesus cried, and cooked, and loved babies, and when people beat him up, he didn't fight back. If you're a follower of Jesus, it's okay to be different...

And, the Bible also teaches us that we shouldn't always trust our feelings. We find our true selves not by following our feelings, but by following Jesus, so when our desires don't line up with following Jesus, we need to trust him...

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:24-25). But Jesus doesn't ask us to do this alone. He gives us his Spirit and he gives us his body (other Christians) for help. So if you are struggling with being a boy or a girl, look for a Christian friend to talk to about your feelings. If you feel comfortable with your body, try to be the kind of person who could support a friend who was struggling in this way.<sup>23</sup>

Jesus tells us that God created humans "from the beginning male and female" (Matthew 19:4). If we're

trusting in Jesus, he knows us from the inside out, and he makes us belong even when we feel like we don't fit.<sup>24</sup>

### How Should Christians Relate to Transgender People?

If you know someone who identifies as transgender or non-binary, your job is not to avoid them or make fun of them. Jesus wants you to love them, listen to them, be there for them, and when there is opportunity to tell them about Jesus. Loving other people doesn't mean you agree with all their decisions. "Telling a friend that you love them as they are, and that you think the body they were born with is good isn't hateful."<sup>25</sup>

### IMAGE OF GOD

In the beginning, Genesis 1 and 2 say both man and woman are made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). It says both men and women are given dominion over creation (Gen 1:26, 28). Both men and women are given the responsibility to multiply and fill the earth with generations of people. And the Bible is addressed to men and women equally.

In Genesis 2 Eve is created out of Adam's rib but that does not mean Eve is inferior to Adam. Being created out of something does not mean inferiority to that something, otherwise that would mean Adam would be inferior to dirt since God created Adam from the dust of the ground. Adam and Eve are co-equal in substance.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that men and women are created with different natures. They are both created with human nature as man and woman. This is the same human nature that the Son of God takes on in the incarnation in order to redeem

<sup>23</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 146-147.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 148.

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humankind, both men and women. Jesus is able to save both men and women, even though he is a man and not a woman, because as a man he shares the same human nature as both man and woman.

Galatians 3:28-29 says, "28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* 29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*" All the promises of the gospel belong to men and women equally.

### JESUS AND MEN

#### What are men supposed to be like?

The Bible gives us a picture of the one and only perfect man. Jesus is the perfect "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). He had the power to stop storms (Mark 4:35-41), summon angels (Matthew 26:53), and defeat death (John 11:25). But his arms held little children (Mark 10:13-16), and his hands reached out to heal the sick (Matthew 8:3; Luke 4:40).

Jesus drove money-changers out of God's temple with a whip (John 2:13-17). But he tenderly welcomed the lonely, rejected, and weak (Matthew 11:28-30). When his friend Lazarus died, Jesus wept (John 11:35). When his friend Peter drew his sword to protect Jesus from getting arrested, Jesus healed the man Peter had hurt (Luke 22:49-51).

Jesus is the greatest hero in the history of the world. But he fought his greatest battle by dying on a cross. Jesus is the rightful King of all the world, but he came "not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45). Before his

crucifixion, Jesus washed his disciples' feet (John 13), and after his resurrection, he cooked them breakfast (John 21:9).

Some people think real men don't cry. But Jesus cried.

Some people think real men sleep with lots of women. But Jesus never even had a girlfriend.

Some people think real men don't stand for insults. But Jesus took insults all day long. He defended the weak, but he wouldn't fight back to defend himself.

Some people think real men don't cook or care for kids. But Jesus did both these things.

If we want to know what it means to be a perfect man, we must look at Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

Men often have more physical strength than women and in most cultures throughout history men have had more power than women - men are to look to Jesus, the God-man, as the model for wielding strength and power to love and serve others (Philippians 2:1-11).

### JESUS AND WOMEN

#### What are women supposed to be like?

Jesus is the perfect man AND he is also the perfect human, so all Christians—male or female—are called to imitate him. Both men and women are sanctified by the Holy Spirit to be more and more Christ-like. Women are co-heirs of the grace of life (1Pet 3:7; Gal 3:28); women are a part of the unity of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Spirit (Eph 4:3, Phil 2:1); and women have been baptized with the Spirit (Acts 2:17; 1Cor 12:13).

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<sup>26</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 137.

Jesus made lots of female friends and treated them as if they were equal to men. For instance, when his friend Mary was sitting at his feet to learn alongside his male disciples, Jesus defended her (Luke 10:38-42). He particularly cared for women other people looked down on. Jesus shocked his disciples by befriending a Samaritan woman, who had had five husbands and was now living with a man she wasn't married to (John 4:1-42), and he held up a "sinful woman" who loved him as a moral example to a self-righteous man who didn't (Luke 7:36-50). As we saw in chapter 5, the first people to see Jesus after his resurrection were women—even though women at the time weren't trusted as witnesses in court!

Some of my friends think that Christianity is "misogynistic"—which means hateful toward women. Just like with any other sin, Christians have sometimes acted that way. But from the very beginning, Jesus has especially drawn women to himself. Historians believe that in the Greco-Roman empire into which Jesus was born, there may have been twice as many men as women, because women often died in childbirth and baby girls were often left outside to die. But the church seems to have been the other way around, with perhaps twice as many women as men. The second-century Greek philosopher Celsus mocked Christians saying that they "are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable and stupid, only slaves, women, and little children." Today, both in America and across the world, there are significantly more Christian

women than men, and women are more likely to go to church, read the Bible, and pray. Christianity isn't against women: it's the greatest movement of women in all of history!<sup>27</sup>

### MARRIAGE & FAMILY

#### How are husbands and wives supposed to get along in marriage?

When God creates Eve to be the wife of Adam she is given the role of "helper". Genesis 2:18, "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.*" In no way is that insulting!!! Both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are described with same term as the "helper" of Israel (Ex 18:4; Dt 33:7, 29; Hos 13:9; Psa 20:3; 70:6; 89:20; 121:1-2; 124:8; 146:5). God has given Adam work to do, like having dominion over all the earth and filling it with people, and Adam can't do that alone. God's design is for husband and wife to do the work he has called them to do as a family TOGETHER. The literal translation of "fit for him" is "like/opposite him."

#### Who's in charge in marriage?

In Ephesians 5 Paul the apostle tells wives they are supposed to "submit" to their husbands "for the husband is the head of the wife" (Ephesians 5:22-23). But, that word "submit" does not mean "obey" like wives are supposed to obey whatever their husbands say. Husbands are not the boss of their wives. And, Paul is not saying all women should "submit" to all men. Paul is giving instructions specifically to husbands and wives. And, you have to remember the awful Greek culture in which the church was born. Wives in that culture were treated like they were a subspecies, like they were inferior to their husbands. Wives were treated like

<sup>27</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 138-139.

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property that their husbands could do whatever they wanted with.

And the apostle Paul also said in Ephesians 5, “Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Husbands are supposed to love their wives sacrificially. That’s what it means for husbands to be the head of the family. Husbands are supposed to put their wives first. Husbands are supposed to lay down their lives, their desires, their dreams for their wives. And in that Greek culture the world would have laughed at Christian husbands like they were a bunch of sappy weaklings for loving their wives sacrificially. So Paul tells Christian wives they need to be the ones who respect their husbands. That’s what Paul means when he says, “wives submit to your husbands.” That word “submit” is a term of respect.

The only time the regular word in Greek for “authority” in the New Testament is used in regards to marriage is in 1 Corinthians 7:4, “*The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.*” Both the husband and the wife have authority over each other’s bodies.

#### Who’s in charge of the kids, mom or dad?

In Ephesians 6:1-2, Paul commands children, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right...*” and then he quotes the 5th commandment given to Israel at Mt. Sinai: “*Honor your father and mother.*” The dad and mom have equal authority over the children in both the New Testament and the Old Testament. There is no hierarchy the children are supposed to observe with regard to their dad and mom. Both mom and dad are equally in charge of their kids.

And since human beings themselves are the greatest cultural products in the world, and the only cultural products from this world that will be in the new heavens and new earth - raising kids is one of if not the most important job there is. And while raising children is one of the most important jobs, some moms also work. We also know that Jesus himself was supported by money from some of his female followers (Luke 8:2-3), so there is no reason to think that Christian women should not work outside the home and be paid fairly for their work.

#### THE CHURCH AND GUYS AND GIRLS

##### Who does what in the church - what do guys do and what do girls do?

Both men and women in the church are called to spread the good news about Jesus. “But a few Christians in each church are called to teach the Bible to the whole church and lead God’s family in that place. These people are often called pastors and elders, and these roles seem to be given in the Bible to qualified men”<sup>28</sup> (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The reason is the very first man, Adam, was given the role of being head/king over all of humanity and his one big job was to guard the garden against the devil. And if he had successfully kicked the serpent out of the garden of Eden then he and Eve would have had dominion over the earth and multiplied and filled the earth with people who would have worshiped God together. And the heads of all the families would have been those dads who came from Adam and they would have lead their families in worshiping God with Adam as king. But, Adam messed everything up in the garden of Eden. BUT, the good news is Jesus came and did what the Adam failed to do and he paid for Adam’s failure and for all our sin to make us the church his new family.

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<sup>28</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 142.



And so the church now looks like what it would have been before the Fall. The elders and deacons are like the heads of the church family leading the church in worshiping God with Jesus, the Second Adam, as King.

God has given men a particular responsibility to teach and lead in the church. This is not because women aren't as intelligent or as faithful as men, or because a woman couldn't be as good a speaker or leader as a man. As we have seen, the first people to see Jesus after he was raised from the dead were women, and it seems like the women believed that Jesus had been raised, while the male disciples still doubted (e.g., Luke 24:10-11).<sup>29</sup>

Paul's letters and the Book of Acts mention twelve women by name who were coworkers with him in the gospel ministry. Four women are known as leaders of house churches: Lydia (Acts 16), Chloe (1 Cor 1:11), Apphia (Phil 2), and Nympha (Col 4:15). Paul also highly commends a woman named Phoebe to the Roman church and tells the Roman church to "*help her in whatever she may need from you*" in order that she might continue in her labor (Rom 16:1-2). Paul wrote that four women - Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis (Romans 16:6, 12) - had "*worked very hard in the Lord.*" In Philippians 4:2-3 Paul mentions two women, Euodia and Syntyche, who "*labored side by side with me in the gospel.*"

The fact that men are called to lead local churches also doesn't mean that men are more important than women. When two of Jesus's disciples, James

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<sup>29</sup> Rachel McLaughlin, *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* (Crossway, Wheaton 2021), 143.

and John, asked to have special leadership positions in his kingdom, Jesus explained to them that leadership in his kingdom was the opposite of leadership in the world. In the world, people take charge so they can get their own way. But Jesus explained that in his kingdom, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man [that's Jesus] came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45). Leaders in Jesus's kingdom don't come first. They come last.

At the time when the New Testament was being written (and in many parts of the world today) teaching the Bible in public often meant getting attacked or arrested. So perhaps it's not surprising that God calls men to sacrifice in marriage and to lead in church. It's not about power and privilege. It's about his special call on men to serve and sacrifice, like Jesus served and sacrificed for us. So God made men and women equal, but in some areas he has called them to different roles.<sup>30</sup>

#### Will it be like that in heaven?

We know in the new heavens and new earth we will still be male and female BUT male headship and exercise of spiritual authority in the family and in the church will disappear! There will be no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:30). So while those roles in the family and in the church are important now, they will become totally unnecessary and cease to exist in heaven.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 143-144.