

Becky Bereans Hot Button Issues - Transgenderism

Introduction

Go figya! As it turns out, many of the controversial “hot button” issues confronting our society today (as throughout history) pertain to attitudes and practices God has ordained in His Word as sins against Him. Consequently, it will be helpful in discussing these issues to use a well-known scripture as a framework for our discussions.

9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 [ESV]

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of those things that God has defined as sinful, but it does serve as a good launching point for our discussions.

Before we take a look at any of the specific sins mentioned in this list, it is important to note some general truths we find in God’s Word:

1. There is not hierarchy of sins in God’s law. Dishonoring one’s parents and coveting one’s neighbor’s possessions are right alongside murder and adultery in God’s commandments.
2. There are no “non-deadly” sins. God’s Word is straightforward regarding God’s just punishment for sin.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 [ESV]

3. No one is immune of ourselves.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8 [ESV]

4. Everyone can be saved out of death into eternal life by Jesus’ sacrificial atonement for all mankind’s sin (past, present, and future) on the cross.

Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Matthew 12:31 [ESV]

Discussion Question

What exactly did Jesus mean by “***blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?***”

Anyone interested in a more thorough treatment of 1 Corinthians 6 and specifically 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 may find my message [“Such Were All of Us”](#) helpful.

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What the Bible Says About Gender

Discussion Question – Does the Bible mention gender modification at all?

God's Word doesn't mention the idea of people changing their gender per se. Obviously, the hormonal "treatments" available today were completely unheard of in ancient times. However surgical castration and female genital mutilation have been practiced for thousands of years.

God's Word often uses euphemisms to speak of matters concerning sexual immorality. This frequently leads to confusion at best, and even worse opens the door for the unscrupulous to purposely and blatantly misinterpret God's Word in order to rationalize foregone conclusions and personal agendas.

So let's just look at some of the relevant passages before we launch into our discussion.

God's Creation of Two Genders – Male and Female

³And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Matthew 19:3-6 [ESV]

Jesus' teaching here regarding divorce makes use of quoted scripture from Genesis 1:27 and 2:23-24. Clearly there is no provision for any other possible genders apart from male and female. This also extends to the animal kingdom. When God commanded Noah concerning the animals to be brought aboard the ark (Genesis 6), He specifically directs that two of each animal kind were to be brought – male and female.

Cross Dressing

"A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God." Deuteronomy 22:5 [ESV]

Obviously, cross-dressing is not the same thing as gender modification. This is perhaps a case where the Bible is referring euphemistically to assuming the role of the opposite gender in sexual relations. Nevertheless, even wearing the dress of the opposite gender is clearly excluded by God. Even thousands of years ago, God proclaimed that Hillary Clinton's pant suits are an abomination.

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Homosexual Practice

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. Leviticus 18:22 [ESV]

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. Leviticus 20:13 [ESV]

²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Romans 1:24-27 [ESV]

Homosexual practice is not the same thing as gender modification, of course, but the two are very closely related, so these passages are relevant.

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But what about our series framework passage 1 Corinthians 6:9-11?

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Some of those who attempt to rationalize homosexual behavior that God clearly deems sinful in His Word have rightly claimed that the word “homosexual” was not even present in English usage until the late nineteenth century. Therefore, they say its use in modern English translations’ – e.g. NKJV, NLT, NASB, and NET – rendering of 1 Corinthians 6:9 is a “homophobic” mistranslation of the original Greek.

In order to prepare ourselves to give an answer to this incorrect contention, we need to take a closer look at two specific Greek words in 1 Corinthians 6:9

- **μαλακός *malakos*** – translated as “homosexuals” in the NKJV and as “sexually immoral” in the ESV – appears four times in three verses in the New Testament. It is translated as “soft” in the other verses. The KJV translates it here in 1 Corinthians 6:9 as “effeminate.” It was used to euphemistically refer to pubescent boys kept by older men as sexual partners, and to refer to male prostitutes.
- **ἀρσενοκοίτης *arsenokoitēs*** – translated as “sodomites” in the NKJV – appears twice in the New Testament. It is translated as “sodomites” by the NKJV and as “men who practice homosexuality” by the ESV in both instances. The KJV translates it with the clumsy phrase “abusers of themselves with mankind.” It is a compound word composed from the Greek words for male and bed. It means – one who lies with a male as with a female, a sodomite.

So, it would seem that the “mainstream” modern English language translations have correctly and fairly translated these two Greek words without any “homophobic” agenda.

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Eunuchs

Before we launch into our discussion, let's briefly examine what God's Word says about eunuchs – the only form of gender modification specifically mentioned in the Bible. Eunuchs are mentioned throughout the Old Testament, usually in the context of service in various royal courts. Presumably, eunuchs could be entrusted with care of the royal harems and captive people like Daniel in the service of the king because lacking the equipment to manufacture testosterone they would be less prone to have sexual relations with their charges.

In Acts 8, we find the story of a eunuch in the service of the queen of Ethiopia who became a Christ follower and was baptized after hearing the Gospel from Phillip the evangelist.

The most intriguing mention of eunuchs in God's Word comes at the end of Jesus' own teaching on divorce in Matthew 19 that we read about earlier in connection with God's creation of only two genders – male and female.

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it. Matthew 19:12 [ESV]

The word “eunuchs” used by Jesus here – **εὐνοῦχος *eunouchos*** – denotes not only men who have been castrated for such jobs as service in royal harems, but also to those who voluntarily abstain from marriage and marital sexual relations for reasons of their own. The most famous of these perhaps was the apostle Paul himself who never married and therefore presumably never enjoyed sexual relations with any woman. Clearly, it is such voluntary celibates to whom Jesus refers in His teaching on divorce.

NOTE – Nowhere in God's Word are the sexual practices of eunuchs mentioned. God clearly makes a distinction between our gender characteristics and our sexual practices.

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Discussion Questions

Can gender identity and sexual practice be separated?

Can a person actually change their gender at all?

Are there any other genders apart from male and female?

Assuming a transgender person is sexually inactive, and refrains from cross-dressing, is surgical and/or pharmaceutical gender modification still an abomination before God?

Gender modification “treatments” quadrupled between 2016 and 2017 in the USA, and reported cases of gender dysphoria in the UK rose 4,400% over the preceding decade. Why?

Passage of laws to protect transgender people?

Relaxation of traditional social stigma surrounding the issue?

So-called “emotional contagion/peer contagion” – “all the kids are doing it” syndrome?

Something else?

Should parents be allowed to enter their children into gender modification “treatment?”

At the request of the child?

As the parents prefer?

At what minimum age if any?

Is homosexuality practiced among animals? If so, does that make it okay for humans?

Some animals (e.g. amphibians) are able to change their gender to match environmental conditions. Does that make it okay for humans?

Some animals (e.g. honeybees) are able to select the gender of their offspring on demand. Should humans be able to do the same?

Assuming a transgender person is sexually inactive, and refrains from cross-dressing, is surgical and/or pharmaceutical gender modification still an abomination before God?

How should Christ followers interact with transgender people we encounter...

within the Church?

outside the Church?

- a) Keep calm and carry on
- b) Point out the person’s sin
- c) Accept and embrace the person’s free choice
- d) None of the above