



MALE & FEMALE HE CREATED THEM

UNDERSTANDING & RESPONDING
TO A CRISIS OF IDENTITY

ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM

CHURCH ALLIANCE

**SO GOD
CREATED MAN
IN HIS OWN
IMAGE, IN THE
IMAGE OF GOD
HE CREATED HIM;
MALE AND FEMALE
HE CREATED THEM.**

GENESIS 1:27



INTRODUCTION

Does biology matter?

Is biological sex fixed or fluid?

Is the identity someone claims at a given moment in time the ultimate measure of his or her humanity?

Swaths of our culture and society are not only rushing to engage these questions of being – questions most considered answered until recently – but are hastily providing new answers that contradict basic biology and God’s design for men and women.

The rapid embrace of radical ideas and activism surrounding gender ideology is seemingly everywhere we turn. It’s touted and widely embraced in academia, the entertainment industry, corporate America, and the public school system.

Churches and other ministries are also being impacted. Some are feeling the pressure to cave to the culture’s push to, in effect, abolish biological reality, affirm a radical gender ideology that could harm vulnerable children for decades to come, and compromise the truth of God’s Word and design for the pinnacle of His creation.

From the very beginning, God desired human beings, made in His image and likeness, to cultivate, steward, and expand His righteous reign and rule throughout the entire world, to enrich all creation with His love, goodness, beauty, wisdom, and truth.

Humans were not only created in God’s image but also made distinctively male and female. Genesis 1:27 tells us that men and women are integral to God’s ongoing project in this world, and their biology plays a central role: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

God then tells these co-laborers of creation to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Ultimately, this speaks to God’s creative genius. But it also testifies to the reality of God’s design for humanity and its flourishing.

At the outset of Scripture, God mercifully laid out His design for humanity, calling all of us to understand, respect, embrace, and follow. The biological reality of being created male or female is central to His creation— and true human flourishing means abiding by this God-ordained design.



But as we see in the creation account, sin and corruption seek to distort and upend God's rule and reign at every turn. We're keenly aware of the brokenness ushered in by Adam and Eve when they chose to reject God's truth for a lie. This brokenness now permeates all of God's good creation.

One area of especially painful, disorienting brokenness in the world today is the area of gender identity. We're seeing a rapid rise in individuals— especially adolescents and teens— questioning their biological reality, and our society is all too eager to entertain and unquestioningly affirm their confusion.

This resource is not intended to suggest that people struggling with issues related to gender identity are more broken or sinful than people who do not have that struggle. We are all broken, susceptible to sin, and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and God commands us not to judge others when we have sin present in our own lives (Matthew 7:1-5).

This resource is intended to help churches and ministries engage with this pressing issue. Churches and ministries shouldn't be afraid to tackle this topic. Male and female are not malleable categories or artificial social constructs that can be adjusted to suit an individual's feelings or sexual desires. When we ignore or reject this truth, we ignore God's desires and design for His beloved image-bearers. We exchange truth for a lie.

When we abandon the biological reality about the sexes, serious consequences may include devastating physical and psychological harm.

Churches and ministries not only can defend God's truth in an age of confusion, but also have the privilege of serving, walking alongside, and loving individuals struggling with a crisis of identity. There's a unique opportunity for churches and ministries to help fulfill what the Apostle Paul speaks of in Colossians:

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:12-17

A heart of thankfulness and compassion is what God desires. But He also wants us to be wise in how we serve Him and others. In Matthew 10, we learn about Christ's instructions to His disciples about their upcoming mission with Him. He tells them to pack light and not be distracted by people who reject them or their message.

He also tells them of the posture He desires of them, knowing they would face fierce opposition: "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16).

Wisdom coupled with gentleness is how we are to serve those around us. Like in Jesus' day, there are a lot of "wolves" in the world who are opposed to Christ, His Gospel, and His followers. But there are practical steps your ministry can take to better prepare and protect itself from hostilities that are becoming more prevalent today.

PRACTICAL ACTIONS YOUR MINISTRY SHOULD CONSIDER

Considering Potential Scenarios

Church and ministry leaders must be actively thinking about how they will engage on the issue of gender identity. It's a hot-button issue in our society, so churches and ministries should, at the very least, expect to hear questions about it.

- ▶ **If you haven't done so, now is the time to begin formulating a biblical, compassionate response to gender identity issues.**

To help in your preparation, what follows are hypothetical situations ministries could face regarding this challenging topic. This list is not exhaustive but provides a basic framework for thinking through scenarios your ministry could face now or in the future. Take some time to think about how you might respond with wisdom, compassion, and God's truth.

The ADF Church Alliance team is always here for you as you engage this issue. Confronting controversial cultural issues can feel daunting, especially with all the other competing demands of operating a ministry. We want to serve you in this critical area, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns.



Hypothetical Scenarios

Churches

- A man identifying as a woman attending your church asks about membership
- A woman identifying as a man applies for an open position at your church
- An individual uses a bathroom that does not correspond to his or her biological sex



Christian Camps

- A man identifying as a woman applies to be a camp counselor
- A teenaged male who identifies as a female attends your overnight summer camp program and seeks to sleep in a dormitory designated for females only
- Parents of a female child who identifies as a male asks about your policy pertaining to admitting children who identify as the opposite of their biological sex

Christian Colleges and Universities



- A male student identifying as female wants to use the bathroom that corresponds to their perceived gender identity and not their biological sex
- A male student identifying as a female tries out for a women's sports team
- A female identifying as a male applies for an open employment position at your institution

Hypothetical Scenarios Continued

Rescue Missions

- A man identifying as a woman seeks to sleep in an area designated for women only
- A woman identifying as a man applies for an employment position at your ministry
- A man identifying as a woman asks about volunteering at your rescue mission



K-12 Christian Schools



- A male student identifying as a female wants to use the bathroom that corresponds to his gender identity, not his biological sex
- A female student tries out for a male sports team
- A man identifying as a woman applies for an open employment position at your school





He, She, They? Considering Pronoun Usage

As our society embraces radical gender ideology, an emphasis has been placed on the “affirming” usage of an individual’s preferred pronouns (i.e., if a biological man identifying as a woman wants to be referred to with the pronouns “she/her/hers,” everyone should automatically and uncritically accept this new “truth” or “reality.”)

However, as Christians, we believe our biology speaks a certain truth about how God made us and reality in general. Therefore, referring to a man by using female pronouns (and vice versa) is ultimately dishonest, distorts God’s truth, and can further reinforce gender confusion. One alternative churches and ministries are considering to potentially avoid this is to find out an individual’s preferred name and use that instead of the individual’s preferred pronouns. While a name often indicates a corresponding gender, it is not a definitive indicator. This option allows one to recognize the individual’s dignity without affirming his or her gender confusion. Ultimately, the conscience must be the Christian’s guide in this area, along with consideration of relational context. For example, you would likely speak differently to someone who is visiting your church for the first time than someone who has attended your church for years.

The Importance of Pastoral Counseling

Most pastors speak into the lives of their congregants every Sunday, but many also speak wisdom, truth, and love into the lives of their parishioners throughout the week through pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling is often an essential service a church provides, offering support, wisdom, and hope to individuals and families struggling with various life challenges and difficulties. This type of counseling offers invaluable spiritual insights coupled with practical wisdom.

Pastors shouldn't be afraid to give counsel based on their biblical beliefs. Some licensed Christian therapists unfortunately face infringements of their free speech from the government for their beliefs on topics like marriage and human sexuality. However, pastors remain free to express their biblical beliefs on various issues without interference from the State. ADF stands ready to defend the right of both counselors and pastors to speak freely and truthfully in the counseling room.

Pastors: Be Encouraged

The pastoral work ministers of the Gospel undertake is meaningful to congregations, to communities, and to the Kingdom. In light of this, pastors should not be afraid to speak the truth about physical and spiritual realities. Youth pastors should especially take heart. In many ways, they're at the forefront of engaging with what is affecting future generations right now, including the rise of gender identity issues. They have a unique role to play in sharing the truth, demonstrating God's grace and compassion, and helping lead young men and women closer to Christ. Youth pastors should not back down from engaging with issues like gender identity because many teens and young adults need their wisdom, guidance, and help now more than ever.

Scripture tells us in 2 Timothy 4:5 that pastors should "always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

Fulfilling the call to ministry as a pastor is more challenging as our society and culture continue embracing distorted views of what it means to be human, including ideas that contradict God's design for men and women. But God is always at work in His world, and His love and grace can still penetrate broken, rebellious hearts. This reality should give every Christ-follower, especially pastors, courage to carry out what God calls them to, no matter how daunting or difficult the task may seem.

ADF IS HERE TO HELP

Instructions for Submitting Documents for Review

One of the most fundamental ways of communicating truth relating to what you believe is by including those statements of truth in your ministry's governing documents. For instance, your church's statement of faith should contain your religious beliefs about marriage and sexuality. It is also critical that all employees, volunteers, guests, etc., are aware of these beliefs and policies. When crafting your church's policies on sex-specific spaces such as restrooms, changing areas, showers, overnight shelters, etc., it's imperative to clearly state that these areas are only open for use by the designated biological sex.

However, because some sexual orientation and gender identity laws regulate what statements can and cannot be published, we recommend reviewing your written policies with one of our attorneys. This is where our document review service comes in, which enables our attorneys to review your vital documents with an eye toward better protecting your religious freedom and freedom of speech. This review is a part of your membership, so please take advantage of it.

When you are ready to submit your church's or ministry's governing documents and policies for review, please follow these three easy steps:

1. Log into the ADF Church Alliance members-only website: My.ADFChurchAlliance.org.
2. Under "Contact Us" in the navigation bar, select "Document Review."
3. Follow the Document Review Checklist instructions. After you submit your documents, an ADF attorney will provide recommendations on better preparing your church or ministry from a religious freedom legal perspective.

Further Reading

[Don't Say 'They': Why Pronouns Matter](#) – The Colson Center

Ryan Anderson's *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*

Andrew Walker's *God and the Transgender Debate*

Andrew Walker article: [He, She, Ze, Zir? Navigating Pronouns While Loving Your Transgender Neighbor](#)

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The information included in this guide is designed to be an educational resource and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions or legal issues related to religious freedom, we encourage you to contact us directly.