

God and Gender: It's Really Not Confusing

A Canadian couple's decision to raise a "genderless" child has perplexed me.

I was scratching my head last week after hearing about the couple from Toronto, Canada, who announced they were going to raise a "genderless" child. Kathy Witterick and David Stocker, parents of two boys named Jazz and Kio, had a third child named Storm on New Year's Day. Witterick announced to her family last month that she intends to keep the child's gender a secret and let him/her figure it out on his own.

So far mom and dad have not granted interviews, but the mother said in a letter to the *Edmonton Journal*, published May 30, that letting Storm determine his/her gender was "a tribute to freedom and choice in place of limitation."

"Gender is determined by the foreknowledge of God; it is not our choice. He is the Creator, we are the creature; He is the potter, we are the clay. To say that a child is going to "choose" his/her gender is the ultimate in rebellion against God's created order."

"Someday soon, Storm will have something to say about it," the mom added. (And I'm thinking he/she also may grow up resenting its parents for this bizarre decision.)

We know where this line of reasoning came from. We already have laws on the books in several states to protect people who don't know their gender or who have altered it surgically. In Gainesville, Fla., for example, a man is allowed to use a women's restroom if he "feels" he is female, regardless of whether he has had a sex-change operation.

Also, some educators have advocated a policy of not telling little boys they are boys and little girls they are girls. They fear this will lead to "gender stereotypes"—such as girls wanting to play with dolls, boys wanting to drive monster trucks and all kids thinking heterosexuality is normal.

So far it doesn't look like the Canadian couple is setting a popular trend. I doubt parents are going to send their boys to school in pink tights anytime soon. But this decision was made because we live in a time of growing gender confusion. To stay on track we must reclaim some simple principles from Scripture:

1. God created gender. Gender is one of the most fundamental concepts in the Bible. Genesis 1:27 says God created mankind "male and female"—and both genders together reflect God's divine image. God, who is a spirit, has both masculine and feminine qualities, so when He made mankind He needed men and women to reflect His nature as well as to procreate.

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foreknowledge of God; it is not our choice. He is the Creator, we are the creature; He is the potter, we are the clay. To say that a child is going to “choose” his/her gender is the ultimate in rebellion against God’s created order.

2. Attacks on gender are ultimately aimed at

God. The apostle Paul noted that the reality of God and his power are clearly evident “through what has been made”—the Creation—but that sinful and unbelieving people reject this obvious truth. Romans 1:21 says: “They did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

All we know about gender is obvious in nature—and it should be taught at home (as well as in fourth grade health classes). God made males and females, and when they have sex they often have children. Same-sex couples can’t have children biologically without help from the opposite gender. A penis goes with a vagina. A sperm goes with an egg. It’s a no-brainer. Gender isn’t that difficult to figure out!

It is true that some people develop same-sex attraction, but this is not because God is confused, or because He occasionally creates a male with a female psyche, or because He thinks it will be OK for a certain percentage of men to have sex with each other. Homosexuality is just one of many manifestations of the fallen world we live in—and

anyone who
struggles with sexual brokenness can find healing and freedom
in Christ. (And
they should be able to find this healing in any church,
without fear of
judgment.)

**3. Children should be taught to embrace their
gender, without unhealthy stereotypes.** Many modern
psychologists think if you reinforce a boy's masculinity
he'll grow up to be a wife-beater, a rapist or a violent thug.
They also oppose
teaching a girl to be feminine, lest she grow up to believe
all she can do is
bake cookies and vacuum.

This was obviously the thinking behind David
Stocker's decision to keep baby Storm's gender a secret. He
said: "What
we noticed is that parents make so many choices for their
children. It's
obnoxious." Stocker thinks he's providing freedom to his child
by adopting this
choose-your-own-gender policy; in the end, what he's doing
could be classified
as child abuse.

Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train up a child in the way he should
go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." There's
nothing wrong with
reinforcing a child's gender—this will result in emotional
health. But in a
fallen world where men often oppress women, and where women
struggle with their
self-worth, we also must train our kids to rise above
unhealthy stereotypes.

True

masculinity, when transformed by Christ, is not violent or dominating. True femininity is not defined by inferiority, timidity or domesticity. Boys can be trained to be strong yet compassionate gentlemen. Girls can be trained to be confident women of character. And churches can help raise healthy families no matter how confusing our culture becomes.

J. Lee Grady is contributing editor of Charisma. You can follow him on Twitter at leegrady. His most recent book, 10 Lies Men Believe (Charisma House), includes a biblical strategy to end domestic violence and discrimination against women.