

In a World of Gender Confusion, We Need the Love of Jesus

When I was a kid growing up in Alabama, I was taught there are two genders. I learned to read using the popular *Dick and Jane* books, and we had girls' restrooms for girls and boys' restrooms for boys. My first-grade teacher, Mrs. Mizelle, wouldn't have permitted a boy to use the girls' restroom in 1964—and the parents of students at my school would have been up in arms if she had.

But things are different today.

Just when I thought there were only 64 official genders on record—such as “gender fluid,” “pansexual,” “bigender” and “genderqueer”—a video began circulating last week on TikTok. On that video a person named Bunny explains new terms such as “genderfae” (“nonbinary identity with no feelings of masculinity”) and “genderfaun” (“no feelings of femininity”), along with “genderfaer” and “genderflor.”

If you are scratching your head about these designations, note that we also have a list of new pronouns to memorize. Some people want to be referred to as “ze” or “zir,” “xe” or “xem,” as well as “they” or “them.”

This transgender phenomenon makes no sense to people who assume we live in a binary world in which men are men, women are women and everybody just accepts the scientific rules of biology.

But we don't live in an orderly world. And even though we are constantly reminded today to “follow the science” when it comes to vaccines, viruses or global warming, we are supposed to ignore science when it comes to gender.

Transgender people only make up 0.6% of the U.S. population, according to a 2021 Gallup Poll. So chances are you have never met anyone who identifies as a different gender compared to the one they were born with. My experience has taught me that I must show compassion to people with gender confusion, even though I don't agree with the movement to normalize or promote this behavior.

When I was on assignment with *Charisma* in San Francisco a few years ago, I carried on a long conversation with Stephanie, a man who was living as a woman. Stephanie had already paid \$2,300 for breast implants, but he was saving money for a full sex-change operation.

His hair was bleached blond, and he wore thick blue eye shadow and dark red lipstick. He had feminine mannerisms, but the hormone pills he had been taking couldn't soften his square jaw or shrink his thick hands, which were decorated with long purple nails.

"I feel kind of lost sometimes," he told me after I bought him a cup of coffee.

Stephanie had been raised in a trailer park near Pittsburgh, and while still living as a man, he entered the Navy after high school. He even married a Filipino woman for a while, but he decided to identify as female. He worked as a transgender prostitute for years, but that income dried up as he got older. He was living on disability when I met him.

Stephanie told me he had attempted suicide more than once, and I could see the scars on his arm where he had slit his wrists. Then he said: "My stepmother told me, 'If you ever commit suicide, don't leave a note to us because we don't want anyone to know you are related to us.'"

Stephanie displayed a hollow sadness I've never seen on any other human face. It was as if some invisible vampire had sucked all the life out of him. I was not revolted. I felt

compassion.

I didn't slam my fist on the table and scold Stephanie for being confused. I certainly didn't lecture him about which bathroom he should use. I was more concerned for his eternal soul.

In that coffee shop, my friend Scott and I shared the gospel with him, and we prayed for him. I remember struggling with whether to use "him" or "her" in my prayer, but I realized that God is not so concerned with pronouns when a life is teetering on the edge of eternity.

"Jesus, we know you love Stephanie," we prayed. "Heal this body, and show Stephanie how much you want to help."

I don't know if Stephanie ever got a sex change operation. I don't know if he ever visited the church I recommended. If he did, I hope he was treated with kindness.

I'm not being soft on sin when I plead for compassion on this issue. I believe gender is a fixed component of our created identity. When it comes to public policy, we should not allow children to be subjected to a transgender agenda in public schools. Teachers who seek to indoctrinate impressionable children in gender nonconformity are participating in child abuse.

But as we work to protect kids and restore sanity in our culture, let's remember that reacting in anger toward the transgender community is not the Jesus way. Jesus always upheld biblical morality, and He certainly affirmed traditional gender identity. Yet His religious critics called Him a "friend of sinners" (Matt. 11:19) because He accepted and loved tax collectors, prostitutes and adulterers even as He confronted their sin.

If you meet someone who is unsure about their gender identity, don't just launch into lecture mode and try to prove a

scientific point. Listen, show genuine concern and introduce them to the love of Jesus. Only His love will end this rising tide of confusion. {eoa}

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