

Ravi Zacharias Gives Surprising Answer to 'Is God OK With Transgender People?'

"Is God OK with people being transgendered? Does the Bible say anything against it?"

That is the question posed to Ravi Zacharias and Vince Vitale when they spoke at the University of Florida. Vitale begins by addressing that many transgender people feel a gap between who they are now and who they're meant to be, or their ideal selves. He says that's not the result of being born the wrong gender, but rather being born at all as a human in a fallen world. He points to Christ's ultimate redemptive purpose for all things, including our bodies, in this world.

Zacharias affirms and then adds on to Vitale's point. First, he recommends a book about gender dysphoria and three frameworks for considering such questions. But then his response took an unexpected turn, as Zacharias compared his response to the sensitive plight of transgender people with Elijah's response to the plight of Naaman.

"There's a fascinating passage in the Old Testament when Naaman [is] suffering from a certain disease and he comes to see Elisha, and Elisha prays over him and heals him," Zacharias says. "Naaman the Syrian is shocked that this prophet of Israel has laid his hands on him and made him well. He asks an incredible question and receives an even more incredible answer. Naaman looks at Elisha, and he says, 'I have a question for you: I know who your God is and I know this is the God I now worship. When I go back home and work for my master, he takes me to the temple, and in that temple, he leans on my arm and asks me to bow down with him by the pressure he puts on my arm for me to kneel too. Elisha, what

should I do?'"

Zacharias says he empathized with Naaman because it's a common problem in his own culture.

"I knew that question was very sensitive because it comes from my culture in the same way," Zacharias says. "You're asked to celebrate a festival that is not in keeping with what your own faith is, but many times you're asked by friends, 'Would you like to come to the temple and just celebrate this festival with me?' Elisha looks at Naaman and says 'Go, and God will be with you and will guide you.' Elisha doesn't play God for him. Elisha says 'Go, and God will be with you and God will guide.'

"So I just give you one little answer in this—please ask a question about yourself, not what you are but who you are. That's the first question. 'Who am I, Lord? Not what am I—who am I?' And once you gain your identity in Him, all other identities can be defined for you as well. He will tell you who you are, and I will just tell you, ask God questions as you read His Word, and He will guide you. I will not play God in your life. You lean on Him. He will guide you."

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