



Session Four: He/She/Their?

We Live in a Brave New World of Gender and Sexuality!

Let's talk gender and sexuality in a woke world...



Most of you didn't watch the 2023 Grammy Awards. But 12.5 million people did tune in. This year's show was a rainbow explosion of wokeness; an LGBTQ celebration of gender fluidity, notorious for a performance of the winning duo/pop song, *Unholy*. German transgender woman, Kim Petras, sang from a cage while her genderfluid partner, Sam Smith, was decked out as Satan. Drag queens dressed as devils danced amongst smoke and lights, while the audience raucously joined what many critics labeled as satanic worship.

"The culture war is over, and the left won."

That's what MSNBC's Joy Reid said as she celebrated the Grammy's craziness the next morning. "I can only imagine the heads exploding in red states," she crowed. "It's a helpful reminder that despite the almost hysterical war the right is waging to take the culture back to the John Wayne era, they are not just losing. They literally cannot win. Cultural progression is relentless. Once people get a taste of modernity, they never go back willingly."



Joy Reid is right. The culture war *is* over, and the left has won—at least for now. Cultural progression is more than relentless. It's a runaway train, and our next generations have jumped on board. Should we raise the white flag of surrender? Absolutely not! But we *do* need to

stop fighting battles Jesus never called us to fight. Satan knows, if he can get us to waste our energies and resources waging the lesser culture and political battles, we will be too distracted and dissipated to fight the only war that will ever defeat him: **spiritual warfare**.

Jesus never called us to transform culture. He didn't come to make bad people good or bad cultures better. He came to save sinners. He calls us to evangelize the lost and disciple the redeemed. If enough sinners are transformed into his likeness, families and communities *will* be better. Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation..." But *real* righteousness comes from spiritual transformation. What happened at the 65th Grammy Awards, or who's in the White House, aren't as important as whether Jesus reigns in the church house, your house, my house, and our neighbors' houses. Let Ms. Reid celebrate her culture victories. We are here to fight and win a bigger war.

Joy Reid is wrong. She assumes culture is moving inexorably forward into a brave new world. But history never moves in straight lines. Ecclesiastes 1:8 says, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." History goes in circles. People are born naked and die naked. Culture ebbs and flows. Fads come and go. Kings are crowned and then toppled. Nations rise and fall. Republicans and Democrats win and lose. What is popular today is passé tomorrow. And the circle goes round and round.

But, God's story moves in a straight line to a sure conclusion. The end of His Story is already written, and Jesus wins! We may lose culture wars today, but we continue to march relentlessly forward to the final victory when Jesus returns. Sorry, Joy Reid, but your victories are temporary. Just blips on a circle. In eternity, no one will remember the 65th Grammy Awards or MSNBC. So, we should take heart and fight the right battles in the way Jesus told us to fight them, especially when it comes to this issue of gender fluidity and sexual confusion.

First of all, we must have a certain hope

St. Peter wrote, "Always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have..." [1 Pet. 3:15] Before we can give a reason for the hope we have, we must have a hope. God's Word gives hope that's *certain*. And yet, too many Christians are *uncertain* about the Bible's take on today's polarizing issues. So let's see what the Bible actually says about gender fluidity and sexuality:

1. God's Design is binary.

Binary means "composed of two things." In the area of gender, it means there are only two designations: male and female. The LGBTQ

movement has coined the word, nonbinary, to describe those who self-identify as neither male nor female, or a blend of both, or changing from one gender to the other. Various designations are used: genderqueer, agender, bigender, or genderfluid.

But God's design for us is binary. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; **male and female** he created them." Before the female was created, God said, "It is not good that the man is alone." [Gen. 2:18] So he created a woman for the man, and then said, "It is *very* good." [Gen. 1:32] Immediately, marriage was instituted: "And a man shall leave his father and mother [binary] and be united to his wife [binary] and they shall be one flesh [binary heterosexual union]. Jesus reaffirmed God's binary design: "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man should leave his father and mother, and be united to his wife...'" [Mt. 19:4&5]

God told Noah, "You shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female." [Gen. 6:18-19] When he chose to remake the world, God only preserved males and females. The reason is simple: gender binary is necessary for the procreation and survival of almost all species. God's design was binary. Jesus affirms it. The rest of the Bible insists on it. And scientific data supports it. From chromosomes, to cellular makeup, to genitalia, to sperm and ovum, to brain, to physique and life span, the differences are overwhelming. *ScienceDaily* recently ran this headline: [Researchers identify 6,500 genes that are expressed differently in men and women](#).

2. God determines our gender in the womb.

The Psalmist praises God with these words: "For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I knew that full well." [Ps. 139:14] Kind David never had a gender identity crisis. He praised God for making him the way he was. What God did in the womb defined him for life. As Christians, we need to instill in our children a sense of joy and pride in what God created them to be: their gender at birth, ethnicity, color, parentage, size, I.Q., and all the unique characteristics that make them different from anyone else. My granddaughter, Mae, was born a special needs child. But she is fearfully and wonderfully made. Dark cultural forces are trying to confuse our kids to doubt, or resent, or feel guilty about their birth identity. It's our job to build into them a sure sense of identity that will withstand outside forces.

3. Sin has messed everything up.

In Matthew 19, religious leaders asked Jesus why he was against divorce even though Moses allowed it. Jesus responds, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not that way from the beginning.” [Mt. 19:8] He then refers them to the 2nd chapter of Genesis, and how God intended binary marriage to be in Paradise. But that was before Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve sinned, and all creation became twisted and warped. In a post-Genesis 3 world, sinners have hard hearts. That’s why people split up, one out of three U.S. children are raised by single moms, 20% by grandparents, and 24.7 million go to bed in a home where their biological father is missing.

Jesus takes his description of a fallen world a step farther in Matthew 19:12. “For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who chose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.” Eunuchs, by definition, cannot engage in binary sexual relations. That’s why they guarded the harems of ancient kings. Eunuchs are sexually dysfunctional. Jesus shocks us by saying that some are born that way. He is saying that sin affects everything including our fetal development. Some people are born hermaphrodites. Others are born with atypical genitalia or discrepancies in their sex chromosomes. Is it possible that a woman can be trapped in the body of a man or vice versa? Sexual dysfunctions from birth should be viewed in the same way we look at other birth defects—as the result of a fallen world Jesus came to redeem.

Jesus goes on to say that some have been made eunuchs, or sexually dysfunctional by others. How many adults were wounded and sexually confused as children by molestation, incest, abandonment, being raised in broken families spawned by dysfunctional marriages? In a media age, they are being bombarded by messages that dismantle gender reality. In ancient times, young boys were castrated and sold as eunuchs to guard the harems of kings. How many of our children have been psychologically castrated, or fed hormones, or had their genitalia mutilated or breasts cut off by postmodern Frankenstein doctors? Yes, some are gender confused. But their minds are still developing, and, for most, gender identity isn’t fully set until they are 19-21 years of age. Yet they are pushed to take radical action by junk science, pop psychology, public school groomers, woke professors, cultural influencers, the medical industry, and politicians who want to fund this gender madness with tax dollars.

Jesus ends by saying that some live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. In other words, they stay unmarried so that they can devote full energy to bringing the gospel to a fallen world. Not every Christian is called to live as a eunuch in this world, but Jesus did. So did

St. Paul. So have Christians down through the ages. These rare people have been given the gift of celibacy. I haven't. But I am committed to give my life to folks who have been messed up by sin (just as I've been)—and there are so many ways this world twists the thinking and actions of people. I want to share with them compassionately as a fellow struggler. And, I know that only Jesus can transform those messed up by the pervasive sin that corrupts every molecule of this world.

4. Transgender is the denial of reality.

At its core, *gender* fluidity is *truth* fluidity. In a postmodern world, truth doesn't come from above, or what you observe empirically, but from within yourself. Truth is subjective and fluid. This is the genius of the LGBTQ strategy. When you were growing up, birth sex and gender were synonymous words. Biological fact determined whether you were female or male gender. Not so anymore. The LGBTQ movement has cleverly decoupled gender from sex. Sex was your biological definition at birth; gender is how you perceive yourself now. Therefore you can say, "I am a female with a penis. I have every right to go into the girl's shower." "I am a male with a vagina and breasts. I need a tampon dispenser in the boy's restroom." It's hard for Baby Boomers to understand what most Millennials, Gen Zs and Alpha kids embrace: biological reality no longer defines gender identity. Now it's "My body, my choice."

If you don't think Satan is behind this LGBTQ ruse, you've forgotten the biblical account of his deception in the Garden of Eden. God told Adam, who relayed the message to Eve, that they would surely die if they ate the forbidden fruit. [Gen. 2:17] Satan countered with, "Did God really say...?" [Gen. 3:1] In other words, "You can't be sure what God said. You have to decide true reality for yourself." Therein lies the big lie, then and now. Truth is not objective. It does not come from above, nor is it determined by biological facts or empirical data. "You decide your own truth" is at the heart of gender fluidity and almost every other moral issue today. Followers of Jesus must not fall for the devil's big lie.

5. Idolatry is at the heart of genderfluidity.

The 2nd Commandment says that we cannot turn God into an image of our own making. At the heart of idolatry is the "trans" idea that the creatures can remake the Creator. But idolatry can only make pale facsimiles of the *Real* Creator. Idolatry is grounded in self-deception. It is impossible to transfigure God to be what you want him to be, wish him to be, or think you need him to be. He is The Great *I AM*—the never-changing God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

There is another kind of idolatry. I call it ***Anthro-idolatry***, from the Greek word *Anthropos* which means man or human: the idolatry that happens when we try to reshape others or ourselves to be something different that God never created us to be. Idolatry can take place in the mind: I don't like God as he is, so I will reimagine him. Gender idolatry is the same: "I don't like my sex at birth, so I will reimagine myself as another gender." And just as idolaters take sculpting tools and turn wood, stone, and metal into false images of God, so do doctors today take scalpels to mutilate and reshape human flesh into false images of what people were created to be. The tragic testimonies of so many retransitioners, whose bodies have been so mutilated that they can never return to what they once were, is proof that anthro-idolatry is as deadly as God-idolatry.

It is not by accident that many idolatrous cultures have a long history of transgenderism. It is a short jump from making false images of our *Real* God to making false images of *real* humans. The Canaanite culture was rife with transvestism. That's why Moses ordered the Israelites to wear gender distinctive clothing as a guard against trans thinking [Deut. 22:5]. It stands to reason, as Western culture abandons its Judeo-Christian roots, it will join other idolatrous peoples in affirming gender fluidity.

6. We are called to judge ourselves, not the world.

That was Paul's approach to immorality in the Greco-Roman culture of his day. He writes to the church at Corinth, "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? God will judge those outside the outside." [1 Cor. 5:12&13] While Christians in Corinth were pointing fingers and judging what the pagans were doing, there was immorality going on inside the church. Paul's admonition to them to focus on their own sins is relevant for Christians in 2023. Joy Reid's opinions shouldn't matter that much to us. What happens at the Grammy Awards is God's business. Our concern should be whether we are following Jesus or caving in to the lies of the culture outside the church. If the light of Jesus goes out in the church, or in his followers, then the darkness in the world will be that of hell. Peter agreed with Paul when he wrote, "Judgment begins at the house of God." [1 Pet. 4:17] It starts with us, and not with Kim Petras, Sam Smith or Joy Reid. If we want to see the world fixed, we need to get the church, ourselves, our marriages, and our families fixed.

Secondly, we must have good reasons shared in a reasonable way. 1 Peter 3:15 says we have to be "prepared." That's what Legacy Imperative is all about: helping prepare grandparents and parents to dialogue with their children and grandkids about these issues

that polarize, to help remove their stumbling blocks to the gospel. First of all, we want to help establish you in your own biblical hope. But you also have to prepare yourself: to listen to your kids so you understand where they are; to take time to study what's going on in the culture, and learn how to speak to those in a largely non-Christian Culture. We can no longer afford to preach to the choir. The choir is rapidly dwindling.

1 Peter 3:15 goes on to say we must give “answers to anyone who asks you for reasons for the hope you have.” We must have answers to *why* we hold to biblical truths on issues like gender and sexuality. This is critical because surveys show that our next generations are by-in-large passionately committed to the LGBTQ agenda. Maybe you saw the *CNN* headline, [The truth behind the ‘He Gets Us’ ads for Jesus airing during the Super Bowl](#). Maybe you’ve seen the “Jesus Gets Us” ads. They’re cool, relevant, and geared to reach non-church Millennials and Gen Zs. Two 30-second “Jesus Gets Us” spots on the televised Super Bowl cost \$7 million a pop. Good strategy. Non-church kids generally like Jesus. But *CNN*’s investigators discovered “the truth” behind the Super Bowl ads: they are financed by conservative evangelical donors who (gasp) are personally opposed to LGBTQ ideology. *CNN* treats this discovery like a “smoking gun” secret that would alienate their target audience—if they knew. Again, it's not Jesus that's the problem; its evangelicals' biblical view of gender and sexuality that's the turnoff. We must have reasonable answers and reasonable approaches to this—one of the most defining issues of our day. Here are a few for starters:

1. Listen rather than lecture. Questions beat answers.

Peter says we should “give answers to those *who ask...*” [1 Pet. 3:15] Past evangelistic strategies, that cornered people and forced them to listen to a gospel presentation, were *not* biblical. In Luke 10, when Jesus sent his seventy-two disciples into the villages, he told them to go gently, not to stay where they weren't wanted, and not to pester those who didn't want to listen. [Lk. 10:7] He told them to look for the people who were at peace with them and stay in their homes. Jesus said, “Stay with them, eating and drinking...” [Lk. 10:7] This was relational evangelism. How can we speak to the hearts of others unless we discover the keys that open their hearts? We need to listen, ask questions, and not feel pressure to close the deal quickly. Jesus said, “Don't move from house to house.” [Lk. 10:7] In short, stay in one place a while. Evangelism takes time. Above all, we don't have to feel that we must make our point or win the argument. It's not personal. Jesus said, “Whoever listens to you, listens to me. Whoever rejects you, rejects me.” [Lk. 10:16] Our job is to give reasons; his is to do the transforming. There's no pressure or hurry

when we depend on the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of those we love most. He closes the deal.

2. No compromise for yourself; compassion for others.

First, **no compromise**. We are in spiritual warfare. Ephesians 6:12 says that the enemies we wrestle against are not “flesh and blood.” LGBTQ folks are not our enemies, nor is Joy Reid or the 65th Grammy Awards. Rather it’s the “spiritual forces of evil in invisible places.” The Deceiver will come, just as he did to Jesus in the wilderness, “If you bow down to me, I will give you all the kingdoms of this world.” [Mt. 4:8&9].” He will say to us, “If you lay down your swords, and bow to my lies, I will give you the nations of the world.” What is our sword he calls us to lay down? Ephesians 6:17 says it is “the Word of God.” Satan whispers in the ears of discouraged pastors in half-empty churches, “Just lay down your Bible beliefs and the nations of the world will pour back into your churches.” He says to dispirited parents and grandparents: “Lay down your outdated views and you will win back those who reject you because of them.” Don’t you dare! If we lay down our sword, the lion of hell will devour us and all those we love.

Second, **be compassionate**. Jesus never compromised the truth. Yet, we read, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” [Mt. 9:36&37] His anger was always directed at religious bigots or hardhearted disciples, but never at prostitutes, gangsters, or the sort of sinners who anger conservatives today: gays, lesbians, transgenders, bikers, gothics, tattooed kids with nose rings, the Housewives of Orange County, and others who shamelessly flaunt traditional values. Shouldn’t we look at them through our Lord’s eyes as “helpless and harassed, like sheep without a shepherd”? Ours is the *Good Shepherd*, theirs are false. In a media saturated world, they’re bombarded by more disinformation, fake news, and lies than any generation in history. Their sense of identity is being stripped away by a graceless and unforgiving woke culture.

When Jesus stood on a hill above Jerusalem, he wept. One of my mentors, Francis Schaeffer, said that the watching world needs to see less Christian fist shaking and tears. People should never hear harsh or judgmental statements coming out of our mouths. We should make our appeals based on the gender fluid movement’s non-compassion. The devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy. His lies don’t produce compassion. So, do some sleuthing. Dig up facts where the transgender movement is destroying lives. Listen to the horror stories of those who are de-transitioning. Study the horrific statistics that have come out of Sweden and other European countries who are years further down the road than

we are. If you only go on Google, you'll find a treasure trove of evidence that a culture gone gender mad, is one that is far less compassionate. [**warning:** Google stacks the decks. Articles supporting 'woke' ideology appear first. You will have to go two or three pages in to get other views]

3. Appeal to social justice.

Millennials and Gen Zs are passionate about social justice. Good for them? Ask your next generation loved ones to explore with you the social justice inequities inherent in the trans movement. Start with the Johns Hopkin's pioneer in gender reassignment surgery, Dr. John Money, whose Frankenstein-like experiments led to his human test subjects committing suicide. Take a close look at the huge money being made on sex-reassignment surgeries on children as young as pre-school. See how Big Pharma is getting in on the bonanza. The *Wall Street Journal* is only one of many whistle blowers on the horrors of mutilating kids: [Transgender Surgery Isn't the Solution](#).

Read the 2011 study at the Karolinska Institute that shocked Sweden and the world. Like the U.S., Sweden dove pell-mell into gender madness and transgender surgeries, mostly on teen girls. Like Dr. Frankenstein's creation, the monster escaped from the laboratory. Depression, regret, and suicide soared in the aftermath of these surgeries. The same horror stories are beginning to appear in the U.S. You can find them if you look.

Talk about the grooming of our children by schools and social media culture influencers. A 2018 headline in *Psychology Today* asks the question, [Why Is Transgender Identity on the Rise Among Teens?](#) The article cites a national study by Brown University of 250 families with trans teens. Researchers discovered that 80% of the families saw none of the usual signs in their children that would indicate future transgender feelings. Brown University's study concluded that teen gender beliefs are more often shaped by cultural influencers than biological instincts. Brown's research team coined a new term: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria. The evidence is conclusive that cultural forces are grooming our kids to grab their surfboards and take a ride on the trans tsunami.

Compare this to the enlightened view of children when it comes to our court system. Years ago, we understood that adolescents and teens didn't have fully developed brains. Their less developed minds were subject to making rash decisions. As a result, minors are no longer held to the same accountability for their decisions as are adults, nor are they subject to the same punishments. Progressives applaud such enlightened views. Yet many of those same progressives believe that adolescents and teens can make gender identity decisions, and undergo radical surgeries that will change their lives forever. Wouldn't social

justice demand that school officials, psychologists, and medical doctors can't recommend or perform such measures until the gender confused kid becomes an adult? If you want to see my unlikely allies on these thoughts go to the website: Gays Against Grooming.

Finally, talk about what the transgender movement has done to women's sports, making a shambles of Title IX and threatening the Olympics. One of the major issues in feminism is the conflicting values of LGBTQ rights and women's rights, especially on the sports field and in women's locker rooms.

4. Fight the battles that really matter most.

Sometimes gentle dialogue isn't enough. We have to stand up and speak more forcefully, even in the public square. And we should do so, as St. Peter says, "with grace and respect." [1 Pet. 3:15] But here are three areas where we have to draw the line: 1) When we are required to go along with the lie. If someone says he/she/they is a gender you know they aren't, you can be respectful, but, as a Christian, you can't agree with their false reality just to make them feel safe. 2) If your children or grandchildren are being groomed, you must stand up for them. Make your voice heard at the principal's office or school board meeting. Do it graciously, but firmly. Be the boy who let the emperor know he had no clothes. You won't be popular. There's a good chance you will pay a price. If you can't make a change, pull your children out of the school. If you are a grandparent, offer to pay the tuition for your grandkid's private or parochial school. If your adult children choose to homeschool your kids, help take up the slack where you can. 3) If asked your views, don't be afraid to confess them. Do it humbly, without judgment of those who disagree, but with quiet confidence in your Lord.

5. As naturally as possible, put the spotlight on Jesus.

The endgame isn't winning the argument, or changing the behavior of others. To paraphrase Jesus, "What would it profit you should your children, grandkids, or other loved ones become conservative, heterosexual, capitalist, flag-waving Americans and lose their souls." Maybe you have a loved one who is gender confused, gay, lesbian, or even in the process of transgenering. Don't focus on that. Above all, don't allow them to think they have to change their behavior to come to Jesus. Let them know that Jesus loves them just the way they are. He died on the cross for them, knowing exactly who they are. Tell them that Jesus is making no other demands of them than that they put their trust in him, and invite him into their life. Then, step back and let the Resurrected Jesus who is in them, transform their lives. A warning: Jesus may have other priorities that are different than yours. You might have

a change in gender identity or sexual preference as Christ's first work in their lives. That might be number ten on Jesus' list. But this is the point: the flesh never has enough flesh to change the flesh. Only the Spirit can transform the flesh. That's why your dialogue with those you love most must always come back to Jesus and his gospel.

A talk given by Dr. Robert Petterson, Founder and President of Legacy Imperative Inc [legacyimperative.org] in his "Sharing Jesus in a 'Woke' Culture" series at Covenant Church of Naples, FL.