**Recap** (2:00-2:10 pm)

Last week, we considered both the creation and contexts of sexuality. Tonight, we begin our study of the corruption of sexuality and our hope for wholeness in Christ. As I mentioned last week, we need to be reminded that our battle in this world is not against flesh and blood, but instead, spiritual powers. Even the most militant people in our lives and in our culture are captives of the Enemy of our souls. We do not hate people who disagree with us. Instead, we love them. We pursue them ought of love to see them set free from the deception of the One who intends to destroy them.

Furthermore, we must humbly reflect on how we, even as followers of Christ, fall short of ideal of biblical sexuality revealed by God. When we fall short and sin against God, we need to be reminded that God intends to forgive us and cleanse of all unrighteousness. We possess bold access to God through Christ. While the gospel calls us to repent (that is, turn away) from our sins and place our faith in Jesus Christ, there are times when we will stray into temptation and need to be disciplined by our loving Father. He disciplines us out of love, not anger or wrath. Christ has satisfied all of God’s just wrath toward our sin by becoming a propitiation for us. We receive this gift by faith. Therefore, we not only do not have to live in condemnation, but we must also not live in condemnation. There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Thus, while it is important to recognize our own sins, repent of them quickly, and reaffirm our trust in Christ, we must no linger or wallow in the guilt that drive us to Christ. It is right and good to flee to Christ for forgiveness at our first awareness of our sin again him. We do not have to wait. We have been set free. Do not buy the lie that says, “You are too bad to come back home to the Father, now.” This is a lie from the pit of hell from the Accuser of God’s people.

So, in terms of those who might habitually practice or demonstrate a commitment to the types of corruption that we are going to look at tonight, do not despise or hate them. Instead, pray for them and demonstrate a love for them that is rooted in God’s love. You do not have to agree with a person’s ideas or practices to pray for them. You do not have to agree with a person in order to be like Christ to them. Will such behavior cause trouble for you? Probably. Religious people who do not truly know the love of God themselves hate it when others show God’s love to people. That is exactly what happened to Jesus as He ministered to the tax collectors and prostitutes among his religious community. Jesus was not afraid offer forgiveness AND call people to repent of their sins (“go and sin no more”), but He did it in such a way that the religious people hated Him for it.

In terms of those of you who are here or watching these sessions and find yourself struggling with some of these corruptions that we are going to look at, I want you to hear that there is hope. There is hope because Christ Jesus lived, died, and rose again to destroy the works of Satan, who wages war against us. Our sinful, fleshly desire can (and must!) be put to death through faith in Jesus and discipleship in His church. You are not defined by your rebellion or your struggle. If you are in Christ, you are a new creation. The old has passed away. The new has come. Turn the eyes of your heart to Jesus, even now, and ask Him to forgive you and have mercy on you. If you have sin to confess, confess it to Him, and He will forgive you. If you need counseling or guidance, PLEASE let me know. We are here as a church to help you grow in your hope in Christ. You are not alone in this fight against your flesh. We will fight alongside you. We all have a common enemy. And thanks be to God in Christ who has won the victory that we could never win in our own strength.

**The Corruption of Sexuality**

***Session #8 – Not Either/Or – Addressing Body-Self Dualism (2:10-2:30pm)***

The aim of this session is to address how body-self dualism springs from a faulty understanding of what it means to be an embodied person and results in approach to sexuality that attempts to divorce our physical bodies (body) from our mental constructs (self).

In our present culture, it is popular to posit a division between one’s conception of personhood and one’s understand of the human body. One of the clearest examples of this division can be found in the debate over abortion. So, for instance, in the debate over abortion, pro-life advocates understand the personhood of a fetus and the physical body of a fetus are inseparably united. Pro-choice advocates, on the contrary, argue that while the physical body of a fetus may doubtlessly be human, the personhood of the fetus is a matter of debate, particularly related to its stages of development, dependence upon another, and desirableness in the world. In other words, pro-life advocates understand there to be a union between personhood and physical body, while pro-choice advocates argue that the physical, humanness of the fetus’ body should not be determinative of the fetus’ personhood. As can be seen in our example, the pro-choice advocate devalues the human body. If a culture is willing to dehumanize the fetus by declaring that “just because a fetus is human that doesn’t mean it is a person” on the basis of its ideas “personhood,” then it will be the mental constructs of self that become determinative for our understanding of the worth and purpose of the human body. Thus, we can see how detrimental a faulty view of the body and the self can be for our society.

Now, to be sure, when we use the term “dualism,” we need to recognize that not all forms of the term are necessarily a bad thing. As public intellectual, Nancy Pearcey has noted, “In the tradition sense, Christianity is dualistic because it holds that there exists both body and soul, matter and spirit. These two substances causally interact with one another, but neither can be reduced to the other. The reality of the spiritual realm is important to defend today because the academic world is dominated by the philosophy of materialism (the claim that nothing exists beyond the material world)… Yet Christianity holds that body and soul together form an integrated unity—that the human being is an embodied soul.” Nevertheless, what we are seeing in our culture is not a Christian understanding of “body and soul” dualism. So, when I speak of “body-self dualism” in this session, I am not speaking of the body-self dualism within the Christian tradition. Instead, I am speaking of the type of dualism that intentional posits a division between body and self where Christianity posits a union between body and self.

Why is it important for Christians to affirm a unity of body and self? To answer this question, we must revisit the categories that I noted last week in our session on “Biblical Sexuality and the Body.” In that session, I spoke of how we are “embodied persons created in the image of God.” In that session, we looked at Genesis 1-2 and considered how being created in the image of God, at the very least, meant that human beings were made to reflect the character of God through dominion on earth, fruitfulness (which includes reproducibility, and the physicality of God’s presence (which is inextricably related to humans being formed and filled by God in creation in humanity, but also pointing to the incarnation).

One of the implications of this three-fold look at the image of God (dominion, fruitfulness, physicality) is that our bodies were created with a particular purpose or end in mind. So, for instance, what is an eye created to do? It is created to see. How about an ear? It is created to hear? Now, let me ask you, if an eye could not see or an ear could not hear, would you describe that eye or ear as “good?” Of course, not! Why? Because it is not fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. In other words, because of bodies are “part of nature,” they also possess a purpose. Our bodies are ordered to a particular end. We could do through every system in our body with this exercise and we would come to same conclusion: certain purposes are inscribed in our bodies. And this is no less true for our reproductive systems. Even biological scientists who do not believe in God or creation must admit that our cosmos possess an inescapable order.

If it is the case that our bodies reflect a particular purpose or end that is biologically irrefutable, then how is it that people can arrive at different conclusions about how our bodies ought to be used? The answer to this question is found in an understanding of body-self dualism that separates physical/material reality from mental constructs about personhood. In other words, if one can separate “who they are” from “what they are” (e.g., their embodied state) or argue that “what they are” is determined not by their bodies but their mental constructs, then they can justify their preferred behavior in the body because the body’s unmistakable purpose is not factored into their action. When people allow one aspect of their being, whether be physical or mental, to become the essence of their personhood instead of the affirming a unity of the physical and mental in one person, people will be able to justify nearly any behavior and the results will be devastating on a personal and a societal level. Furthermore, people tend to only make an argue for this separation of body and self when it is convenient. As one writer noted, “Think of your own experiences as a human being: your body is not just a ‘shell’ in which you dwell. Your body is not just a body. You body is somebody—you! Through the profound unity of your body and soul, your body reveals or ‘makes known’ the invisible reality of your spiritual soul. The ‘you’ you are is not just a soul ‘in’ a body. Your body is not something you ‘have’ or ‘own’ alongside yourself. Your body is you. Which is why if someone broke your jaw in a fit of rage, you wouldn’t take him to court for ‘property damage’ but for personal assault. What we do with our bodies, and what is done to our bodies, we do or have done to ourselves.” (Christopher West)

Now, at this point, someone might be inclined to say, “Yea, but my body is capable of doing a lot of different things. In fact, some of those things are quite pleasurable. If I can do it, why shouldn’t I do it? Shouldn’t the purpose of my body be determined by me?” Let me answer this question by illustrating the danger of prioritizing personal preference over intended purpose. Imagine, for moment, that you are rushed into the ER later this evening with appendicitis. An emergency surgery is required to address your situation. As you wait in the OR before receiving anesthesia, a lady walks in to talk to you about the proceed. She tells you that she is the surgeon on call this evening and that she will be performing the surgery. As she describes the procedure, she starts to point to the tools that she will use to remove your appendix. Everything seems fine until she picks up a ball-peen hammer. You ask her, “Doctor, what is the ball-peen hammer going to be used for?” She answers, “Oh, I use the ball-peen hammer to access the abdominal cavity and remove the appendix.” A bit concerned, you follow up, asking, “Doctor, pardon me for asking, but why don’t you use a scalpel instead?” To this, the doctor responds, “Well, while one is dull and the other is razor sharp, they are both made of high carbon steel and fit in my hand. I can gain access to the abdominal cavity and remove the appendix with both of the tools. I guess the decision to use the hammer instead of the scalpel just comes down to my preference.”

How many of you are going to let that surgeon operate on you tonight? None of you are. Why? Because while she might be technical right about her ability to open you up and remove your appendix with a ball-peen hammer, you know that is not what it is designed to accomplish. Just because it is possible to do something, that does not mean that one should do it or desire to do it. We do not want to live in or promote a world that disregards the purpose for which things were made. I’m sure that it is possible for someone to pick up broken glass from the kitchen floor with their eyelids, but it is not advisable. In fact, it would be very detrimental. To deny and ignore purpose can lead to devastating results. So, why would we allow this with sexuality or think that it will be any different?

***Session #9 – A Perversion of Power (2:30-2:45pm)***

The goal of this session is to address how a misunderstanding and misuse of power has resulted in all sorts of sexual abuse. As we reflect on what it means to be created in the image of God, we remember that part of what it means to bear the image of God is the exercise of dominion. Dominion and authority are good things. They were created and given by God. Yet, the tendency of our flesh is to take a good thing and use it for bad things. That is what happens when people pervert the idea of power and misuse it in order to harm others. This is particular true in the case of sexual abuse.

2 Samuel 12:1-14

1 The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

4 “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”

5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

7 Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’

11 “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’ ”

13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die.”

Who gave David power? The LORD. Why did the LORD give David power? For God’s glory and the good of the people. In the case of Bathsheba, how did David use his power? For the indulgence of his flesh and the harm of his people. David took a good thing (authority and dominion) and used it for an evil end. Thus, God disciplined him for it, because David misused what God had given Him.

When we think about the types of authority and dominion that God has given us in our spheres of influence and leadership, we must recognize that all such authority and dominion is a delegated authority and dominion from God that He intends for us to use for His purposes, not our own.

***Session #10 – The Problems of Promiscuity (2:45-3:00pm)***

The goal of this session is to consider how the sexual revolution has resulted in the devastation of our relationships.

At the core of the sexual revolution was the idea that sex could be isolated from covenant relationship before God and others. Sex was simply an act to be enjoyed in the body. It was an expression of an idea of love that was rooted in culture instead of God’s design. As I mentioned last week, two of the cultural developments that aided the sexual revolution were the creation of the birth-control pill and the right to abortion. With the potential for procreation removed from the picture of the sexual relationship, individuals could seemingly live unburdened of responsibility and sleep with whomever they desired. All of this was touted as freedom, yet, what the movement did not realize (or failed to acknowledge) is that one cannot separate the action done in the body from the impact that it has on a person’s soul. To put it another way, while the claim was that the sex of sexual revolution came with “no strings attached,” the aftermath demonstrated that there was simply no such things as “no strings attached” sex.

As you can likely already see, the problems of promiscuity are inextricably related to body-self dualism that we considered at the beginning of our sessions. The perpetuation of body-self dualism in the area of sexuality has led to the argument that “what you do with your body sexually need not have any connection to who you are as a whole person.” (NP, 27) Yet the connection between body and person is inescapable. God created sex not only for our pleasure but as an expression and physical actualization of union between one man and one woman in the context of marriage. To quote Tim Keller, “Sex is God’s appointed way for two people to say reciprocally to one another, ‘I belong completely, permanently, and exclusively to you.”

Within that context of marriage, man and woman, before God and others, commit themselves in vows to one another. There is a promise being made. A promise that is far more important and consequential than the promise that you make when you tell a bank that you will repay the mortgage or the car loan. It is a promise to God, before God, and to another bearer of God’s image. It is only this context of promise that the power act of sex can be contained. For, it is only here that the act is safe, because of how the act is intended to function.

Now, what do I mean by “how the act is intended to function?” I mean that God’s design in the body is reflected in the ways that our bodies respond to the sexual act.

Let me explain. God has so ordered our bodies to be interconnected with our person that when we engage in a sexual act, hormones are released that bind us to the person with whom we are engaging in the act. Hormones like oxytocin (primarily in women, which has been called the “attachment hormone” and vasopressin (in men, which has been called the “monogamy hormone”) because of the way that they are released and create feelings of attachment to others. This is true of nursing mothers with the babies, and it is true of people who are engaging sex. In other words, God has written biochemical attachment into our bodies for sex. And, as a result of this, when we engage in so-called “no strings attached” sex, we are actually lying to ourselves, but we are, in reality, creating a chemical bond to others (NP, 127). God made us to bond with those with whom we have sex. Could it be that the apostle Paul had some awareness of such a bond when he wrote 1 Corinthians 6:18?

Now, since that is biochemically true in our bodies, it makes sense that the only context in which it is right and good to make such connection is the context of marriage. Otherwise, we are simply going around making promises with our bodies to people that we do not intend to keep nor can keep because we have not committed our lives to them. And when we do this, the results are devastating.

Our brains were wired for intimacy, but when we circumvent intimacy in favor for promiscuity, our brains and bodies get sick. As Anne Maloney put it, “It is no coincidence that the top two prescribed drugs at our state university’s health center are anti-depressants and the birth-control pill.” We were not made to hook up. We were made to bond. We were made to know and be known (Note that when the sexual act is mentioned in Bible, it is often described as spouses “knowing” one another – Genesis 4:1. The term *yada* carries connotations of a deep, personal way of knowing). And the context for such “deep knowing” is marriage, where a promise before God and others is made, an anatomical union of body is promoted, and the potential of a family is present.

***Session #11 – An Invisible Drug Epidemic (3:00-3:15pm)***

The aim in this session is to expose the darkness of pornography and its impact on individuals and society. Last week, we looked at Romans 1, where the apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.” For centuries, this passage has been rightly understood as a denunciation of homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle in society and before God. In no uncertain terms, Paul explicitly addresses and denounces the “shameless acts” of those who “gave up natural relations” with the opposite sex and “received in themselves the due penalty for their error.” Paul tells us that God “gave them up to dishonorable passions” because of this dark exchange.

While this passage rightly addresses homosexual actions, I do, however, believe that it issues a broader warning about sexual immorality that should be headed by all, especially considering our current existence in a pornified-world. Hardly anyone can live unaffected by pornography in our day. From the magazines at our children’s eye level in the grocery store checkout line to the potential sewer pipe of internet connectivity that we carry in our pockets and purses, the ubiquity of pornography plagues our society.

For decades, many argued that pornography was harmless. Like the arguments bolstered in favor of the sexual revolution, pornography use was claimed to be safe. Yet, in more recent days, as brain scientists have started studying things like neuroplasticity (“Neurons that fire together, wire together.”) it has become obvious that pornography is enslaving and punishing our society. From the dehumanizing exploitation and harm of men and women in the porn industry to the fundamental devaluing of sexual intimacy in marriage to the porn-induced physical, emotional, and psychological issues facing thousands of people, we are learning that we do not consume pornography; pornography consumes us.

Returning to our consideration of body-self dualism, “pornography tears apart what is meant to be integrated, treating the body as an object or instrument for one’s own purposes” (NP, 125). Furthermore, the way that pornography depicts sexuality is skewed from real sex in a real marriage. Consider these statistics, “In a content analysis of best-selling and most-rented porn films, researchers found that 88 percent of analyzed scenes contained physical aggression,” with most of the victims being women.” The result was that “those who watched mainstream pornography ‘were more likely to say they would commit rape or sexual assault (if they knew they wouldn’t be caught)” (NP, 125).

How about this one? The average age that a boy first encounters pornography is 11 years old. Or this one? Roughly 75% of parents surveyed in a British study believed that their kids had never seen pornography. Yet, more than half of those kids had seen it. One pornography website, in particular, is visited more frequently than eBay, Walmart, Instagram, NetFlix, Twitter, and ESPN. Pornography is a $97 billion global industry. I could spend the rest of the evening providing details like this, but I won’t. The point is to awaken us and expose the darkness of pornography to the light.

People might argue, “But who is really getting hurt? The people who are participating in pornography are doing so because they want to.” Or, “Isn’t it better for me to watch pornography than to go out an actually have sex with someone?” Here’s the thing: people are harmed by pornography. The participants in it, the producers of it, and the consumers of it. In terms of participants in it, there are near countless testimonies of former participants who have walked away from it because of the mental and physical abuse that they experienced. This is not to even mention the fact that many “participants” in pornography are not willfully doing so. Many are victims of sex-trafficking. They struggle severely with depression, being more prone to substance abuse and suicide. This is true of many involved in the production of pornography as well.

In terms of those who consume pornography, there is a physical and emotional toil. Men who watch pornography are twice as likely to divorce. Other research has demonstrated that porn actually shrinks the brain. There is also compelling evidence that pornography is addictive (like a substance) given how the hormones in the brain react to the stimuli of pornography. One example of this is porn-induced erectile dysfunction which is when an otherwise healthy male is no longer able to have sex with a real women because porn has so warped his understanding of sexuality and the nude form that he is no longer “turned on.”

All of this is to say that when we remove sexual arousal and consummation from its covenantal context of monogamous, heterosexual marriage, we exchange “natural relations for those that are contrary to nature.” God did not intend for our sexuality to be synthetically consummated in front of a magazine, stage, or screen. Sexuality is not a commodity for the consumption of the masses. Such an understanding of sex is contrary to nature. When this truth is exchanged for the lie, sex is no longer about our worship of God, but rather, it is about our worship of sex. And as we pervert God’s natural design for sexuality, we begin to receive in ourselves the due penalty of our error.

Pornography is a drug that is short-circuiting our brains, and sadly, it is everywhere.

***Session #12 – An Assault on Human Nature (3:15-30pm)***

The aim of this session is to deal with homosexuality in biblical terms that speak clearly and redemptively without compromise.

In 1 Corinthians 6:10, Paul uses some unique terms to describe homosexual behavior. In particular, he used the term *malakoi,* which outside of a sexual context, can be translated as “soft” or “effeminate.” In a sexual context, the meaning points to the “passive partner in the homosexual act.” The other term Paul uses is *arsenokoitai,* which is a compound Greek word, composed from the words arsen (man) and koite (bed). It could be literally translated as “bedders of man.” The term is only used twice in the New Testament; here in **1 Corinthians 6:10** and once in **1 Timothy 1:10**.

Why am I going to such efforts to deal with these words in this context? It is because some people attempted and are continuing to attempt to say that Paul only has a particular type of homosexual relationship or action in mind when he condemns homosexuality. They are arguing that Paul is more concerned with the disruption of relationships by temple prostitution, wherein one partner in the sexual act would be subservient to the will of another, like that of an adult male with a male child (I.e. - pederasty). They are arguing that Paul’s condemnation of “homosexuality” does not apply to the “consenting, loving adult relationship.” Sadly, however, such an interpretation does not take into consideration Paul’s other comments about homosexuality.

Last week, we spent a great deal of time considering the testimony of God’s Word about sexuality. Specifically, we looked at Romans 1 and how the apostle Paul taught us that when God is rejected the result is a rebellion that is contrary to our created nature. To illustrate the “contrary-to-nature” results of rebellion against God, he points to sexual acts wherein men abandon women and burn with lust for other men. The same was true of women.

In Romans 1:26-27, Paul defines what he means by homosexuality in no uncertain terms. He writes, “This is why God delivered them over to degrading passions. For even their females exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. The males in the same way left natural relations with females and were inflamed with lust for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error.” It is clear from this passage that Paul does not simply restrict homosexuality to the active and passive relationship between an adult male and child boy in the context of temple prostitution.

Now, obviously, there will be many that reject the authority and nature of Scripture, thus rejecting the New Testament’s condemnation of homosexuality. Yet, those who would seek to argue that one can live a consistent Christian life while engaging in homosexual activity will be hard-pressed to find support for their lifestyle. As one leading gay Dutch scholar, Pim Pronk, has stated, “Wherever homosexual intercourse is mentioned in Scripture, it is condemned. Rejection is a foregone conclusion... the biblical texts that deal specifically with homosexual practice condemn it unconditionally.” Or as Kevin DeYoung, an evangelical author has put it bluntly; “The Bible says nothing good about homosexual practice.” My point here is to stress the unanimous voice of Scripture on the matter. There is no compelling argument from scripture to support homosexual behavior, just as there is no compelling argument from scripture to support sexual immorality (like pornography or lust), adultery, idolatry, theft, greed, drunkenness, abuse, or swindling.

The way forward is not to soften or compromise on the nature of sin. Imagine a doctor who practices medicine with a philosophy of care that says, “I simply refuse to give my patients any bad news.” Well, that’s all fine and good until you are sick with a curable form of cancer, but your doctor doesn’t want to tell you because he knows it will upset you. No, I want (like you) the doctor who is going to come in that room, tell me the truth, and get to work fixing the problem. Like good, caring, loving doctors, we cannot compromise on the nature of sin. We must be convictionally clear about sin and God’s condemnation of it. We must be clear about sin’s end! For, as we saw first in this passage, if we are not convinced that perpetually living in sin results in eternal separation from God under His wrath, we will most certainly lose the gospel!

But that is an exceedingly religious argument! How does this relate to the idea of the body-self dualism that we looked at earlier? Well, in consideration of the body, from a biological perspective, it ought to be obvious how the body-self dualism falls short. As ethicist Oliver O’Donovan stated it, “To have a male body is to have a body structurally ordered to loving union with a female body, and *vice versa*.” Or as Nancy Pearcey puts it, “To engage in same-sex behavior, then, is implicitly to say: Why should my body inform my psychological identity? Why should the structural order of my body have anything to say about what I do sexually? Why should my moral choices be directed by its *telos*? The implication is that what counts is not my sexed body but solely my mind, feelings, and desires. The assumption is that the body gives no clue to our identity; it gives no guidance to what our sexual choices should be; it is irrelevant and insignificant.”

In other words, same-sex behavior is a denial of the body in favor of the mental construct, and it does not lead to human flourishing.

***Session #13 – A Denial of Human Embodiment (3:30-3:45pm)***

The goal of this session is to explore how transgenderism is fundamentally at odds with human nature and ultimately unsustainable leading to great distress and damage.

In order to consider transgenderism, one must attempt to define what we are actually talking about in the conversation. The term “transgenderism” or the idea of “trans” is used by a lot of people in a lot of different ways. For some, the terms “trans” is applied to anyone who violates gender stereotypes. So, for instance, some women may feel more drawn to activities that are stereotypically related to men (i.e., tomboys). Or, some men may not have the slightest inclination to sports or hunting, and thus they call themselves “trans.” This is one end of the spectrum, but the other end is where a biological male or woman “transitions” through hormone treatment and surgery to present themselves as the opposite of their birth-assigned sex. And, as you would imagine, there is a host of people and perspectives in between these views.

At the core of transgender ideology is the denial of human embodiment. In other words, feelings constitute reality. Thus, in our body-self dualism discussion, the self is ultimate in transgender ideology. Now, while it might be tempting to write off the role of one’s feeling in the conversation of identity, when need to at least aim to be sympathetic in our conversations and debates with those who are struggling with gender identity issues. In other words, not everyone who falls within the conversation of “trans” is someone who is willfully thinking such thoughts. Many would say that they hate the tension that they feel between their physical body and their mental self. In fact, for a significant period of time, gender dysphoria was considered a form of mental illness in the medical community. Yet, due to social pressure, this designation has been removed.

What does the Bible have to say about this topic? Well, in one sense, the Bible does not directly address transgenderism because it was not really a concept like what we currently see in our present culture. The acceptance of the binaries for gender (male & female) were universally accepted by every culture and religion since the beginning of recorded history. To suggest that a person could “identify” as something between male and female is simply not ancient category supported by history. On the other hand, given that the Bible only presents the binary of male and female and it understands those reality as fixed (that is, unchangeable) by creation, there is a very real sense in which the Bible unequivocally rejects transgenderism as an acceptable idea.

I do, however, think that it is important for Christians to think more deeply about gender stereotypes and the potential damage that such thinking could do in society.

**The Hope for Wholeness**

***Session #14 – “Why Does He Eat with Sinners?” (3:45-4:00pm)***

The aim of this session is to frame our engagement with all sinners in terms of Jesus’ mission and example. To quote Timothy Tennet, “All persons—particularly those with same-sex attractions and gender dysphoria—need to know Jesus Christ’s radical, unconditional love for all people. We must first embrace people as image bearers, and only after that can we address other issues that distance someone from the will of God.”

Matthew 9:10-13

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Luke 19:1-9

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

9 Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

***Session #15 – “And Such Were Some of You” (4:00-4:15pm)***

The aim of this session is to remind us of the hope of the gospel in all situations.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Gospel Conviction

Gospel Clarity

Gospel Confidence

What our culture decides to believe about sexuality changes nothing about the reality of the Gospel. Sin is still sin! Christ is still Savior! Sinners will still be saved! And all that is wrong will one day be made right and submissive to Christ as “every knee bows and every tongue confesses that He is Lord!”

***Questions and Answers (4:15-5:00pm)***