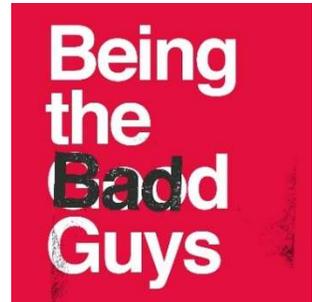


## Week 2: Binary Beige vs. Diverse Rainbows

NCAC Adult Sunday School

September 26, 2021



**Key Resource:** *Being the Bad Guys: How to live for Jesus in a World That Says You Shouldn't* by Stephen McAlpine (The Good Book Company, 2021)

### LAST WEEK:

---

- Over the past several decades Christianity has moved from being generally seen as a force for good to being something that was tolerated to being seen as wrong and even dangerous.
- This trend has its roots in the Enlightenment (when tradition became more broadly questioned) and the Romantic Era (when each individual's feeling became his or her standard for how to live).
- Thus, we've been steadily moving away from a time when our identity was defined by external standards to now being encouraged to discover our own identity from within.
- Today the world celebrates a new religion built on commitment to individual autonomy and celebration of personal authenticity at any cost. Ultimate meaning is now found in the self.
- Some suggest we're now living in a Post-Christian World, one that has been inoculated against the Gospel and that has its own methods of "evangelism" and "discipleship" to counter our own.
- Yet, when following Christ, Scripture calls us to not be surprised or frustrated if the world rejects us or the Gospel. Rather, we should rejoice in the fact that eternal glory awaits us!

**Overall Course Goal:** *"This book isn't about how to stop being the bad guys; it's about how to be the bad guys. It's about how to be the best bad guy you can be—to refuse to be surprised, confused, despairing and mad about it, and to find a way to be calm, clear-sighted, confident and even joyful in it."* (Bad Guys, p. 11)

**Today's Class Goals:** *Gender—Binary Beige vs. Diverse Rainbows*

- What is our culture's current teaching on gender?
- What does the Bible have to say about gender?
- As Christians, how should we respond to what's going on around us?

*"We need to begin by remembering that we're not simply talking about 'issues' here, but people: precious individuals, each created and loved by God. Most of them don't have a strong political agenda or any desire to fight in a 'culture war'; they are simply trying to cope with feelings that may well cause them great distress. Too often they are being damaged in the crossfire of what can become a very heated debate... let's ensure that we try to understand what they are experiencing."* (Vaughn Roberts, *Transgender*, The Good Book Company, 2016)

## WHAT IS OUR CULTURE'S CURRENT TEACHING ON GENDER?

---

The binary world of male and female, in which sex and gender are matched, is now seen as wrong and harmful. The world today recognizes a wide variety of gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, and romantic orientations. This “liberation” of sex and gender is seen as a way to end centuries of abuse and damaging restraint by the church, other institutions, and our culture in general.

*“Sex is what we are ‘assigned’ at birth, generally a binary: male or female. But note it is ‘assigned.’ It is given to you at birth when you are powerless to say otherwise...If the bad news is that sex is assigned, then the good news—the ‘gospel’ if you wish—is that you’re now free to determine your gender. Your gender is the real you and cannot be imposed externally by hostile and controlling narratives.” (Bad Guys, p. 48)*

## SOME DEFINITIONS\* RELATED TO GENDER:

---

**Gender Identity** is a person’s innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to their sex assigned at birth. Some have identified over 100 genders. Note that gender identity is different from sexual orientation. A few examples of gender identity:

**Agender:** A person who identifies as having no gender.

**Bigender:** A person whose gender identity is a combination of two genders.

**Cisgender or Cis:** Someone whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth.

**Genderfluid:** A person who has a fluid, unfixed gender identity. A person who is gender fluid may feel more like one gender some days and another gender other days.

**Pangender:** A person having multiple gender identities.

**Gender dysphoria:** Used to describe the experience of discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between a person’s sex assigned at birth and their gender identity.

**Gender expression:** How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender. These external manifestations may include name, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics.

**Gender reassignment:** Another way of describing a person’s transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.

**Intersex:** A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female.

**Non-binary (or Genderqueer):** May be used as an umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn’t sit comfortably with “man” or “woman.”

\*Note, many of these definitions come from Stonewall and GLAAD, both LGBTQ rights organizations

**Sexual Orientation:** A person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and who is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman, not a gay man.

**Trans/Transgender:** An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender man:** Someone who was assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shorted to trans man or FTM, an abbreviation for Female-to-Male.

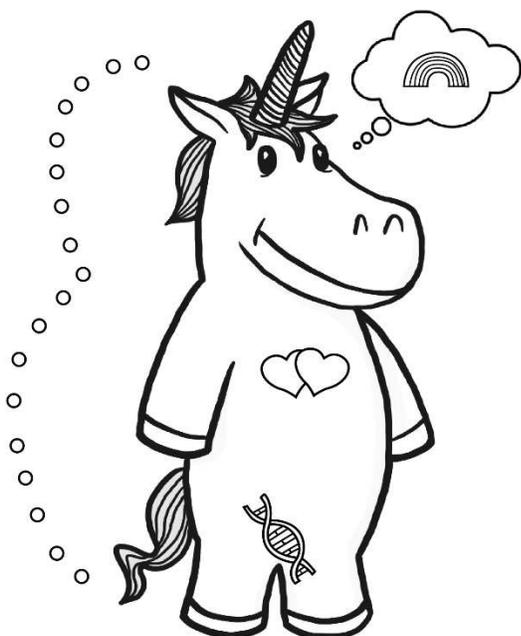
**Transgender woman:** Someone who was assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman or MTF, an abbreviation for Male-to-Female.

**Transitioning:** The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

**Transsexual:** This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.

# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



## Gender Identity

Female/Woman/Girl  
Male/Man/Boy  
Other Gender(s)

## Gender Expression

Feminine  
Masculine  
Other

## Sex Assigned at Birth

Female      Male      Other/Intersex

## Sexually Attracted To

Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)

## Emotionally Attracted To

Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)

To learn more go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan  
Illustration by Anna Moore

*“We assumed that sex and gender was a sidebar discussion, unimportant to questions of deep identity. These minor topics could be set aside while the deeper matters of religion and spirituality were discussed...It turns out that these matters are deeply spiritual and central to the quest for meaning. Gender identity is now the deepest, most important reality about the self—central to the new secular religion.”* (Bad Guys, p. 49)

**How have you encountered some of these non-binary views on gender?**

**Is there anything in our culture’s current views on sex or gender that might involve truth? If so, what?**

## **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT GENDER?**

---

*“Past conflicts about the opening of Genesis focused on the literal understanding of creation. Were there six actual days or is that a literary device? Recently, the argument has shifted from science to philosophy...As a result, the first chapters of Genesis are in the firing line once again, this time because of their binary understanding of God’s created order.*

*“It is not merely humans who are created binary; the whole of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 is binary. We see equal opposites everywhere: light and dark; day and night; land and sea; earth and heavens; animal and human; male and female; and—most significantly—Creator and creature. The binary nature of male and female is embedded within a binary system culminating in the most binary relationship of all: the one between the God who created all things and the humans he created.”* (Bad Guys, p. 52)

**The Bible teaches that God created just two classes of gender, and our gender is central to our identity:**

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”* (Genesis 1:27)

**The Bible teaches that each of us was designed by God with care, and thus we should accept and be thankful for the body God has given us, rather than wish we had a different body or sex:**

*“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* (Psalm 139:13-14a)

**The Bible teaches that though all men and women are created by God in His image and thus of equal value, God does not want people of one gender presenting themselves as being of the other gender:**

*“A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.”* (Deuteronomy 22:5)

**The Bible teaches that Jesus agreed with the Scripture's binary view of gender:**

*[Jesus] answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?" (Matthew 19:4)*

**The Bible teaches that a binary view of gender is essential for marriage to properly illustrate spiritual truths as intended:**

*"This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:32, following a teaching on the union and the roles of husbands and wives in marriage.)*

**Why should it matter to us that the world is moving away from a biblical view of sex and gender?**

*"Our primary concern is—or ought to be—not that our personal lives will become harder, nor that our children will grow up in a hostile sexual setting, nor even that we might lose our jobs because of our faith. Rather, it is that the rapid rejection of this binary understanding of the world will both destroy and be used to destroy those who have been made in the image of God. It is a rejection of God himself." (Bad Guys, p. 54)*

**The Bible teaches God's wrath is kindled against those who reject His design. What's more, a society that embraces a false view of God's design is itself evidence that God's wrath is already upon them:**

*<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. <sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> 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.*

*<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:21-28)*

**What are the implications of Romans 1 as we consider our engagement with society on this issue?**

**How would you explain to a friend who is suspicious of the Christian perspective on sex and gender why God's creation order is good?**

## **AS CHRISTIANS, HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND US?**

---

*“It is time to recover our confidence that the Christian vision for sex, marriage and family also conveys social and relational goods that can bring blessing and flourishing to all...we need to share what we have found, for the sake of all those whose lives have been hollowed out by pornography, promiscuity, trafficking and by the fruitless pursuit of self-fulfillment. We have been given life for the world and we cannot keep it to ourselves.”* (Glynn Harrison, *A Better Story*, IVP, 2017)

**The first account in Scripture of a non-Jewish person becoming a follower of Christ was of a eunuch, someone who would have had a non-normative experience with their gender:**

*Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. (Acts 8:26-27)*

**What should we learn from this example?**

**The Church has not always behaved in a godly manner when it comes to those who don't see the world as we do, especially in the areas of sex and gender. In what ways has the Church got it wrong?**

**If someone expressing gender non-conformity came into our church, how should we respond?**

**Should we use someone's preferred gender pronouns (PGP) if those pronouns don't align with their sex?**

*“In the same way that Genesis tells us that humans were made in the image of God during creation, the gospel also tells us that believers have been remade in the image of Christ. We draw our identity from Christ. The core of our identity—the place where our meaning lies—does not come from sex or gender but from who we have been declared and recreated to be in Jesus.”* (Bad Guys, p. 57)

**Our culture has made gender our primary identity. As believers, we know our primary identity should be in Christ. How should this truth shape how we live and how we interact with the world around us?**