

# Transgenderism, Reality, Christianity, and Me

Let's start with a bit of my background so that the following discussion can be better put into context. I am a transgendered person. I have been a devout, practicing, sincere evangelical Christian for 28 years. As of the writing of this document I am 54 years old, very happily married to the most wonderful woman, proud father of 4 outstanding children, and a grandparent of 4 amazing kids that I am just crazy about. I have no wish to hide who and what I am and I put this information right up front. I am writing this to summarize what I have learned and to clarify and organize my thoughts on the matter. By no means is this meant to be an exhaustive review of the subject but rather it is intended to map out where I am in my exploration and to open a dialogue. I suppose this document is mostly for me but I do hope it proves useful to my family, close friends, and others trying to understand me and this issue. This is a slightly enhanced version of the original article.

## What is Transgenderism:

The website Wikipedia has the following definition that serves well:

**Transgender** (IPA: /trænzˈdʒɛndə/, from (Latin) derivatives [trans <L, combination form meaning across, beyond, through] and [gender <ME <MF gendre, genre <L gener- meaning kind or sort]) is a general term applied to a variety of individuals, behaviors, and groups involving tendencies that diverge from the normative gender role (woman or man) commonly, but not always, assigned at birth, as well as the role traditionally held by society.

*Transgender is the state of one's "gender identity" (self-identification as woman, man, or neither) not matching one's "assigned sex" (identification by others as male or female based on physical/genetic sex). "Transgender" does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation; transgender people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, or asexual. The precise definition for transgender remains in flux, but includes:*

- *"Of, relating to, or designating a person whose identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender roles, but combines or moves between these."*
- *"People who were assigned a sex, usually at birth and based on their genitals, but who feel that this is a false or incomplete description of themselves."*
- *"Non-identification with, or non-presentation as, the sex (and assumed gender) one was assigned at birth."*

Transgender persons are a visible minority. It is very hard for most transgender people to live openly and function in society without being recognized and persecuted. Finding acceptance from one's family is an insurmountable obstacle for many. The suicide rate amongst the transgendered is approximately 31%. The stigma associated with being transgendered causes severe pain and depression and often leads the affected person on a downward path towards self harm. Denial, doubt, uncertainty, lack of understanding within and from without, lead to a myriad of emotional and mental problems. This leads many to conclude that being transgendered is a sickness. Research especially over the

last 40 years has increasingly shown that this is not a sickness but rather being transgendered is a valid part of the human condition. The sickness comes not from being transgendered but rather from rejection and lack of understanding from within the person and also from society as well. In order to function as any other human being there has to be knowledge, understanding, and acceptance so that we the transgendered can take our place in the world around us. I present this document as a step towards that understanding.

### ***What does nature and medical science show us:***

I would like to make the reader aware of two terms that are becoming more prevalent in the discussion of transgenderism.

Phenotype: Basically this refers to the physical attributes of the body and in particular the genitals. This is classically manifested in the outward appearance of a person.

Genotype: Classically this refers to the DNA structure but is increasingly being used to refer to the internal or unseen aspects of gender including the mind. This is the inward attributes of a person (sense of personal identity).

Medical science has documented numerous cases of disparity between classic phenotype and classic genotype attributes of individuals. Research in these areas has contributed greatly to our appreciation and understanding of the complexity of gender.

### **The Genitals (phenotype):**

There is a prevalent point of view that humans are created either exclusively male or exclusively female. Certainly if this was so then there should be no humans created that break this rule. This of course is not the case. There are the intersexed persons. These are individuals that have the physical genitals of both sexes to varying degrees or no genitals at all. Medical statistics show that approximately 1 in 2500 births is of a child that is intersexed. Once medical techniques advanced to a point where plastic surgery could be applied (approx. 1960), the majority of these children were cosmetically altered to a female presentation. The reason for this is quite simple as it is said "it is easier to make a hole than a pole". This has proved to be a major problem with children that have been altered to a female presentation and grow up with feeling male. The intersexed population shows us that there are various combinations of genitals, genital development, and the lack thereof. This of course implies that although not usual, there are more complex gender classifications than just the binary exclusive male/exclusive female system that we are used to.

### **Genetics (classic genotype):**

Now let's consider the DNA structure as presently understood. Most people have heard of the DNA chromosomes XX for female and XY for males. That is the standard model that is used to support the exclusive male/exclusive female binary model. However, there is much more when one looks further. The standard DNA gender markers become complicated as there can be anywhere from one to five gender marker chromosomes. Typical variants include XXY and XYY as well as all sorts of others. The XO (just a single X) is an example of a person that looks female and typically is sterile, is short in stature, and usually has many other physical development problems (Turners Syndrome).

There are those with the classic male XY markers that physically appear as female (Swyer's syndrome) and (Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome). The same is true of the classic female XX markers and having the physical attributes of a male (de la Chapelle syndrome). However, these are still persons, as are all those with complex DNA gender markers. Again, looking further at DNA research reveals that at present there are several other DNA chromosomes that have sections that have gender implications in the makeup of a person. As medical science progresses it will be interesting to see how complex the DNA gender model really becomes. The point in all this is that at even the deepest physical level that we can examine that gender is not a simplistic binary male/female model.

### **The Physical Brain (phenotype):**

Let's move on to the brain. Brain research is regarded as being in its infancy and most people will agree that we have just begun to explore the inner workings of the brain. So far there are interesting findings as the differences between male and female brains are explored, and in this quest, we have a long long way to go. Also, research has revealed that brain structure is affected by hormones early on in pregnancy, even before the gender traits of the child are developed. Up until the 8<sup>th</sup> week of gestation all fetuses are female in form. It is from this point on that hormones begin the definition of genitals. The hormonal factors that are strongly suspected to begin the formation of gender identity in the brain occur just before this point, somewhere from the 6<sup>th</sup> week on. Research is just beginning in this area and already there are processes identified that support this hypothesis. This means that the gender of the brain is set before the genitals are developed.

Given that there is already such visible evidence of a complex variety of physical development demonstrated by intersexed persons it is most reasonable to expect a similar set of complex variations in brain development as well. Indeed, present leading edge research is beginning to show that there are similarities in deep brain structures between transgendered women and their conventional women counterparts. This also holds true for the transgendered men and their conventional male counterparts. I am excited that as brain research advances that more and more of this complexity will be revealed.

### **Mental Aspects (genotype):**

The mental aspects of a person are directly influenced by the brain. There are several other factors that influence our mental makeup and our mental state but it is important to remember that it is also anchored to our physical makeup. I would like to also point out that there are definitely cases where the sense of gender disparity within a person is one of the symptoms of some other mental problem. In order to understand the cause of the gender disparity in a person then it is reasonable and proper to consult a trained professional with credentials in that area of expertise just like we would do for any other medical condition. Clinical practices have been specifically designed to continually assess, identify, and confirm the underlying cause for a person's sense of gender disparity and to apply appropriate treatment.

Psychiatry has been making advances in understanding steadily over the past 100 years and in particular, the last 30 years. From this standpoint the complexity of the gender makeup of a person was recognized long before the DNA and brain research were developed enough to begin to reveal the depth and complexity of gender. As psychiatry developed there were attempts made to treat all persons affected as if it were some sort of mental illness. It is now recognized that this is not in itself an illness but rather that transgenderism is an expression of the core person. In brief, what at one time was thought to be an aberrant condition given a simplistic binary male/female gender model has been found to be consistent with the physical evidence and a complex gender model. This means that although a very minor segment of the population, and like the intersexed, that transgendered persons are a valid and normal expression of the human condition. The mental aspect of a person is very sensitive and fragile. This is amply demonstrated with persons with mental conditions that cannot be linked to a specific physical cause or a site within the brain. Medical science has a long ways to go yet and every year our knowledge grows. A person with a gift such as art, music or math all have those abilities contained somewhere within the brain yet we are not able to yet determine where or how. Regardless, we do not deny that the abilities exist, the ability is there and that is that. In a similar way, gender identity is embedded in the mental makeup of a person. Given all the physical evidence for a complex gender model and the mental evidence already recognized, it is most reasonable and proper to conclude that the complex gender model applies to the mental makeup of a person as well.

## **Mathematics, Set Theory, and the Human Population**

Mathematical set theory is used to group things into populations.

To belong to a population group an item must meet all the definitions of the group.

If an item does not meet a definition then either the item must be excluded from the group or the definition must be revised to accommodate the item into the group.

Intersexed persons do not fit the classic binary gender definition. Either the definition must be revised or intersexed persons must be excluded from the group called humans (mankind). Of course transgendered persons must be dealt with in a similar manner or excluded from mankind.

## **Summary of nature and medical science:**

In summary, we can clearly see the evidence that physically, genetically, and mentally that we are very complex creatures. As such we cannot be constrained to a simplistic exclusive binary gender model. Our definitions used to describe humans must include all humans. We need to change our gender model to reflect the actual complex reality. I would submit that based on the evidence and the present medical understanding that transgenderism fits well within the context of the intersexed condition although the classic definition of intersexed is based on phenotype characteristics.

Further, I would submit that although unusual, that the intersexed condition is a valid and normal subset of the human condition and needs to be acknowledged as such. Similarly, transgenderism is also deserving of the very same full recognition.

Intersex individuals exist and are full persons in every respect and as such deserve to have their complexity recognized. In the same manner, transgendered individuals are also full persons in every respect and deserve to have their complexity recognized.

All the facts presented so far are easily found on the internet using standard search techniques. I ask the reader to research and learn and not to just take selective sites that I could offer. Such a search would bypass any bias on my part and leave the reader to consider the reliability of the sources for themselves. I am confident that the summary of the facts as presented will be amply validated.

*Here is a list of keywords and phrases that may prove helpful in a search for information:  
phenotype, genotype, karyotype, Turner syndrome, Klinefelter syndrome, gender identity, genetics of sex,  
transgender, transgenderism, chromosomes, intersex, gender dysphoria  
This is just a brief list presented as an aid to get the search started.*

## **Gender Identity from a biblical perspective:**

Before we begin I would like to take a moment and remind the reader that scripture has been wrongly interpreted in the past when considering scientific research. One notable example is that Galileo (early 1600's) and Copernicus (late 1500's) were both threatened with excommunication from the church for their belief that the earth was not at the centre of the universe. According to the understanding of scripture at the time their scientific research was regarded as heresy. In 1992, some 500 years later, Pope John Paul II apologized for the interpretation of scripture in light of the undeniable scientific evidence. Of course great caution must be exercised when evaluating scripture in the context of scientific evidence. But, the evaluation must take place and a fair and reasonable interpretation must be made based on the facts. Please keep in mind that the order of the solar system, the existence of galaxies, the existence of atoms and thousands of other things illuminated by science have always existed in God's creation, even when we were unaware of them. Science can only illuminate (make us aware) what has already been created.

I firmly believe that the bible is for each and every person and that scientific fact and the bible are completely compatible. At this point in time the scientific evidence that the intersex condition exists and that gender is a complex attribute is clear. The simplistic binary gender model is not a valid representation of the human condition. Since God is concerned with each individual and there are undeniably individuals that do not fit the classic simplistic male/female model then scripture must be evaluated with those facts in mind. I ask the reader to investigate the facts presented and to honestly and courageously reevaluate their understanding of scripture in this regard. I believe this is a proper approach in keeping with the practice of the Bereans as the apostle Paul noted in Acts 17:11.

I ask that the reader apply the standard principles of bible study.

1. Remember that we work with translations and scripture meaning must be carefully evaluated. Evaluation of the original language words, phrases, and multiple meanings is an essential requirement.
2. Consider the context of the discussion by considering the topic, audience, and historical context.
3. Carefully compare scripture with scripture and do not build a doctrine on a single scripture.

A fundamental Christian view regarding the predominance of the heart is illustrated in the following scriptures. There are many more but this should be sufficient to begin the discussion:

1 Samuel 6:17 **“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart”.**

Psalms 51:6 **Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,**

**And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.**

Jesus taught the predominance of the heart over the outward appearance many times. The focus both in the old and new testaments has always been on what is inside. This should be a guide to how we determine who and what we really are. Once the insides are right the outside should be brought into line to match. If the insides have been created one way then it would be proper to work on making the outside match what is inside.

Another fundamental Christian view is that God made each of us and that God does not make mistakes. We are made exactly as He has seen fit.

Psalms 139:13-16: **For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.**

Ecclesiastes 11:5 (New King James Version)

**As you do not know what is the way of the wind,**

**Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child,**

**So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.**

This scripture clearly states that we do not have a complete understanding of how and why God makes us the way He chooses, to but, that God does choose how we are made, we are not merely happenstance. In the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter of Job, God puts us in our place regarding our understanding of His creation and also of ourselves. God points out that we have yet to scratch the surface of understanding His creation.

Matthew 19:12 (New King James Version)

**For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made**

**themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."**

This particular scripture clearly indicates that God does make persons that do not have the full classic male genitalia. Here we see that the classic binary male/female model is not even applied. I would suggest that this scripture is directly applicable to the intersexed individual and by logical extension, the transgendered as well. Further, we also see that genital modification is clearly discussed and is not condemned at all.

Some would say that the differences displayed in intersexed individuals is the result of sin (the fall of man). The following scripture along with the scriptures already discussed calls that viewpoint into question.

John 9:1-3 (New King James Version)

**Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"**

**Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.**

Please consider this, if a person is born with a deformity do we compel them to just accept that inside and live with it? Or do we do our best to help correct the outside problems? Since the heart matters most, what do we do with a person that is created with an inside nature that does not match the outside? Seems to me that making the outside match the inside is a more proper approach. Another problem, what do you do with a person that is physically stuck between the classic genders? How does one determine which classic gender that they should be assigned to? Who has the authority to do that? Why would it be necessary to assign that person to one gender or the other when in fact they are equally both ..... or .....maybe equally neither? Given that, who has the authority to determine what nature God may have placed in the heart of a person and therefore what right do we have to impose a gender designation upon them simply on outward appearance? There is much to be examined here in our Christian conduct.

Galatians 3:27-29 (New King James Version)

**For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

It would seem from this scripture, especially when taken in context, is that God is less concerned with our gender than He is with our heart.

1 Samuel 6:17 **"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart"**

There is only one scripture in the old testament that appears to forbid dressing in the clothes of other than one's assigned gender. There is no such scripture or reference to this issue in the new testament.

Deuteronomy 22:5 (New King James Version)

**"A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.**

However, when a deeper study of the actual Hebrew and context of this verse is conducted it becomes clear that the translation is lacking in clarity. The verse actually is about women putting on the war instruments of a warrior and a warrior dressing as a woman to deceive the enemy. There are several very good discussions of this scripture done by respected Jewish theologians posted on the internet.

We as Christians understand that the law and ordinances were fulfilled and done away with in Christ. We are no longer under the law. When we look at that scripture in Deuteronomy and the associated scriptures before and after this one, we find that all the rest we do not apply now, so logically, neither should this one. There are no references to this practice in the New Testament.

I am just wondering if Jesus did not feel this was worth mentioning and Jesus looks at us all the same and gender is not an issue with him, then why are we so preoccupied with this issue?

Often the book of Genesis is used to support the notion of a distinct exclusive male/female gender model. For a moment let us please look at this a bit closer.

Genesis 1:26-27

**26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

Here we need to look deeper into the translation and realize a few things.

Regarding gender in the Hebrew language I wish to quote this from a website

<http://www.jewishmosaic.org/verses/view/2>

*A note about gender in translating Hebrew*

*The Hebrew language has two grammatical genders, "masculine" and "feminine." As in other languages with grammatical gender, Hebrew grammatical gender is completely unrelated to "real-life" gender. For example, in Hebrew, a book is masculine; a library is feminine. "Gender" in grammar is merely a convention.*

*Therefore, in Hebrew, the pronoun "he" is often correctly translated into English as "it." Furthermore, God is almost always referred to with masculine language. All of this present problems for translation; the translator must decide what kind of "he" they are dealing with. If the author actually conceived of God as a male entity, then it is accurate to translate the Hebrew "he" as English "he." This is the case, for example, when God is presented opposite a female "Israel." But if the author is presenting a God that is not necessarily "male"—as in some of our present texts—then how do we know whether "he" is really "he," or if it is gender-neutral, or something else? Furthermore, since it would be inappropriate to refer to God or to human beings as "it," we are left in English with a lack of good solutions to this problem.*

### **Gender and the Nature of God**

This website also shows that there has been a long ongoing discussion of the gender nature of God within the Jewish community. Since we are all created in the image of God, including females, then somewhere in God there must also be a female quality.

This would imply that God encompasses both male and female natures and that God is

complex in gender, or at the very least, like the triune nature of God, that our understanding is limited at best. The scripture above has these very implications within it. This may be an uncomfortable thought for many but I do feel that this is an issue that needs scholarly study. If we are to truly get to know more of God we must also be willing to explore the areas that we find uncomfortable.

If the notion of a God having a complex gender nature does not sit well then let's consider the issue from a more conventional point of view. A popular viewpoint is that God is male in nature hence the Father and Son descriptions. A second viewpoint is that we retain our gender identities in our resurrected state. To summarize, God is male, we keep our entire identity including gender. Now consider that we are called "the bride of Christ", we are called to "the marriage supper of the Lamb", Jesus is called the bridegroom, and we are also referred to as "the body of Christ". This raises some troublesome issues. Since we all count individually as well as corporately, then is Jesus marrying a complex gendered bride? And since some of the individuals of the corporate bride are male is Jesus marrying another male? Again, since we all make up the body of Christ does that imply that Jesus is a complex gender being? I would suggest that there is a great need for theological exploration and explanation here. Perhaps in the meantime a simpler and possibly more productive course would be like Paul and admit to how little we really do understand. Maybe the men would do better to learn from the women how to be a bride and perhaps the women also have much to learn from the men's point of view. This of course is all much simpler if we take to heart the scripture from Galatians and put personhood first and put genderhood back in its place as a secondary issue. I just put this forward to start a dialogue because I certainly do not pretend to have all the answers. All I have are a lot of honest sincere questions.

Another aspect that must be considered is a language construct called a **Merism**.

*A merism is a figure of speech, used frequently in the Bible, by which a large single concept is referred to by a phrase that enumerates only two of its many parts, to indicate the breadth of the whole. For example, in Genesis 1:1 we read that God "creates the heavens and the earth." These two parts combine to indicate that God created the whole universe. Similarly, in Psalm 139, the psalmist declares that God knows "my down-sitting and mine uprising," indicating that God knows all that he does.*

The first chapter of Genesis is full of merisms and it is both reasonable and logical to view verse 27 as a merism as well. Intersexed persons exist and the acknowledgement of a merism in this verse regarding gender clearly resolves scripture with reality.

Genesis 2:21-23

**21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.**

**23 And Adam said:**

**"This is now bone of my bones  
And flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called Woman,  
Because she was taken out of Man."**

Let's consider "she was taken out of man" in light of a complex gender model. This would imply that Adam actually had both the male and female nature inside before the woman nature was taken out. Adam was a person of complex gender. I would submit that not all the female attributes were removed. The classic male still has breast tissue identical to a classic female. Maybe this was left as a sign of a deeper connection. Both classic genders share a lot in common. The first classic female came out of a man, and ever since, every person has come out of a phenotype female.

In regards to Adam as mentioned in the first chapter we would be well advised to again consider the Hebrew grammar.

*Adam*

*Adam iterally means "earth creature" and refers to the human being who was created out of the "adamah" (earth). Although this word is sometimes translated as a proper name to refer to the first human being created in Genesis, in our verse it appears as a common noun with a definite article.*

There are many times in scripture that God uses the multiple language constructs to show the depth and complexity of the thought being put forth. This technique is commonly used by pastors and teachers to bring out fuller and deeper meanings of scripture and there is no compelling reason to exclude Genesis.

There is a huge complex area of theology here that is in my view, that has not been adequately explored and needs to be addressed for those of us that do not fit the classic male/female model. The bible is also for the intersexed and transgendered as we also must be part of the "whosoever" and "the world" as stated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John. We are valid persons in God's eyes and we deserve to be acknowledged and included in the exploration of scripture.

Please allow me to summarize to this point.

1. God loves each and every one of us. No exceptions.
2. God is concerned with our heart (inward person) not our outward appearance.
3. God is not concerned with gender when it comes to our place in Christ.
4. God has made us in His image.
5. God has formed each of us exactly as He has chosen. That of course would include the eunuchs and certainly must include the intersexed persons as we cannot deny they exist.
6. God does not make mistakes.
7. There is no scripture that forbids being intersexed, and by extension, no scripture that forbids being transgendered.

Given that God has indeed created humans that are intersexed then God must be the creator of the complex gender condition.

Since God also creates the inward person then God must also have chosen to create transgendered person.

Why would God do this? My suspicion is that God wanted to show that there is no wall between the genders. Other than that, perhaps it is time this subject received some unbiased scholarly attention and we begin to discover what truth treasures are really here.

I would remind the reader that Jesus found fault with the Jewish leaders of the day for their unwillingness to see beyond their fears and prejudices when interpreting and applying the scriptures. God is a complex being, God's creation is marvelously complex, and we are created complex beings in the image of God. We need to move beyond our comfort zone and face the uncomfortable complex issues as fully as the areas that we find so comforting, love and hold dear. I am convinced that God is able to keep us and the Spirit of God is able to lead us and teach us, if we are willing.

## **Some Common Objections:**

### **Transgenderism is deception:**

Let's start with an easy one. If one looks at the issue with the simplistic binary gender model and at the same time focuses on the outward appearance rather than the heart, then, guilty as charged. However, this leaves us in a quandary of what to do with the phenotype intersexed individuals. What biblical standards do we apply and what box do we put them in?

Now let's apply a complex gender model and also apply God's view and look at the heart. It would seem that there would be even a greater deception in not living as God has made us on the inside. Here there is freedom for the intersexed to live as they have been created and there is freedom for the transgendered to live honestly and openly who they are inside. Seems to me that expressing the transgender nature openly is the very opposite of deception. I do know that there is considerable emotional and spiritual damage done to the intersexed and transgendered persons by having to hide their core beings. Forcing themselves to fit into the simplistic gender roles to deceive others in order to be accepted causes anguish, depression and terrible suffering. This I can attest to personally.

Now let's deal with a much harder and a real deception issue. I am referring to a transgender person telling lies or avoiding telling at all in order to cover up or hide their condition and their activities. It is an all too common failing on our part and it is a failing that I will sadly have to admit to as well. This begs the question of why. The simple answer would be that we are wrong inside and that is why we have to hide the wrong behaviour. In light of the discussion so far this is a far too simplistic explanation though for certain aspects this may indeed be applicable. Please, let us look deeper. A transgendered person first struggles with their own personal self identity. The first major challenge is to come to acceptance of one's self. Given the social climate that we have been raised in and our own initial acceptance of the binary gender model by default, we are preconditioned to evaluate ourselves as being wrong, depraved, and a host of other such condemnations. Fear, such a harsh thing, keeps us from believing that anyone would be willing to understand and accept us and indeed there is a huge struggle to accept ourselves. I wonder where that fear and condemnation comes from? Could it be from the enemy of our souls? So, immature as we are, fearing rejection and worse, fragile and in need of so much help, we hide and cover up. Desperation and depression sets in within the internal struggle. We are compelled to be what we are and yet we reject our very selves. Sounds a lot like Paul's lamenting about his wanting to do right and the struggle within doesn't it? Slowly we learn, develop and finally come to some sort of

acceptance of ourselves. The urge to make things right and stop hiding and lying becomes overpowering. This is the stage where we “come out”. We want to be open and accountable. We want to be good, do good, and to be accepted and not have to hide behind a cloak of deception. How much easier and better it would be to have open loving arms to come out to. People, family, friends, clergy that are willing to try and understand and accept the reality of what we are.

### **Transgenderism is confusion:**

Again, if one looks at this from the simplistic binary gender model and outward appearance, indeed it is confusion. But once again, where does this leave the intersexed individual? Where is the biblical compass for this person? I will agree that there is an enormous amount of confusion for the transgendered individual when that person tries to reconcile what is going on inside with a simplistic gender model based on outward appearance only.

When the complex gender model and the notion of the heart is applied a marvelous thing happens and the confusion is lifted. The inward nature of the person now finds clarity, acceptance, and direction. This I know from personal experience.

Now in fairness and for the sake of a complete and open discussion let’s consider the individuals that are in fact not transgendered and the behaviour exhibited is the result of some other underlying issue. Here of course is a true case of confusion that must be addressed. This is a very complex issue that I hope we all can agree is best handled by professionals. Considerable damage can be easily done to a person by treating the individual in the wrong way. To treat a person that is not actually transgendered as if they were is very harmful indeed. But also consider that to treat a truly transgendered person as if they are not is also just as harmful. In order to meet the challenge we first need to acknowledge the existence of both states and the complex gender model. Only then can the correct diagnoses be made and the correct treatment and help applied. Here is where the assistance of properly trained professionals is the most appropriate response. This is no different that what we consider proper for any other physical, mental, or emotional condition. For these reasons I am of the opinion that every transgendered person should have the help of qualified professionals.

### **Transgenderism is rebellion against God:**

Based on a simplistic binary gender model and using outward appearance as the basis of measurement, again, guilty as charged. The case is made, that based on outward appearance, to have a gender identity sense different that one’s genitals is to deny the way God has made you. Again the intersexed individual causes a quandary. This viewpoint places the intersexed person as being born in a state of rebellion. The medical answer has been to make the outward appearance match one classic gender or the other, preferably done as close to birth as possible. This practice has caused untold personal tragedy when the outward appearance selected for the person does not match the inside sense of identity. Further, when the choice is made for the person as a baby and then the person grows up with an identity conflict between the inside and the outside, then the

rebellion is a result of a choice imposed on the person. Clearly the simplistic gender model and outward appearance methodology is inadequate in this case.

Let's apply the complex gender model and look on the inward person, the heart. Now we have a viewpoint that can address the situation of the intersexed. Now we can give the person time to grow and mature and make their own determination based on what is found inside. To extend the notion of the inward person, as the measure to the transgendered as well, makes perfect sense here. I would submit that the true rebellion is in denying that God has indeed made the transgendered person as they are. To be in agreement with God the transgender person would have to accept the heart condition they have been created with. A logical and reasonable extension of that concept is to make the outward appearance line up with the inward reality.

From my own experience, this accepting that God made me this way and He is well pleased with how He has made me has finally brought me the deep inner peace and hope that has eluded me for so long. I now know that He loves me just as I am and He has a plan for the special me that He has created.

### **Transgenderism is immoral and or leads to sexual immorality:**

This is perhaps one of the most hurtful and crippling viewpoints as for many of us, at first look, there seems to be an uncomfortable level of validity to this statement. This viewpoint is one that many of us anguish over when dealing with all the various emotions and feelings going on inside. Many of us fall away and are defeated as there is no help in dealing with this very real aspect of our personhood.

Please allow me, based on research, and on my own personal experience, to try and put this in context.

I have learned that when we finally acknowledge the transgender nature within that we go through adolescence all over again. From personal experience, this is exactly how it feels, and discussing this with others like me, this is their experience as well.

Now let's look at a classic adolescent male and female and consider their growing experience. The boys reach a stage they go girl crazy and the girls reach a stage they go boy crazy. Sexual urges and thoughts emerge and many many times, the young person makes unwise choices based on those urges. Now, do we tell the males to stop being male because of the urges and thoughts? Do we instruct the females to suppress their femininity because of their urges? Certainly not, we mentor them through those stages. Even later on in life, a male found being sexually immoral is not counseled to renounce his manhood, nor is a female under similar conditions counseled to renounce her womanhood. The entire goal is to teach the males how to live out their manhood in an honourable manner. Similarly, teach the females to live out their womanhood in an honourable manner. If I may coin a phrase, maybe our goal should be to mentor and help the transgendered to live out their transgenderhood in an honourable manner.

Pushing us away contributes to our going astray. We want desperately to be included, to belong, to count, to be worthwhile, and to be acknowledged and accepted for who and what we are. I can tell you from personal experience that it is a very painful thing not to be able to share my struggles and successes with my Christian family and community. One more thought please, as a transgendered woman, if I dress as modestly and respectfully as the other women in the church, and I conduct myself decently and

properly as a woman should, then where is the immorality in that? Is it possible that we are using the verdict of immoral as a shield to cover our lack of understanding, our uncomfortableness, and our unwillingness to face the complex issues that God has placed before us? To brand something as immoral is to judge. There are things that need to be judged I agree. The onus is on the judge to consider all the facts, all the evidence, and consider what the scriptures actually say or not say; then to judge fairly. If there is no clear scriptural principle against, and when still in doubt, what is a fair judge to do? I will leave that to the one making the judgment to answer though I feel you get my point. As for the heart of the person, there we have no jurisdiction there to judge, that is between God and the person. Judge the actions, certainly, but do it with honest measures, we know God detests unfair measures. If unqualified to make that judgment, then best to leave it to God and not impede or interfere with that person's walk. All this of course is just common sense Christian conduct. In summary, it's not what we are that is immoral; it's how we use it.

### **Transgenderism is selfish:**

I agree wholeheartedly, guilty, no contest. Now let's look at selfishness. There are two kinds of selfishness. Like so many other emotions, one kind is bad and the other is good and proper. Jesus gave us two commands. The first was to love our God with all our heart, soul and mind. The second he said was like the first, to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. What a strange way of putting it as the command implies the need to in some way to put ourselves first, in other words there is a proper selfishness. It does not take a great deal of effort to think of dozens of ways that we put ourselves first, being selfish, and it is proper. Consider a bible study, that we participate in for ourselves first and foremost, selfish in a good way. Selfish is not necessarily bad. The bad kind is easy enough to discern and I do not feel I need to expand on that. Now let's look at selfishness in regards to personal identity. This is self, this is the proper place to develop self, develop and understand the "I". This is the personal place where only I and God belong. I want to know myself. I want my identity. I need to come to terms with who and what I am. There is nothing improper in this. Indeed to do less would be improper. But what about my family? What about my church? Is it not selfish to be this way when it will cause them discomfort, embarrassment, and confusion? This implies that the principle way I am to live my life is to accommodate the comfort of others first. This means I have to ignore the truth of how I am made and live as if it was not so. Somehow that does not sound honest to me. Maybe if there was a more open dialogue and there was more knowledge then it would be easier for my family, friends, and church to come to terms with the real me. Maybe there would be less embarrassment and confusion when it is all brought out into the light of day and there is finally some attempt at understanding. Maybe when someone sticks up for me and is willing to say that they are proud to know me, just as I am, even when they don't understand it all. Maybe then the social stigma will be erased and I will be free to share my personhood in an unselfish way just like everyone else. Yes, I am selfish, a good and proper kind of selfish. I need to take responsibility for myself. I need to learn about myself. I need to take charge of the direction of my life. I need to do something about myself. I need to develop my personhood in a positive and productive way. There are lots of "I need to" things in the

list. “I need to”, selfish, yes; necessary, indeed yes. Help me to avoid the wrong kind of selfish by getting to know me.

### **Who am I?:**

Like Jesus I will put the question to you. Who do you say I am?

Please consider the evidence that I have tried to summarize here and decide.

The question is posed and can no longer be avoided.

I now know who and what I am.

I am a valid human being created and loved by my creator just as I am.

I am a transgendered person, fearfully and wonderfully created.

I am your neighbour, family member, friend, coworker, and perhaps a member of your church.

I am not ashamed of who and what God has made me.

I am a person responsible to live out the life God gave me in an honest, loving and upright manner.

I am a complex person made in the image of my complex God.

I am worth knowing and having a relationship with.

I am me, I am Doug and I am also Rita.

Please dialogue with me and others like me. I do not claim to have it all figured out.

Consider the issues and questions I have put forward and please make sure your judgments and opinions are supported by facts and solid research and not just feelings. I am not a scholar nor am I a theologian but I have done my best to summarize the issue as best I can. Perhaps you will find it in your heart to get to actually know me or someone like me. Maybe together we can pull down the wall of misunderstanding.

Thank you so much for hearing me out and considering my case.