



# What does God Think? Transgender People and the Bible: An Evaluation

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## Abstract

The transgenders are socially marginalized people who wished participation in various genres of life, but are being constantly relegated to the peripheries of the society. Their sexual identity and individuality are under a permanent threat of getting extinguish in a society which believes on the two biological genders only. They strive for acceptance of the family and society too. When the truth of a hijra discloses in front of family, then family forced for leave the home. Due to the pressure of the family they abandon their parental family and start to live far from the home. People have taken transgenders for granted as if they have no feelings and emotions. Their everyday experience is filled with discrimination, shame and harassment leading to a strong rejection of their identity which further makes them extremely vulnerable to violence, sexual assault, molestation and rape as no cases are reported in police stations. This research paper acknowledges gender does not exist on a binary system. Rather, gender exists on a continuum.

Key Words: Trauma, Discrimination, Social Exclusion, Gender identity, Changing Notions

## Introduction

The world is divided into binary system of gender conformity which forms a stereotype; and anything which disrupts this stereotype is perceived as deviation and consequently leads to social disapproval which results in social exclusion and marginalization. Gender roles are socio-culturally constructed and society always quite unitedly tries to reinforce the binary system primarily through the institution of family (socialization) and society (division of labor on the basis of gender). Human tendency to stereotype and generalize on the basis of the majoritarian believes has been a matter of debate since the time immemorial. The views on the matter of sexual and gender orientation follows the same story. There exist a sense of confusion between the terms sex and gender

and sometimes these are used interchangeably while they are non-synonymous in nature and their meaning can be quite varied as sex refers to biological orientation and gender correspond to sociological one. There exist a multitude of gender combinations but under the guise of social obligations and predisposed norms the system is portrayed as a vague set of binary categories like men and women, masculine and feminine, male and female. Each singular in this binary system has specified roles which may vary from society to society.

Deviating from the binary classification is not perceived as normal and invite sanctions from society against the deviation. However, irrespective of all the consequences certain individuals do not see themselves fitting in conventional binary classification and thus are exposed to a wide range of possibilities. These are labeled as gender non-conformers and more popularly as LGBT community where L and G stand for homosexual category of lesbian and gay while B is for bisexuality and T representing transgender. These all sets are very unique in themselves and also subjected to prejudice of the majoritarian belief. Thus, these groups experience a great deal of challenges as they are not accepted by the society which is driven by strict taboos. The complex interplay of light and shadow will always be present between society and individuals. The accommodation of different types of gender and sexual orientation within the framework of society is a big challenge as social reform has its own pace and for it to reach every single mind it will take a little more time. But with the rise of individualism the trend of respecting one's own choice even if it is completely non-synchronized with the majority, the peaceful and equal environment for the gender non-conformers can be sighted in near future.

### About the Author

Author, Cheryl B. Evans was born and raised in Ontario, Canada. Evans became a writer out of a deep desire to help make the world a kinder and more compassionate place for the LGBTQ community. In a world that seems to do far more judging than embracing when it comes to human diversity, Evans pours her passion into her writing in the hopes of making a difference. She is an LGBTQ ally and transgender advocate and believes strongly in protecting the human rights of transgender persons and helping to educate others. Along with her husband Jim, they have raised two wonderful children, one of whom is transgender.

She became a writer out of a desire to make a difference in a world that seems to do more judging than embracing. She is the author of multiple books aimed at helping to educate others and help support transgender persons and their families. There is even an interactive journal series that includes a book for transgender pre-teens, teens and youthful transgender adults. Connecting with her readers is one of her greatest joys, an enriching experience where her readers often teach her as much as she teaches them. But, knowing that her books have helped people, strengthened families and encouraged people to think differently is what really makes her heart sing. Her love and compassion for all people shines through the pages of her books which readers often say are honest and heartfelt.

## Discussion

For several decades, political and theological debates related to LGBTQA issues have centered around same sex relationships for Lesbian, gay and bisexual people. While an exploration of that topic is important, the volume of faith resources dedicated to it have often excluded reflection on the unique considerations related to gender identity. Cheryl B Evans in her book *What does God think? Transgender People and the Bible* explores a lot of relevant issues of Transgender people and rightly addressed the topic of God's love versus human hate based on single mindedness. Too many people suffer and die needlessly because of religious zealotry that is not supported by an increasing amount of science and Ms Evans offers on perspective that addresses this. It reminds us that we are all deeply cherished, and loved children of God. The title and texture of the book cover draws the reader to learn more of what's inside the thought provoking, full of so much heart, true story. The common thread running through *What Does God Think? Transgender People and the Bible* is unconditional love. It reminds us that we are all deeply cherished and loved children of God. It perfectly sums up the seemingly inconsistent struggle between transgender people, the Christian church, and God. Conflicting views about and it's easy to get confused especially when raising a transgender child yourself, having praised and loved God your whole life, only to be told by some that your child simply is not good enough or is actually possessed by demons. This book dispel fears and gives a good wholesome perspective on the situation. Cheryl ab Evans encourages discussion and provides interpretation of the Bible. It discusses eunuchs in the Bible as passages that show that God is as accepting and as loving toward transgender people as He is towards cisgender people. "Transgender" can refer to any individual whose gender identity (culturally defined as an internal sense of gender) differs in some way from their birth or biological sex.

The term "transsexual" is typically used for those who seek medical assistance to change their biological or birth sex. A significant step in the modern conception of transgenderism was the separation of gender as a social construct from biological sex as a given at birth. To be born female no longer meant someone was limited as a woman according to the expectations of society. As this understanding developed, its fluidity offered significant explanatory power for the transgender experience of gender incongruence (experiencing an internal sense of gender that is at odds with one's birth or biological sex). Even though by definition transgenderism is not the same thing as homosexuality, there is enough overlap between the two that some regard transgenderism as homosexuality by another name. For example, if a transgender individual is biologically male but perceives his identity to be female, and is sexually attracted to men, it would be considered a homosexual attraction for those who see the individual as male. On the other hand, that same person might count it as heterosexual because of the identification as female. But what would be the determination if the transgender individual had undergone a sex reassignment surgery? Our culture does not agree on the answer. Regardless of their inclusion within the LGBTQIA+ initialism, shared political benefits, and the overlap between the transgender and gay communities, transgenderism remains culturally distinguishable from homosexuality, as the former deals with gender identity (identifying as male, female, or other) while the latter deals with sexual orientation (sexual attraction to the same

sex). While the overlap between the transgender and homosexual community is recognized, it is important to remember that those who identify as transgender are not necessarily homosexual. Today “transgender” is typically used as the umbrella term for the myriad of ways in which individuals can experience and express incongruence between their birth sex and their gender identity.

Transgender has been applied to individuals as varied as children struggling with their sense of gender, drag queens, and intersex individuals born with both male and female traits that do not allow easy identification (though for the reason that they were born without a clear birth sex, many intersex individuals will not accept the trans label). Cross-gender behaviour may also cover a variety of expressions ranging from secretly cross-dressing to undergoing sex reassignment surgery. There is no one-size-fits-all explanation of transgenderism, nor a one-size-fits-all response to the pain experienced by transgender individuals. According to Scripture, when God created human beings, He created them “male and female” and blessed their marital union (Genesis 1:26–28; 2:20–25). Later authors of Scripture interpreted this twofold act of creation and blessing to entail moral norms such as the mutual cultivation of intimacy between husband and wife and the prohibition of sexual immorality and divorce (c.f., Matthew 19:4–9; Mark 10:5–12; 1 Corinthians 7:12–20; Hebrews 13:4). The prophet Moses, Jesus the Messiah, and the apostle Paul are united in common witness to the goodness of humanity’s biological complementarity and the moral norms that should govern male-female sexual behavior. Recent decades have witnessed the steady erosion of biblical moral norms governing sexual behavior. As these norms regarding, among others, nonmarital sexual intercourse, homosexual activity, marital fidelity, procreation, and divorce have given way in the broader culture to more permissive understandings, new, more fundamental challenges have emerged to the very notion of biological complementarity itself. This “transgender moment,” as it has been called—in which a person can select a gender identity at variance with their biological sex—requires a biblical and theological appraisal. When Christians think about gender, they tend to go back to the beginning. In Genesis, we find two stories about how things came to be, one of which says “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27, NRSV). If you grew up hearing these stories and living with people who seemed to fit inside these gender boxes, the existence of transgender people might seem to fly in the face of God’s created order.

However, when we look just a little closer at each of these passages, we find a much more complex and beautiful world. For instance, when God creates men and women in Genesis 1, it’s after creating opposites in every other corner of creation--day and night, land and sea, flying birds and swimming fish. Humans, then, are also created in an opposite pair--male and female. But the problem with a literal reading of this text that even though Genesis 1 sets up these binaries, God’s creation exists in spectrums. Genesis 2 gives us a different perspective on the creation story, and here a non-gendered human is created first and then later a piece of the first person, Adam, is made into the second person, Eve. Based on the order of creation in this story, some theologians argue that this passage upholds a structure called gender complementarity. Gender complementarity asserts that God created two fundamentally different genders which have strict corresponding societal roles; in short, men

were created to lead and women were created to follow. We don't have the space here to explore the rich biblical scholarship that has demonstrated the theological and pastoral need for Christian Egalitarianism, but suffice to say these views, even when held with the best intentions, have a consistent history of leading to emotional, spiritual and physical violence against anyone, regardless of their assigned sex or their gender identity or presentation, who does not completely and unwaveringly conform to gendered expectations. Alternatively, moving away from gender complementarity frees Christians up to explore other biblical alternatives for identity, community and relationship--alternatives based on the example Jesus set and called for in his teachings, rather than on gender difference. Shape of reproductive organs, and nearly all other physical characteristics, which makes it hard for every single person on earth to fit neatly inside one culture's categories of man or woman. There is too diversity among transgender and non-binary people when it comes to bodies, personalities, beliefs and experiences. But rather than writing Genesis 1 off as fiction that doesn't match reality, many affirming Christians recognize that the stories set down in this chapter were never meant to catalogue all of creation (in which case, it would just be an encyclopaedia), but rather to point us towards God's power and love. Not every microbe and constellation must be named in this chapter in order to have a purpose and a blessing. Mistakenly, some Christians have suggested that taking the Bible Seriously requires people of faith to stand in opposition to the existence, health and humanity of transgender people. Consequently gender expansive people of all demographics and christian tradition have been made to feel that they must choose between their faith and living a whole, healthy and authentic life. whether you are a ministry leader, the family member of a transgender person or a trans person of faith yourself, this research paper serve as a brief overview of the Bible's precedent for affirming the full inclusion of transgender, non-binary and other gender-expansive people in the full life of christian community.

## Conclusion

Studies show that when transgender people are affirmed and loved, their well-being also benefits. With this in mind, it would be more likely that sin is at play in the oppressive and damaging ways we treat each other, and not in the very fact of someone's existence. In the midst of fear, stress or confusion, it's important to remember that we are invited to pause, breathe and simply observe the work God is already doing. The experiences of gender diversity can be found in nearly every culture throughout recorded human history. Traditionally gender non-conforming people were given communal roles as spiritual leaders, healers, conflict mediators and cultural conduits. In between day and night, we have dawn and dusk; between land and sea we have coral reefs and estuaries and beaches; between flying birds and swimming fish we have penguins and high jumping dolphins, not to mention that uncategorizable favorite the platypus! No one would argue that a penguin is an abomination for not fitting the categories of Genesis 1, or that an estuary isn't pleasing to God because it's neither land nor sea. In the same way, God gives every human a self that is unique and may not always fit neatly into a box or binary. Among cisgender people -- that is those whose gender identities align with the sex they were assigned at birth, or non-transgender people -- there is a wide variety in height, strength, hair distribution, size and shape of

reproductive organs, and nearly all other physical characteristics, which makes it hard for every single person on earth to fit neatly inside one culture's categories of man or woman.

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