

Fluid Family: Redemptive Responses When Family Members Identify As Transgender

Tim Geiger, M. Div.
President, Harvest USA

1. Creation: God's intent for gender

- a. God established two genders *generally* in creation: male and female (Gen 1:27)

- b. God *particularly* assigns a gender to each person he has made (Ps 139:13-16)

2. Fall: Sin and its effects on gender

a. We search for identity and meaning in gender

i. We are meaning-makers

ii. We are worshipers

iii. Identity for us often seems

more
controllable in the
rather than in the Creator

accessible and
created

(Rom 1:19-25)

2. Fall: Sin and its effects on gender

a. Why would someone struggle with transgender?

i. The Tree Model

ii. Over-desire → Temptation →
Death

Sin →

iii. Desires become idols

Idolatry and Gender Confusion

How Desires Become Idols

Love

Good Self-Image

Affirmation

Affection

Security

No pain or suffering

Control

Comfort

Understanding

Intimacy

Disappointment

Discouragement

Despair

“I must have
this...I don't
care what it
takes”

Desire



Idol

2. Fall: sin and its effects on gender

b. Gender confusion and gender dysphoria are ways to try to find *identity* and *meaning* in the midst of adverse circumstances.

2. Fall: sin and its effects on gender

c. How many transgender individuals?

- i. One estimate: 700,000 (2/10
of 1% of the US population)¹
- ii. Social Security Administration:
135,367²
- iii. NY Times: “probably under
1% of adolescents”³

1 *How Many People Are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender?* Gates, Gary J., 2011

2 Social Security Administration, 2015, cited in *The search for the best estimate of the Transgender Population*, Miller, Claire Cain, The New York Times, 06/08/2015

3. nytimes.com/2016/05/18/science/transgender-children.html, last accessed 06/08/2017

3. Redemption: relationship with God

a. Isaiah 55:1-3

b. Romans 12:1-2

c. 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

d. Ephesians 4:17-24

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

- a. What growth in faith and repentance might look like for a gender struggler
 - i. It's a process, perhaps a lifelong one

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

- a. What growth in faith and repentance might look like for a gender struggler
 - ii. Repentance is a twofold process (Rom 2:4)
 1. Turning toward God
 2. Turning away from sinful patterns of thought, behavior, and identity

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

- a. What growth in faith and repentance might look like for a gender struggler
 - iii. Gradual turning away from finding identity and comfort in changing or flexing gender, and turning toward God for identity and comfort

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

- a. What growth in faith and repentance might look like for a gender struggler
 - iv. Turning from patterns of behavior related to gender change or flexing

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

- a. What growth in faith and repentance might look like for a gender struggler
 - v. Avoiding relationships, situations, and venues that might lead to temptation to sin

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

a. What growth in faith and repentance might look like for a gender

struggler

vi. Growth in faith and

repentance

always

involves community

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

b. How to help a family member who
struggles with gender or
identifies as transgender

- i. How family members can help
- ii. How the church can help
- iii. Finding help for yourself

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

1. Actively communicate your love to your family member

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

2. Actively talk about God's love with your family member, and how God's love is meant to transform sinful, distorted worldviews and behavior

(Rom 12:1-2; Eph 4:11-16; Titus 2:11-14)

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

3. Talk with your family member about his or her struggle or transgender identity, but don't make it the subject of every conversation

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

4. Talk about your own disappointment, fear, and need to process your family member's disclosure

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

5. Don't make proof of repentance or repudiation of gender struggle a criterion for your love, or inclusion in the family (but, communicate clearly that unrepentant sin must have consequences)

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

6. Invite your family member to participate in mainstream family activities, as is wise and God-honoring

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

7. Purposefully enter your family member's world and ask questions to understand the development of the gender struggle and/or transgender identity

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

8. Prayerfully exercise patience, compassion, and self-control, realizing authentic change will be a process (and that you, yourself, are a sinner in need of the same grace)

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

9. Set behavioral boundaries meant to protect your family and communicate that sin is destructive

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

i. How family members can help

10. Lovingly live out relational

consequences that are wise and
God-honoring, always
intended to turn your
family member to God,
rather than to punish for failure to
comply with outward
repentance

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

ii. How the church can help

1. Actively provide authentic community that affirms the blessing of relationship and other-care

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

ii. How the church can help

2. Prayer

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

ii. How the church can help

3. Discipleship to help the struggler begin to see the inherent goodness of God, and the power of God at work to heal and transform (Eph 1:16-21)

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

ii. How the church can help

4. Mentoring relationships to help strugglers grow in their practical knowledge of how diversity in expressions of male and female can be lived out in ways that glorify God (Titus 2:2-8)

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

ii. How the church can help

5. Exercising discipline for those who resist repentance, with the prayer that discipline would turn the heart of the struggler toward repentance

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

1. You need time to process this.
Your family member has
already been processing it
for years.

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

2. Prayerfully find two or three trusted friends to help you process your situation

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

3. Ask your pastor, trusted elders, or other leaders in your church to pray with you and help you process your experience of these circumstances

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

4. Appropriately grieve your family member's decisions or struggles, and the impacts they have on you

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

5. Grieve your inability to change your family member's decisions, worldview, or heart

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

6. Be willing to reach out to a trusted counselor for help in processing your fears and emotions

4. Restoration: faith and repentance

iii. Finding help for yourself

7. Realize the Lord is using your own difficult circumstances to change your own heart through this process, as well. Pray for the humility to be changed by him, and to see his love in the process.

Outside resources to help

harvestusa.org

thestudentoutreach.org

215-482-0111



Tim Geiger
tim@harvestusa.org