

Sexual Identity Theft by Pastor Marty

Recently, there have been an increasing number of data breaches and identity thefts taking place in our country. Some have been through businesses and online stores while others have taken place through credit card companies and banks. I personally had a minor incident of credit theft take place a little over 10 years ago, and although it was identified within a couple months and the thief brought to justice relatively quickly, it took over a year to clear up everything on my record. There are companies now that guarantee to monitor a client's credit report and fix any problems—including all of the legal processes involved. They do this by carefully watching a person's information, verifying all additions or changes, and making note of any suspicious activity. However, this requires them to have regular contact with the person or business involved. As you can imagine, it would be much more difficult for such a company to identify problems and fix errors if they did not have entirely accurate and complete information on the person, or if false identification suddenly became as commonplace as the real thing. Regrettably, the margin between what is legal and illegal is rapidly diminishing in our culture.

The margin between legal and illegal is rapidly diminishing in today's culture.

We commonly think of identity theft as a crime where someone poses as someone else in order to steal money. However, we need to expand the definition a bit. In my case, the crime that took place years ago involved someone who not only opened a loan in my name but also was in the process of paying it back. At least two months passed before I had learned what happened. I did not lose money because of what the person did, but it was still identity theft because I suddenly found that my

credit record had been compromised through additional total debt amounts, higher interest rates, and multiple addresses. It was around the time I purchased my home, so it may have actually affected the interest rate I got on my mortgage--though I cannot be certain. In this case, it most certainly qualified as identity theft because the authentic information on my record had been compromised with faulty data. However, it is important to point out that it was theft from the time it took place even though I did not know about it until months later. Being ignorant of a crime doesn't mean no crime ever took place; it just means we are not aware of it.

Our ignorance of a crime does not mean that a crime did not actually take place.

In our culture, there has been an explosive increase in instances of identity theft. However, this is a theft of people's sexual and gender identity. Unlike physical theft, there are some who have been involved in this offense without realizing the damage they have been doing to others; they simply did not understand how identity is formed, so they could not recognize how certain actions and ideas destroy it. However, there are many who knew exactly what they were doing, for it is not possible to carry out a scam of this magnitude and comprehensiveness without giving it careful thought and planning; indeed, anyone truly interested in uncovering the roots of this specific criminal epidemic can follow the clues back a few decades to its sources. The main problem is that most people do not know how to do that or do not realize there is anything to find, similar to how most people are unaware Margaret Sanger's belief in eugenics originated with the Nazi party. Her writings specifically describe the importance of being available to the poor and "unwanted" ethnic groups so they

could be eradicated. After almost a century, very few proponents of her work have any knowledge of the plan they are following and sincerely believe they are helping people. In the same way, large groups of people today do not realize they are following a clearly fashioned agenda to rob people of one of the greatest treasures they receive from God: their identity.

One of the greatest treasures we receive from God is our inherited identity.

When it comes to speaking about sexual and gender identity, I use the word “inherited” for a reason: it is something passed on to us in relation to birth. When a person receives an inheritance, it involves the person’s identity as part of the family; they are either born into that specific relationship or are adopted into it by choice. Also, an inheritance is something that is bestowed upon a person; it is not automatic, for parents could arrange to have everything go somewhere else and could leave the child with nothing. Additionally, an inheritance needs to be received by the person; it can be ignored or discarded if the child so chooses. This is almost identical to what takes place with our sexual identity. First, we are born physically as male or female. Even those who refute the terminology cannot deny there are physical characteristics and chromosomal distinctions that are visibly identifiable. However, those physical attributes at birth are only part of the package; as we begin to grow, our parents—along with other significant people in our environment—impart to us meaning (i.e., definition) for both gender and sexuality; in other words, we “learn” what it means to be both male and female, and our concept of masculine and feminine is taught to us. In reaction to experiences and observations, we “receive” and “understand” our identity. In other words, our comprehension of who we are can be significantly different from what we are.

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Today, there is a logical fallacy that has overtaken our society, and it is easily identified by looking at it in light of what is called a logical trilemma—a set of three principles where any two can be true but not all three; one of the three contradicts the others. The first precept is that sexual identity and orientation originates at birth; this is a sacrosanct premise among large parts of society although it is unsupported by scientific fact as well as refuted by objective research. The second precept is that gender is non-binary, fluidic, and changeable; in effect, a person’s gender is unrelated to their physical anatomy or their physiological characteristics. The third precept is that any person’s gender and sexual identity can be chosen; a decision to be male or female overrides physical traits and chromosomes. If we examine these precepts, we can see that although any two can be true, all three cannot be. If gender is fluidic, non-binary, and chosen at will while a person’s sexual orientation is formed from birth, then gender cannot actually be equated with sexual orientation; if both gender and sexual identity is non-binary, fluidic, and chosen at will, then neither can originate at birth because they are entirely chosen or developed; and if gender and sexual identity are non-binary but originate at birth, then they cannot be fluidic, changeable, or chosen at will. Of course, an argument can be made that these inherent contradictions relate entirely to definitions, and flexibility of terms is a powerful tool for promoting identity theft; however, the more these words are re-defined to support cohesion of these points, the weaker each point becomes. In essence, the only way to blend these three premises together is to weaken all of them individually.

The more we expand terms to fit other contexts, the weaker those terms become.

I have discussed similarities, differences, and distinctions between male and female in a few prior newsletters as well as the concepts of

masculine and feminine. There are common generalizations and interpretations of these terms that create confusion within our society and lead to some erroneous perspectives when people mistakenly believe that masculine and feminine is exclusive to male and female. There is clearly a relationship, but that relationship is neither exclusive nor absolute. In other words, men will have some traits we associate with the feminine, and women will have some traits that are often identified as masculine. We cannot obey the gospel nor be transformed into the likeness of God without growing in all areas of our lives. We have valid reasons to point out poor cultural judgments or definitions for these traits and attributes, but that does not negate their existence nor their actual meaning. As Christians, we have to recognize that there are valid reasons that society is confused, and we are partly to blame for that; however, the answer is not to reject the terms nor redefine the meanings but to affirm the truth and clarify what God has said. We can only restore our stolen identities by affirming what is true.

We can only restore our stolen identities by first affirming what is really true.

When we read the Bible, we find clear statements condemning sexual immorality as well as lifestyles contrary to the nature of man and woman as God created them. What is less clear is the distinction between action and attraction as discussed today. In other words, the Bible condemns sinful actions outright but is less specific when it comes to some desires or feelings. This can be more than frustrating for those who, because of life experiences out of their control, have developed attractions that should never to be acted upon in life. The good news of the gospel is that there is no addiction, obsession, attraction, or other condition that cannot be completely healed in this life. I am not suggesting here that it's automatic, easy, or guaranteed for every person in every situation,

but I am saying that it's not beyond the will of the Father, the work of the Son, or the power of the Spirit. I have met alcoholics, drug addicts, and pedophiles who have been totally healed, changed, and delivered, but I have also known others who must constantly practice extremely strict disciplines and abstinence. Although it is an unpleasant comment that many will find to be offensive, I believe that we, the Church, are primarily responsible for the lack of healing and transformation being experienced today. Our lack of understanding and practical application has left us with almost no hopeful (i.e., filled with hope) answers for those residing outside our idealistic theory, and the result has been that we either condemn actions while providing no options or we affirm actions in defiance of God's Word. It is the height of arrogance and hubris to blame God for our collective failures.

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If we might accept that God does not condemn certain actions without also offering solutions, then we may wonder why the Bible is not clearer with those solutions. In actuality, they are a lot clearer than we might think. However, we have to recognize that individuals often suffer with consequences that are the fault of humanity as a whole. If we think about it, we know this is true: many people around the world are starving due to societal problems unrelated to personal choices; many children have been born with drug addictions without making bad choices in their mothers' wombs; and an increasing number of boys and girls are growing up without any clear sexual identity because it was stolen from them before they knew better. The Bible is surprisingly clear if we know where to look. In the Old Testament, we find that God made a very clear distinction between Israel and all the other nations around them in some very significant aspects: First, He commanded the creation of the nuclear family

of a husband and a wife in a monogamous life-long relationship; although it took a while for His people to understand, it was crucial to the impartation of the inheritance—for the children to be correctly taught what male and female means. Second, He forbid worship of any other gods; men and women could only become what they were created to be by staying in exclusive relationship with the one-and-only Holy Creator of Man and Woman. God created a new society with laws intended to promote and develop whole human beings. We now see in our culture the individual consequences of defiantly rejecting His corporate instructions.

We see in our culture the individual consequences of accepting corporate sin.

For those interested in looking at one specific example of this, we need only look to what Paul wrote to the church at Rome. As can be imagined, the Roman culture was not as exclusive as the Jewish culture when it came to sexuality. This explains why he discusses sexual sins in letters to Corinth and Rome more than to Jewish congregations. He makes very specific and interesting declarations in Romans 1:18-32. Paul describes a corporate devolution as if it is an individual cycle of addiction, beginning with actions and ending with consequences: they (1) knew God but (2) stopped honoring God and (3) stopped being thankful; they (4) let their imaginations run wild, (5) rejected wisdom, and (6) worshipped idols instead of God; in effect, they (7) chose to believe a lie instead of the truth, which resulted in (8) the complete loss of their sexual identity. This is one of a few times in Scripture we find God clearly spelling out a cultural devolution with causes and effects in both the individual and corporate contexts. It is especially noteworthy that the fault begins with the people choosing to not “honor” God and eventually leads to worshipping idols. If we look back to when God developed a new and unique culture for the purpose of promoting healthy

people, we find an interesting connection: He first prohibited any idolatry before He command children to “honor” their parents. In the Church, it is often recognized that our view of God is strongly affected by our relationship with our parents. Similarly, Paul suggests that the corporate absence of “honor” toward God as their Father and Creator ultimately led to the individual losses of their sexual identities.

Corporate loss of honor toward God led to an individual loss of sexual identity.

If we return to our earlier analogy, this becomes even clearer. As parents offer an inheritance to the children, the children must receive it. The Jewish concept of honor toward parents involves respect as well as gratefulness. When it came to early mankind refusing to honor God, they stopped being thankful toward Him, which immediately eroded their ability to receive from Him. In response, they turned to false things for value, and in the process of believing a lie, their sexual identity was stolen. Why does Paul specify that it was their sexual identity and not other social issues? He actually does describe those other things as following, but he specifies that their sexual identity is one of the primary things to go. This is important because it recognizes that humanity is made in such a way that our sexuality is one of the most basic and foundational aspects of who we are as well as it also being inherently tied into our relationship with God as our Father; in some ways, it is our greatest strength as well as our most fragile weakness. If our sexual identity is an inheritance from our parents, then it would certainly follow that the absence of godly parents to honor—or parents offering accurate meaning to what it means to be male and female—would inhibit a child’s ability to be thankful for (i.e., receive) their true identity from them. In essence, their sexual identities will be stolen before they ever know it, and they will never realize what has been lost.