



SR Stance on Sexuality and Gender Identity

The Authority of the Bible

At Solid Rock, it is our goal to present and preserve a high view of the Scriptures as God-breathed, without error, and authoritative. The following stance is the interpretation of the Solid Rock Elders on the Scripture's position regarding sexuality and gender. We understand that there are some within the greater Christian community who have a different view on these topics, but we believe a different conclusion on these topics would require a compromise of the clear teaching of Scripture and its authority over our lives and practice. We also acknowledge that the Bible not only gives clear instructions for God's design for sexuality and gender, but also instructs Christians on how they are to interact with those who disagree.

God's Good Design, Distorted by Sin

The Bible prescribes God's good design for how humans are to interact with one another in order to live in a way that leads to their good and His glory¹. The Bible also teaches that God's good design for creation has been distorted by the sin of Adam, also known as the Fall. Because of the Fall, all people are born with a sin-nature inherited from Adam² and this sin-nature can lead to distorted views on sexuality and gender that are contrary to God's good design³. In the Bible we see that when Adam and Eve first disobeyed God, it was the result of believing the lies of the serpent and engaging in behavior that appeared to be right in their eyes and seemed like it would lead to pleasure⁴. Through their example, we learn that just because something feels good, appeals to the eye or seems right to an individual, doesn't inherently make it right or good. We believe that the sin-nature can lead to real feelings of sexuality and gender identity that feel right to the individual but are considered as wrong (sinful) from God's perspective. Additionally, the Fall has affected the biological and physiological order of God's good creation, causing diseases, disorders, deformities and rare cases of intersexuality or hermaphroditism.

We believe the Bible teaches that there is a difference between temptation towards sin and committing a sin. Jesus, while He didn't have a sin nature, experienced temptation without crossing the line of committing a sin⁵. Our temptation derives from a joint effort between the desires of the flesh (our inherited sin-nature from Adam) and the enticement of Satan⁶. Temptation occurs when a person is drawn, compelled, or enticed towards a sinful thought or behavior. Feeling drawn towards a sinful sexual behavior or gender identity that is outside of God's good design is not necessarily sin. Sin occurs when a person gives in and engages in the sinful thought or behavior. Jesus teaches that once a person engages in these desires on a thought-level by seeking pleasure in the thought, sin has occurred even if the person does not act out on these desires⁷.

At Solid Rock Church, the Bible is the final authority on what is good and right. We believe the Bible's stance on sexuality and gender identity supersedes how a person feels, self-identities or what may seem right to someone's conscience. Because of our sin-nature, our minds and bodies are constantly being pulled in

¹ Genesis 1-2

² Romans 5:12-14

³ Genesis 3

⁴ Genesis 3:1-13

⁵ Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:1-11;

Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13

⁶ Galatians 5:16-21; Romans 7:7-25;

Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13

⁷ Matthew 5:27-30; James 1:12-14

opposition to the Law of God⁸. Distortions in sexuality or gender identity that feel natural to the person are the result of the sin nature drawing that person away from God's good design.

God's Good Design for Gender

The Bible teaches that God created mankind with two fixed gender distinctions, male and female, for the purpose of reflecting God's image on earth⁹. Before God created female, He declared that it wasn't good for man to be without a complementary counterpart of the opposite gender¹⁰. God created woman as a complement to the man: different in gender, distinct in function, and equal in value. We believe that men and women were created equal in value as image bearers but are called to function distinctively in the world according to their God-given gender designs. Therefore, gender distinction is both permanently fixed by God through the procreative process and a necessary part of functioning as a part of God's good creation. We believe these distinctions are fixed and evident before birth, coded in the DNA of each individual, and made clearly visible in most cases in male or female reproductive organs. The Bible teaches that God's will for an individual, including the gender and other details of their inner being, are established before birth in the womb. We see the evidence of this in Jacob and Esau when they were in the womb of Rebekah. God established His will for Rebekah's twins, including their gender identities as males, before they were ever born¹¹. This is true of Samuel the Prophet when he was in the womb of Hannah¹². This is also true of John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth¹³ and Jesus in the womb of Mary¹⁴. This is explicitly expressed by David when he declared that God formed his inner identity and set him apart inside his mother's womb¹⁵.

There are many things in the Christian life that are the same for both genders. However, understanding God's view on gender provides guidance as to how men and women are to function in society, church, and the home. We believe that gender identity is fixed by God and sacred in His eyes and, therefore, has not been left to human decision, preference, or feeling. We believe that when people live according to their biological gender identities and according to God's ordained design for their gender, it leads to God's glory and human flourishing¹⁶.

The Bible teaches that the hidden person of the heart is identified in conjunction with the person's gender, regardless of how they look on the outside. Living within biblical parameters for gender roles elevates God's Word. However, willfully living outside of these biblical parameters for gender can hinder a person's prayer life¹⁷ and cause the Word of God to be reviled and dishonored¹⁸.

We acknowledge that there are some who would point to passages such as Galatians 3:28 or Joel 2:28-29 to refute a biblical precedent for gender distinctions within society, the church and the home. However, in the context of Galatians 3, Paul is arguing that males and females, along with slaves and free, Jews and Gentiles, will receive the inheritance of God that is offered in Christ. And in Joel,¹⁹ the prophet is speaking about a day when God's Spirit will be poured out on both genders equally. Neither of these passages supports a case for dropping gender distinction in society, the church, or the home.

God's Good Design for Sexuality

It is within this biblical understanding of gender distinction that we also see God's ordained plan for sexuality. All throughout the Scriptures we see that gender identity is included in God's design for marriage²⁰. The Greek and Hebrew words used in the Scriptures for *husband* and *wife* have gender distinction embedded in words themselves. There is a clear distinction in the gender of a *wife* as a woman and a *husband* as a man. God created

⁸ Romans 7:15-20

⁹ Genesis 1:26-28

¹⁰ Genesis 2:18, 21-24

¹¹ Genesis 25:19-28, Romans 9:6-13

¹² 1 Samuel 1:1-20

¹³ Luke 1:5-25

¹⁴ Luke 1:26-45

¹⁵ Psalm 22:9-10, 139:13

¹⁶ Genesis 1-2; Ephesians 5

¹⁷ 1 Peter 3:1-7

¹⁸ Titus 2:3-5

¹⁹ Quoted by Peter in Acts 2:16-18

²⁰ Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7

sex and commanded men and women to have sex for the purpose of intimacy and reproduction. While it is possible for sexuality to be experienced with the same sex, by one's self, or with other objects of creation, God's command to be fruitful and multiply can only be obeyed and fully experienced between two people of opposite biological gender: male and female. God designed the sexual relationship to be experienced through a life-long, heterosexual covenant relationship (marriage). This God-ordained pattern for sexuality²¹ is reiterated and supported through the entire Bible and is the only context in which God has created sexuality to be experienced and enjoyed²².

The Bible consistently teaches in both the Old and New Testament that engaging in sexuality outside of the God-ordained design of a life-long, heterosexual covenant relationship is sin. This includes sexual sins such as adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, lust, pornography, incest, bestiality, etc.²³ The Bible warns that engaging in sinful sexual behavior is the result of suppressing the truth of God's Word. When the truth of God's Word is suppressed, it creates a distorted view of God. A distorted view of God leads to idol worship, shifting our worship of Him towards something that He has created. Pursuing an object of our sexual desires in a way that is outside of a heterosexual covenant relationship, is expressing a greater love for what feels good to the body and appealing to the eyes over our desire to please God and worship Him²⁴. The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus can save and sanctify sinners, regardless of what sinful lifestyle(s) they have engaged in. However, the Gospel also declares that when a person engages in a lifestyle of sin without repentance, it prohibits a person from inheriting the Kingdom of God²⁵.

Our Response

We believe that all Christians, those saved by grace through faith in Jesus, are called to strive to live for Jesus while wrestling with the sinful tendencies of the flesh. Temptation, sinful urges, and desires are not immediately removed at the point of salvation. As Christians strive to live according to the commands of Jesus, the Holy Spirit consistently calls believers to put the flesh to death and live by the Spirit²⁶. This means that through the process of sanctification, all Christians are empowered and called to wrestle with sin in an attempt to put sin to death, even if it doesn't go away. Wrestling with sin means that even though the strong and compelling urges have not left, all Christians strive to put the desires of sin to death by admitting that it is sin, living in transparency by confessing when they are feeling tempted or have given into it, and then striving to walk away from it until that time when God sees fit to remove it. We see this exemplified in Paul's desire to put his sin to death as he wrestled with his sinful flesh in order to live by the Holy Spirit.²⁷ This is the life-long struggle of sanctification and includes many other sins beyond the scope of this stance.

Additionally, the Bible gives guidance on how Christians are to interact with those who disagree or who are living outside of these biblical parameters. At Solid Rock, we strive to welcome every person who desires to attend our weekend services with open arms. In any given worship service, you will find believers and unbelievers, members and non-members, all gathered in worship. However, the Bible draws a clear distinction between how the church should interact with those inside the church verse those outside the church. At Solid Rock we define those who are "inside the church" as our covenant members. We consider the church to be those who have yoked their lives together in covenant relationship, committing themselves to a unified expression of theology and practice. The Bible instructs the church to break fellowship with any person who is engaged in a sinful lifestyle, void of repentance if they are already a member. The Bible also instructs the church to refrain from membership or yoking their lives together with a person if they are not willing to walk in

²¹ Genesis 2

²² Matthew 19:4-9; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7

²³ Galatians 5:16-21; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:12-20; 2

Corinthians 12:21; Ephesians 5:2-13;

Romans 1:18-2:11; Colossians 3:5-11;

Exodus 22:19-20; Deuteronomy

27:21-22; Leviticus 18:22-30, 20:15-16

²⁴ Romans 1:18-2:11; 1 Corinthians

5:1-2, 9-13

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

²⁶ Romans 8:1-11

²⁷ Romans 7:7-25

repentance by admitting that their struggle is sin and expressing a desire to move away from the sin-struggle towards holiness²⁸. This guides Solid Rock's stance on where to draw the line with potential or existing members. At Solid Rock, we believe that church membership is an expression of whole-hearted alignment in theology and practice expressed in the Solid Rock Member Covenant. If a person is explicitly and consistently engaged in a lifestyle that is contrary to clear biblical principles with no remorse or desire to turn from their sins, Solid Rock Church does not accept this person as a church member and/or may remove an existing member from membership, but only after walking through the process of reconciliation outlined in the Scriptures under the guidance of the Solid Rock Elders. It is always the heart of the Solid Rock Elders to patiently work towards reconciliation rather than separation. Anyone who disagrees with this stance is welcome to continue attending any Solid Rock events or services that are open to non-members as long as they are not creating disunity, perpetuating false doctrine, or seeking to bring harm to others.

For those who are outside the church, who are not church members, Christians are instructed to take a different approach. Christians are called to invest their time wisely with those outside the church, interacting with grace-filled speech²⁹ that is both kind and true. Christians are called to be honest about what they believe to be true, even in controversial matters, never shying away from calling sinners towards repentance. Grace-filled speech is the practice of sharing what is true, tempered with kindness and humility. Jesus exemplifies grace-filled speech in how He handled the situation of the woman caught in adultery. He lovingly called the woman out of a sinful lifestyle towards repentance when He told her that He didn't condemn her and then called her to go and sin no more³⁰. Through Jesus's example and instruction, Christians are to interact with non-believers and those outside the church as agents of grace through self-sacrificial expressions of love in the form of hospitality, friendliness and kindness³¹. Jesus explicitly calls His followers to love their enemies³². Even though those outside the church are not necessarily seen as hostile enemies, they are by default, enemies of the cross³³. Those who are outside the definitive membership of the local church should encounter love, generosity and kindness when they encounter one of Jesus's followers. As a part of displaying the love of Jesus to those outside the church, Christians are called to be willing to spend time with unbelievers to build intentional relationships for the sake of the Gospel, always exhibiting discernment and wisdom in every situation³⁴.

At Solid Rock, we are committed to submit to the clear teaching of Scripture and its authority over our lives and practice. We believe the stance outlined in this document is in unity with the clear teaching of Scripture and prescribes God's good design for how humans are to interact with one another, leading to their good and His glory. Christians are called to live according to these biblical teachings, never compromising the Truth, and always following Jesus's example by striving to meet unbelievers where they are with self-sacrifice and kindness in an effort to lead them towards the grace and truth of the Gospel.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

²⁹ Colossians 4:5-6

³⁰ John 8:1-11

³¹ Luke 10:25-37

³² Matthew 5:43-48

³³ Philippians 3:17-21

³⁴ Matthew 9:10-13, 10:16, 11:19; Luke 5:30-32; 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:25-33; Mark 1:29-34, 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:1-5; 2 John 1:4-11