

GARDEN

Key Points:

1. Image & likeness create intimacy between God & humankind.
2. Sexed humans are God's visible representation.
3. Jesus affirms XX & XY.
4. Body = Personhood.

OPENING QUESTION

Did God (YHWH) create sexuality or is sexuality a human construct?

Why is this question key?

Because if God created sexuality then his intentions for sexuality as expressed in the Bible have not changed over time. But if God is not the author of sexuality then we are free to define sexuality as we see fit.

Genesis 1 is the overview of the creation narrative and Genesis 2 is the play by play.
(Seahawks win Super Bowl illustration)

VERSE

26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth."

27 God created humankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them,
male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

NOTES

“First, God’s deliberation shows that he has decided to create man differently from any of the other creatures—in his image and likeness. God and man share a likeness that is not shared by other creatures. This apparently means that a relationship of close fellowship can exist between God and man that is unlike the relationship of God with the rest of his creation. What more important fact about God and man would be necessary if the covenant at Sinai were, in fact, to be a real relationship? Remove this and the covenant is unthinkable.”¹ (Exodus 19:3-6)

POINT 1: Image & likeness create intimacy between God & humankind.

Hebrew word for image is *tselem* and “it almost always refers to idols in the New Testament. Idols are visible representations of an invisible deity.”²

“The image of God is a declaration that God intended to create human persons to be the physical means through which he would manifest his own divine presence in the world.”³
We are God’s idols—his visible representations on this earth. We bear God’s image as male and female.

The Hebrew word *Zakar* for male and *Neqebah* for female are used here in Gen. 1 and are also paired up to describe the male and female animals who were brought on the ark to repopulate the earth after the flood in Gen. 6:19.⁴

Biological sex is essential in any attempt to define the human being and human identity. (This does not exclude intersex people who we will talk about later).

Point 2: Sexed humans are God’s visible representation.

¹ Constable, T. *Genesis 1*. Matthew 1. <https://netbible.org/bible/Genesis+1>.

² Sprinkle, P. M. (2021). In *Embodied: transgender identities, the church & what the bible has to say* (pp. 64–65). essay, David C Cook.

³ Sprinkle, P. M. (pp. 65).

⁴ Sprinkle, P. M. (pp. 66).

Question

If God created male (XX) and female (XY) as sexed beings in his image then is God (YHWH) a sexual being also?

There is a prevalent theory that states that hā-ādām is androgenous meaning partly male and female. Just as man and woman are not androgenous before the fall neither is God androgenous ever. He is consistently spirit.

The answer is no. God is neither male nor female. Ancient Mesopotamians, Palestinians, and Canaanites believed that god's and goddesses would come together to procreate. YHWH the God of the Bible throughout scripture has characteristics of both male and female portrayed in imagery. Hosea describes God as a husband. Matthew 6 provides a picture of God as father, protector, and provider. Yet in Isaiah 49 and 66 God is likened to a mother who comforts her children and a God who does not neglect to nurse her children. Yet this does not mean that God is gender fluid. It is meant to show us that both sexes are needed to fully display the image of YHWH. God created sexual differentiation, and thus he stands above the polarity of sex. Notice that sexuality (genitals) is a part of the created design and not part of the inherent nature of God. "In the image of God" indicate personality, moral, and spiritual qualities that God and man share (i.e., self-consciousness, God-consciousness, freedom, responsibility, speech, moral discernment, etc.) These distinguish humans from the animals, which have no God-consciousness even though they have conscious life (cf. v. 24). Some writers have called the image of God man's "spiritual personality." [88] In another sense embodied mankind is the image of God (e.g., he rules and creates [procreates] as God does, thus reflecting God).⁵

VERSE

But notice that **Genesis 1:28** says,

“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”

The word them indicates plurality and differentiation. Multiply and fill shows the union of a heterosexual relationship to propagate humankind.

⁵ Constable, T. *Genesis 1. Matthew 1*. <https://netbible.org/bible/Genesis+1>.

“The sexual distinction between male and female is fundamental to what it means to be human. To be human is to live as a sexual person.”⁶

We find that the only structural differentiation of the human being is sexuality (Penis and vagina). While there is structural differentiation humanity is comprised of both male and female.

Differentiation is a key theme in creation. Light from darkness, day and night, evening and morning, waters and heavens, land and sea, male and female.

God created male and female and when he did, he proclaimed heterosexuality to be the order of the creation.

**Biology supersedes psychology.
Essence supersedes experience.
Who I am supersedes what I feel.**

Genesis 1 affirms that God is the creator of sexuality. Not only did he create it, but he ordered it based on how he saw fit.

There has been a cultural shift from making sure that sexual experience is consistent with the character of God, to making sure the character of God is consistent with sexual experience... **EXAMPLE:** *God made male and female in His image and established a pattern of marriage. However, we now say that you can get married to whomever you choose. (even your AI avatar)*

**If your god never disagrees with you, you might just be
worshipping an idealized version of yourself.**

-Tim Keller

There is a shift from interpreting sex according to the Bible, to interpreting sex according to the Bible, to interpreting the Bible according to sex... **EXAMPLE:** *God doesn't define sex in a way that is contrary to the way I desire the sexual experience to be.*

There is a shift from thinking sexual desires need to be disciplined because human nature is fallen, to thinking sexual desires should be unrestrained because there is nothing wrong with human nature... **EXAMPLE:** *Birth control to students. Go ahead and have sex because you cannot help yourselves. Have sex just don't get pregnant.*

⁶ Davidson, R. M. (2015). Chapter 1. In *Flame of Yahweh: sexuality in the Old Testament* (p. 19). essay, Baker Academic.

There is a shift from worshipping a God who became flesh to worshipping flesh that becomes God.⁷ **EXAMPLE:** “*You believe God is a woman.*”- Ariana Grande, “I wanna F*** you like an animal. My whole existence is flawed. You get me closer to God.-9 Inch Nails”

VERSE

“Can a man hold fire against his chest
without burning his clothes?
Can a man walk on hot coals
without scorching his feet?”

Proverbs 6:27-28

**God’s intent for sexuality is very good.
Man’s intent for sexuality appears good but ultimately will leave us empty (burned).**

Point 3: Jesus affirms XX & XY.

Jesus affirms the Genesis 1 Summary and the Genesis 2 timeline.

VERSE

“Then some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful to divorce a wife for any cause?”⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female.”

Matthew 19:4-5

Jesus considers God’s original creation of humans as male and female to still be normative thousands of years later.

Point 4: Body = Personhood.

Paul correlates the body with personhood.

⁷ Slattery, J. (2018). In *Rethinking sexuality: God’s design and why it matters* (p. 40). essay, Multnomah.

VERSE

“Or do you not know that anyone who is united with a prostitute is one body with her? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” 17 But the one united with the Lord is one spirit with him. 18 Flee sexual immorality! “Every sin a person commits is outside of the body”—but the immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that **your body** is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 **For you** were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Paul interchanges you and your body. That’s because we cannot separate our spirits and our bodies. Our personhood is a body. We are not souls with bodies, but we are embodied souls.⁸

“We are ‘free’ in a sense to ‘do whatever we want with our bodies.’ However, we’re not free to determine what we do with our bodies is good or evil. Therefore, human freedom—choice—is fully realized not by inventing good and evil, but by choosing properly between them.”

-Christopher West

Sexed bodies are central to our humanity. To give up or abandon male and female sex is to risk missing out on who God made you to be, and to find it is to discover a way to thrive.⁹

⁸ Sprinkle, P. M. (pp. 70).

⁹ Comer, J. M. (2016). In Loveology (p. 173). essay. Zondervan.