Series: By Design
Sermon: God's Design for Sexuality
Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 5:1-2; Matthew 19:4-5
Teacher: Jeff Norris
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Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)
26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

These are also listed at perimeter.org/norris
- *What God Has to Say about Our Bodies* - Sam Allberry
- *Love Thy Body* - Nancy Pearcy
- *Wonderfully Made: A Protestant Theology of the Body* - John W. Kleinig
- *Is God Anti-Gay?* - Sam Allberry
- *Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?* - Sam Allberry
- *Born Again this Way* - Rachel Gilson
- *You Are Not Your Own* - Alan Noble
- *Confronting Christianity* - Rebecca McLaughlin
- *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* - Carl Trueman
- *You're Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God's Design and Why That's Good News* - Kelly Kapic
- *A Body For The Lord, the PCA Papers on Human Sexuality*

The Early Church's Category-Defying Social Vision:
    (from "Destroyer of the gods" by Larry Hurtado)
1. Multi-racial and multi-ethnic
2. Highly committed to caring for the poor and marginalized
3. Non-retaliatory - marked by a commitment to forgiveness
4. Strongly and practically against abortion and infanticide
5. Revolutionized the sexual ethic

God's Design
The value of self, anchored in our likeness to God and in the embrace of His design...

Genesis 5:1-2
When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.

Matthew 19:4-5 (ESV)
4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'?"

"Genesis 1-2 tells, then re-tells, how God created humanity. Chapter 1 describes humanity in relationship to the rest of God's creation. God made mankind -- the culmination of his creative work -- in his image (Gen. 1:26-29). It describes the first human beings as a male (*zakar*) and female (*nequeba*). This refers to the sexual difference between male and female. It also demonstrates that biological sex is binary. Chapter 2 describes humanity in relationship to each other, what today we would call gender identity. Instead of finding male (*zakar*) and female (*nequeba*), we find man (*ish*) and woman (*ishah*). The male and the female relate to one another as a man and a woman, respectively. Here we find God's original intent for sex and gender. In both Genesis 1 and 2, the sets of terms correspond. If a human being is a male (*zakar*), then God created him a man (*ish*). If a human being is a female (*nequeba*), then God created her as woman (*ishah*). Our biological sex indicates and informs gender identity."

- Katie McCoy, *What is a Woman? God's Intent for Sex and Gender*

Dr. Lisa Littman conducted a study to explain the phenomena of an increasing and sudden prevalence of gender dysphoria among adolescents, teenagers who had previously expressed no gender dysphoric symptoms. The condition, known as "Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria," (ROGD) revealed an unexpected – and culturally unwelcome – pattern. Littman found the influence of an adolescent's relationships directly affected her gender identity. Among adolescents with ROGD, 87% had friends who announced themselves as gender dysphoric, had saturated themselves with material on niche websites discussing gender dysphoria, or both. In other words, a condition believed to find its source and validation in one's intrinsic sense of self has extrinsic factors. Lisa Littman, "Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria," *PLOS ONE* Vol 13, No. 8; August 16, 2018, accessed September 1, 2020; available from https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0202330; internet.

"Recent data suggests gender confusion is affecting young women and girls at alarming and precipitous rates. Girls who identify as transgender have increased from 1/2,000 in 2008 to 1/20 in 2022." - McCoy, *ibid.*, p. 4. ("The Controversy Over Trans Teens," *The Week*, October 24, 2021; accessed May 16, 2022; available from https://theweek.com/life/1006253/the-controversy-over-trans-teens.)

"For these girls, trans identification offers freedom from anxiety's relentless pursuit; it satisfies the deepest need for acceptance, the thrill of transgression, the seductive lilt of belonging." - Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*

"Our created bodies all point to Christ's incarnation, and in turn, his resurrected body points to our physical, bodily (not just spiritual) resurrection at the end of time….If our bodies are untrustworthy and only serve to mask the true self that is within, then the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity as Jesus of Nazareth cannot be trusted as a reliable means for God's most profound self-disclosure in history."
                                                        - Timothy Tennent, *For the Body*

"The doctrine of the resurrection of the body has helped me … when I'm raised from the dead in the age to come, I'll be raised as a man; so my being a man is a part of my eternal identity … I can say I am a man, there's something ontological going on there. When I'm raised from the dead in the age to come, I won't be raised with the same sexual instincts and feelings and temptations that I experience in this life. Those things are not a part of my eternal experience. So, I don't want to sink my deepest sense of identity into something that is temporal and comes from my fallenness rather than in something that is eternal. I'm more defined by my future than my past." - Sam Allberry

The Culture's Design
The value of self, anchored in our feelings and in the rejection of God's design...

If earlier generations valued 'I think therefore I am', we seem to be 'I sexually feel therefore I am' (Allberry)

In the kind of culture we live in right now, the first and greatest commandment is to be true to yourself. And the second is like it: to affirm whatever self your neighbor decides to be true to. (Trevin Wax)

"Freedom must be connected to our objective design, not our emotional freedom. Therefore, true freedom can often lead to more difficult emotional experiences. There's a kind of freedom that comes emotionally and intellectually from aligning one's life with God's design." - Sean McDowell

"But what if the physical body and the inner sense of gender don't align? Which one determines who we are? Preston Sprinkle gives guidance in his book, *Embodied*, when he says our biological sex 'determines who we are ... and our embodiment is an essential part of how we image God in the world.' (Sprinkle, *Embodied*, p. 152.) Our created, embodied selves tell us who we are. Who we are is not determined on how we feel. The pain of gender dysphoria is real. Longing for inner wholeness is real. But the promise of peace through hormone treatments and surgical procedures is an illusion. Because the purpose of our sex and gender – the purpose for which we were made – will never be discovered from knowing ourselves, but in knowing the God who made us for himself."   - Katie McCoy, *What is a Woman? God's Intent for Sex and Gender*

The Church's Response
Three things primarily:
1. **Cherish theological clarity**
   "If the epicenter of Christian theology is a shocking, radical, sacrifice of love for people who had no capacity to earn it, shouldn't that be the expression on the other end of embracing that theology?" - Paul Tripp

2. **Display compassion that comes from a deep understanding of the gospel**
   "You know you're not in a good place if the particular sin of someone else concerns you more than your own." - Paul Tripp

"In earlier generations we were living in more of a moralistic framework, so one of the tasks in evangelism was to show people that they're a sinner ... and a lot of our evangelism began in Genesis 3. We have to begin in Genesis 1. We don't live in a moralistic age where we need to prove people to be sinners. We live in an anxious age where we need to prove to people they're worth something." - Allberry

3. **Nurture healthy community**
   The church should be an embodied answer to that whole predicament of how can you love someone without affirming them. Because church should be a community of people where there isn't unconditional affirmation, but where there is a depth of love and commitment that we don't see anywhere else. – Allberry

Conclusion:
"In reading the biographies of people who have gone from sexual brokenness to freedom in Christ, I have noticed a theme. They were never convinced of God's sexual *telos* (His purpose for sex) for intellectual reasons. Their submission to God's design was only possible when they finally understood the goodness of God Himself, submitting to Him out of love and not out of fear."   - Hillary Morgan Ferrer, *Mama Bear Apologetics: Guide to Sexuality, Empowering Your Kids to Understand and Live Out God's Design*

"God is not anti-anyone that He's offering His Son to. So, if you're a gay person, right now God is offering you life in His Son. He's not against you if He's offering you everything you could ever need and want. Now, there are things He says are not morally right, so that there are things that will need to be repented of. He is clearly prohibiting same-sex intimacy and relationships in that sort of way; but He is so for us in that He is offering us Christ ... I know the Bridegroom. I'm not actually missing out. I'm not getting the temporal signposts of the love of God that marriage is designed to be. I'm not getting the appetizer but I'm getting the entre. And the entre is so good I can skip the appetizer. So, if I have the Bridegroom then I'm not missing out."