



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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“I forgive you!” These are powerful words that most would find extremely difficult to say to a man who took the life of a loved one. These are the words that were spoken by family members who experienced the shock and grief of discovering their loved ones were victims in a Bible study shooting at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina. These are the words which were directed toward the perpetrator, Dylann Roof.

We are shocked at the severity of Dylann’s crime. Equally shocking is the response of the victims’ family members toward Dylann. Nadine Collier told Roof, “You took something very precious from me, but I forgive you. It hurts me. You hurt a lot of people, but may God forgive you.” Another gentleman, Anthony Thompson, exhorted Roof: “Repent. Confess. Give your life to the one who matters the most, Christ, so He can change your ways no matter what happens to you and you’ll be okay.”

After such expressions, *Christianity Today* editor Michael Wear wrote with surprise, “Some of those who expressed righteous indignation at the disgusting right-wing attempts to invent motivations for Roof — rather than accept his explicitly racist statements and beliefs as his motivation — now refuse to take the family members seriously when they say it is a sincere, thought-out expression of their faith.” It is shocking that some do not understand how hurting people who lost loved ones could utter such words of compassion.

History records many who have in the past experienced freedom through forgiving those who have mistreated them or even taken the life of a loved one. It is unexplainable. It is nearly impossible — and I do not boldly state

that my response would be the same if the lives of my loved ones were taken in an act of such cruelty. But I hope with all sincerity I could, through the grace of God, take such a stand.

My concern is even greater as I think about those who dared to look for alternative motives among the nine victims’ family members, questioning both the authenticity of their compassion and the power of God to carry out this work in their hearts. But Christians understand the greatness of the power of their God who, Paul writes, . . . *is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.* (Ephesians 3:20, NASB) It was this same God whose own Son hung, bled, and died on a cross for our sins. It seems unexplainable that, upon enduring the agony of the cross, this Son would look upon those who had put Him there and say words of compassion: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!” (Luke 23:34, KJV) This same God can touch our hearts so that we forgive in the face of great injustice. Are you willing to let Him love others through you today?

Dr. L.W. Edwards



If our identity were based on our appearance, then plastic surgeons would be the psychiatrists and attorneys of our day. Unsatisfied with your appearance? No problem: stop by your local plastic surgeon for a fix-up, and you'll be feeling good as new.

God didn't need a plastic surgeon to create man and woman; dirt (Adam) and a spare rib (Eve) were more than sufficient. Yet in our twisted world, we are increasingly seeing men and women attempting to pencil out the design God has etched in their indelible genetic ink for the sake of experiencing life in another gender. To them, gender is nothing more than a cosmetic enhancement, a disposable suit to be discarded after frequent wear.

What Is Gender?

Recently Bruce Jenner made the news for his part in bringing the "T" in the LGBT movement into the spotlight. As a self-proclaimed transgender woman (Caitlyn), Bruce has caused many to reevaluate their perceptions of gender — many people, perhaps, but not God. God sees gender as an expression of His image. He has given each of us our gender identity as a means through which we honor Him. Our lives are never more authentic and fulfilling than when we embrace this.

What does gender identity look like in Scripture? From the very beginning, it is apparent gender touched every aspect of human civilization. Gender determined the roles and responsibilities of members in a family, the occupations available, the bearer of the family name and recipient of the inheritance, the manner in which the legal system was enforced, and even the way people participated in religious observances. It is not difficult to see how redefining gender would unravel the very fabric of civilization.

The distinct roles of men as leaders and women as supporters, while clearly defined in the Bible, are never expressed in a way which elevates one gender above the other. The Bible actually promoted gender equality at a time when women were treated as less than equals. Note the Apostle Paul's words to the Church: "there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28b)

What Authentic Gender Identity Looks Like

Authentic masculinity and femininity are attractive, not repulsive. An authentic man or woman doesn't rely on physical characteristics to accentuate his or her gender. Their character speaks for itself. For men, this is demon-

strated in leaving a positive legacy, earning and teaching respect, balancing mercy and justice, modeling integrity, and sharing godly wisdom.[1] For women, character is expressed in personal integrity, diligence, compassion toward others, modesty in appearance and conduct, godly wisdom, and the fear of the Lord.

At the end of a life well lived, the defining trait which will distinguish you and me is not the expression of our gender. It will be the manner in which we managed our potential within the bodies God gave us. Men, let's use our masculinity to its fullest, God-given . . . [>>>Keep Reading](#)
[1] Evans, Tony, *No More Excuses*, Crossway Books, 1996, p. 198.



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