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Can a Case Be Made against Homosexuality and Transgenderism without Using the Bible?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Question about making a case against homosexuality and transgenderism to non-believers who do not trust the Bible.

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Transcript

Welcome to Stand to Reason! #STRask podcast. Greg, this morning we have a question from Antonio Garcia that I think is a good one and I'm not sure how it answers. You already told me that you're not sure to answer so I thought, "Well, Amy doesn't know the answer, man.

I'm sunk." I've got no backup here. I'm very interested to hear how you answer this. This is from Antonio Garcia.

How can I justify making a biblical case against homosexuality/trans genderism to non-believers who do not trust the Bible? I've been having conversations with my teenage daughters who have gay and trans friends and don't think it's right. They're straight but struggling with their faith. Well, it's an odd question.

Let me just go this other because I'm actually not sure if he's saying that his daughters don't think the view against transgenderism is right or if they don't think transgenderism is right. That's unclear to me. I don't know how you took that.

Well, at least initially it sounds like, "How do I make a biblical case with people who don't trust the Bible or don't respect the Bible?" Well, the answer is you can't. It's kind of like, "How can I follow the directions of a French cookbook if I don't speak French?" Well, you can't. Now, having said that, unless I misunderstood the question, having said that, I want to make a different kind of observation.

The directives in Scripture that God gives us about the way that we are to live are given because God made the world a certain way. And when we live consistently with the way he made the world, then we flourish. And I've made the case time and time again that the original created order that God established, Genesis 1 and 2, God created a place for human beings in the last of the list to be created.

That the most important thing, the second chapter focuses in, zooms in on that whole enterprise, and God created human beings to be in friendship with him and then gave them a place to live and relationships that would allow them to flourish. So the world he made was just right. It was just the way his noble mind intended.

Everything was just the way it was supposed to be. Everything was working together just so. And that's what the text means when it said everything God created was good.

So this statement, everything God created was good, is not just kind of a throw away. We're just going to say, "Oh, good job, and that's good and fine. He did a nice job." But rather the particulars, how it all laid out together, were meant to work harmoniously, such that when the fall took place and human beings reflect on the nature of the fall, one of the things that they say is, "Well, look at, things are not the way they're supposed to be." So that means there is a way it's supposed to be, and as I argue from that, that means there's got to be a sposer.

So from the problem of evil, you get God's existence, is the quick response there, or the quick lesson of that observation. But the broader application is this, the things that God tells us are good and right and true, contrary to what the rest of the culture says, generally comports with a common sense reflection on the nature of reality. So when folks think in a common sense way, let's just say about gender, there are people who are confused about gender, but up until 2015, everybody pretty much understood that those who had gender dysphoria were confused, the rest of the culture wasn't confused.

I was having this conversation with a pastor, and his 14-year-old daughter was sitting in the backseat of the car as we were driving, and she said, "Yeah, I tell my friends, check your pants." Which is kind of a course way of putting it, but there is an insight there. That human beings are male and female, not just with comports with common sense, but comports also with direct observation. No duh, this is not hard, it's not difficult.

So now the scripture says, "male and female," he created them. That was part of the original thing. But we don't need the Bible to know that.

Human beings are gendered, which is just to say that they're sexed, which is just to say that their sexuality is binary. Male and female, that's how human beings reproduce. No duh once again.

Okay, so when I made my case against same-sex marriage, and it took me a long time,

years actually, as I hammered out how best to describe this, I came to the conclusion, and the way I articulated it, was that there's a reason why all cultures have protected and privileged long-term, monogamous, heterosexual unions. It's because those are the relationships that, as a rule, characteristically, there are exceptions, by nature, produce the next generation. Okay, that's the way families are built and families are the foundation for civilization.

So notice how I was able to make a case regarding marriage that is based on the way reality is structured, and every culture has pretty much seen that, and responded in a common sense way to a common sense notion, even without referencing the Bible. Now we understand why the world is the way it is, because God made it that way for good purpose, that purpose being human flourishing. Okay, but you don't need the Bible to see that.

All that to say, we can make a biblical case after a fashion without using the Bible. By looking at the way the world is, the phrase I used was how reality is structured, and this is where common sense comes in. So much of these controversial issues are resolved easily by an appeal to common sense.

But people have been bullied out of employing common sense and called names for doing so in order to accept alternatives that make no sense at all. This applies to gender issues, it applies to marriage issues, it applies to sexuality. Okay, is it pretty obvious that human beings are not supposed to have sexual with animals? No duh, right? Okay, well the Bible says that too.

It also seems pretty obvious that women were made sexually for men, and men were made sexually for women. Now how you characterize "made" doesn't matter whether God made them or Mother Nature made them. I'm not dealing with that issue.

I'm not talking about how this came about, I'm just talking about that it is. And therefore same sex seems to be odd. Now it's very hard after 50 years of having our thinking completely changed and a whole new ethic pounded into us, but if we were willing to just let's just step back and reflect on it for a moment and the nature of the thing and the nature of human bodies and the nature of sexuality, that is kind of odd.

That doesn't go together. Which by the way is precisely the way Paul talks about a Romans 1, that the men abandoned the normal function of the woman. So I guess what I'm saying is there are two ways to make a biblical case.

One is explicitly from the Bible, and when you have children that acknowledge at least in some measure the legitimacy of Scripture and the way God made, you speak from the Bible. You speak from the Scripture, but are quick to point out this is just no common sense. This is not complicated.

In fact, you recall when Bruce Jenner came out a number of years ago, there was confusion in our community. We got emails, "Hey, help us understand what's going on here." I resisted doing a video, which is we ended up doing because of the team's encouragement to respond to that, but we did a short video. Basically what I said is, Bruce Jenner is confused.

That doesn't mean we need to be confused, but Christians are confused. The reason they're confused is they keep getting thrashed by the culture. The culture is telling us to believe something that does not comport with common sense and additionally does not comport with the Bible.

The Bible comports with common sense on these issues. There's no good reason to abandon what the Bible says. We ought not be browbeaten by our culture.

This has been my main approach to this Amy for years now is that here it is. They posted on the inside of my Bible, "Faithfulness is not theologically complicated. It's a talk I've developed and I'm giving it this week, in fact, at a church." Actually, I'm giving it a couple of times in the next few weeks.

These things are clear in the Bible, and without the Bible, they still are pretty clear. I'm not sure exactly where his daughters stand on this based on what he said. Maybe you can help me understand that.

But I did want to alert people, though, that a way to make, and this is in summary of what I've just said, way to make a biblical case is to make a case for the biblical view by pointing to the nature of reality. Look at the way the world is structured. This is not difficult.

I think you're absolutely right, Greg, that we can look at bodies and understand how sex is supposed to work and what sex a person is. I think that is a really good way of making a case and explaining your position. Now, what I think will happen, your best shot here is to have them see what you're saying and hopefully it will resonate with them as being common sense.

Where I think this will lead, and this is something that you can make clear, that your daughters can make clear to their friends, is the idea that we think that bodies matter and that they say something true about the world and about us. Because I think that's where this is going to go next. Well, what does it matter what my body says? I'm feeling such and so.

Sounds like Nancy Piercy stuff here. Love that body. Yes, that's a great book to read.

Love that body. And then maybe that can lead into some deeper conversations. So why do we think the body say something true? Well, if your body is simply evolved, I can see someone saying we can use it however we want.

It's just an accident that it's this way, even though as you said, that's the way it functions, that's the way it's whole, that's the way it's working. If someone rejects the whole idea of teleology and purpose in our bodies, that's a great conversation to have. Do you think there's a purpose? Well, you don't think there's a purpose for these things? What I do.

And maybe your best shot here is just to bring about clarity. You might not convince them, but if you can help them to understand that your position is reasonable and makes sense and is coherent and has reasons, and it's not just a matter of bigotry and hate, then you've already made headway, I think. Well, the fact that somebody would even use words like bigotry and hate to characterize those who disagree shows that this discussion or this issue is not about what is sound.

Those are rhetorical moves to disparage somebody who simply disagrees with your point of view, and they use it because they are so committed to their view. They're not saying you're wrong, you're rational, you're mistaken, you've come to the wrong conclusions. Instead, they attack your character for holding the view that you hold, and that is their attempt to disqualify the view.

And to me, this communicates an entirely different sentiment. It's one thing for people to come together and say, okay, what's appropriate in this circumstance and give their reasons and come to different conclusions. It's another thing for a person to say, here is the way I see it, and if you don't see it just like me, you are an evil person, and I'm not even going to listen to you, I'm not going to allow you to speak, I'm going to try to silence you and whatever.

That's an indicator that something else entirely different is going on. And of course, it's obvious to us this is a heart that's in rebellion to God. They're not saying no to the Christian, they're saying no to God.

And this is exactly what Paul was referring to in Romans 1. His point was the woman that God made for men is being rejected by the men who God made the woman for. And I mean, designed the woman for. So this isn't just a rejection of women, it's a rejection of God.

And it's a desire to do what they want. And this is an broader category of worshipping the creature rather than the creator. And I think the same dynamic is going on here.

So much of this goes back to deeper philosophical differences. I'm thinking about Carl Truman's book, he just wrote a shorter version of his rise in triumph of the modern self. The new one is called Strange New World.

And so I would recommend reading that book so you can get some ideas of other things that might be in play here. But if you can just get across the idea that our bodies mean

something, they have purpose and they matter and they have something true to say about who we are, then we can look at these things. You know, my mind's saying I'm a woman, my body's saying I'm a man.

How do we resolve that? And then they can explain how they resolve that. And you can look at your different resolutions for that. But everyone can see that there's something that's not right there.

That's right. That's a great observation. Everybody acknowledges something is a miss.

Okay. Incidentally, this is implicitly an expression of my body dualism. If part of the person is a different sex/gender than the physical part, then that part that's different is not physical.

In other words, their soul is female and their body is male, for example. But if we're just meat all the way down, then there's no way to make sense of that. Identity is tied to the physical since that's all that exists.

Anyway, it's appropriate title, Strange New World. I'm reflecting in the title of Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land. It seems to me that there's, but I was like brave new world, strange new world, all these different literary associations going on there.

But definitely it is a strange new world. And one last thing I want to throw out there, your daughters could make the case for the beauty of this view. Because when you think about it, and this I also got from Nancy Pirsai, I thought this was a great insight.

The Christian view says that we are an integrated whole. So if your body is saying you're one sex, that is the sex you are. There's no variation there.

There's no ambiguity. You're not separate from your body. Your body is part of who you are.

And there's a beauty in that kind of a wholeness and a view of the human being as not being cut up into parts that are in opposition to each other. Even if you have ideas in your mind that are mistaken, you're mistaken about it. It doesn't mean that your mind actually is a different sex.

So that idea of wholeness, of purpose, of the beauty of creation, all those things are also ideas you can bring out. -Curiously the person who is transgender is seeking to restore wholeness by acknowledging the authenticity of their mental image of themselves and denying the legitimacy of their physical image. So they are trying to change the physical image.

Put simply, they understand that there's a conflict, there's a disparity, but they think that the mind is right and the body is wrong. And so they try to change the body, but the

body can't be changed. Not ultimately, sex change operations are not possible.

All that can be done is the body can be essentially mutilated so it looks more like the gender understood by the individual as their identity, but it can't be changed because virtually every cell in your body is screaming out, chromosome-only, what the sex actually is. So the union can never be accomplished in that direction. And the reason is, is because the body is not the thing that's wrong.

It's the mind that's wrong. But that can't be addressed not in our culture now, not even legally in the state of California, at least with minors. It's illegal to counsel them against their perceived gender, to have them counseled.

So there's a lot going against it, but again, and I'm going to just go back to this point I made earlier, our approach is a common sense approach. It is the, we don't have to labor to see the legitimacy of this approach. And this is why people resort to bullying when there's disagreement because their own appeal does not come forward with common sense.

They can't get their way through thoughtful reflection. And so instead, they just bully people into submission. And this is happening everywhere.

Well, thank you, Antonio, for your question. My heart goes out to all the young people out there who are having to deal with this and don't have the tools to respond to the insults and to the fear of being rejected. And all, it's just such a difficult thing.

And the best we can do as adults is help them to understand what Christians believe about reality. In fact, what reality is since Christianity is true and the beauty of it. And also the ability to withstand the insults because we are doing this for God.

And they're, you know, read through first Peter. It talks a lot about how it's better to suffer at the hands of other human beings than it is to go against God and then suffer at his hand, the discipline of God. But not only is, I don't just want to put this in terms of punishments, rewards also.

There are so many stories about Christians over the centuries who have stood up for the truth and enjoyed such good fellowship with God as a result, even as they were being tormented by the people around them. And all of these things, your kids need to understand so that they can resist the pull to go along with the people around them. Just remember these words are Jesus or Matthew 5, the beginning section of the Sermon on the Mount.

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice, be glad for your reward in heaven is great. Thank you, Greg.

And thank you Antonio for your question. Please send us your questions on Twitter with the hashtag #STRAsk or through our website. This is Amy Hall and Greg Kockel for Stand to Reason.

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