



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:4-5

God and gender: Identity Crises

You've heard the saying and have probably been told, "Just follow your heart," or "Do what makes you happy." For someone who feels like a male trapped in a female's body or a female trapped in a male's body, that sounds like great advice. "How could my heart mislead me?" one might think or, "Of course God wants me to be happy and right now I'm miserable."

There's a problem with that line of thought though. God knows your heart better than you do. In Jeremiah 17:9 he says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Or in other words, "Your heart is a liar. Don't trust it."

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to explain why in Ephesians 2:1-3, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath."

Reread that slowly. You were spiritually dead when you followed the ways of this world ruled by Satan. You did what your sinful heart craved following its desires and thoughts. What does that mean? Contrary to popular opinion and pop-culture, it means that wanting to change your gender is not a godly thought. It's actually demonic. It's an idea that comes straight from the devil himself.

The devil wants you to believe that your identity should be wrapped up in your gender or sexual orientation, as if that defines who you really are. That's a lie spiritually dead people believe. Jesus Christ came to free you from that lie. He came to change your deceitful heart and bring you back to life.

Read what the apostle Paul writes next, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Previously, you were dead in your sins and deceitful thoughts, but Jesus Christ has made you alive. He's forgiven



God and gender: Identity Crises - continued

you, saved you, and given you a position of honor! You are his handiwork! Like a sculptor painstakingly sculpts a beautiful statue, God sculpted every bit of you. He created you to do amazing things that are fueled by your real identity.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, you are a son or daughter of God. You didn't do anything to earn that right. God gave you that status because of his indescribable love. That love is what makes you who you are. The more you lean into that truth, the freer you'll be to live out your whole life as his son or daughter.

Prayer: Jesus, I was dead, and you made me alive. I used to follow the ways of the world, but now I get to follow you. Thank you for showing me the real me. Amen.