





# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Why is there suffering? Why does God care about my sex life? Is Jesus the only way to God? God welcomes us with our questions and meets us with His grace and truth. Join us for our new series, *On the Table*, as we unpack eight pressing questions confronting the Christian faith.

## SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Remember that you aren't in this alone! God will help you prepare and lead your group discussion. Make it your goal to keep in step with the Holy Spirit!

Pray and read the passage a few times on your own. Take a few minutes to identify what makes an impression for you and how the passage might impact your group.

Once you've taken some time to read the passage on your own, read through the entire Discussion Guide. Make sure you understand the Main Point. Identify which questions you want to use in your group time and rewrite them in your own words.

Once your group time is over, take a few minutes to evaluate the discussion. What went well? What could have been different? If you had a "bad night," DON'T GIVE UP! Everyone has tough nights. There were times that even the disciples didn't get what Jesus was talking about!

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## FREE RESOURCES

To equip you as a leader, we provide resources each series to help you and members of your group understand and respond to the biblical truths we're studying as a church. Don't forget about the Mariners Annual Read and the [Gospel Every Day podcast](#) discussing each devotional.

The CSB Study Bible is an excellent resource if you'd prefer a physical copy of the translation used by Mariners Church. It is available for purchase online and in the [bookstore](#) at Irvine.

All Scripture references in this guide are CSB unless otherwise noted.

### HOW TO USE THE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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## MAIN POINT

Discussions often take on a life of their own, but they typically lack power when they lack focus. The Discussion Leader ought to use the Main Point to keep everyone on the same page. To do this, you might say something like, "That is very interesting and a good topic for another discussion, but today's study is about..." and ask a question that brings people back to the topic of discussion. There will be times when it makes sense to ignore the Main Point—for example, when someone in your group experiences a significant crisis. If you decide to move away from the lesson's Main Point, you want to do so on purpose and not by accident.

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## RHYTHM REMINDERS

A prompt will be provided when one of the 7 Rhythms of Rooted has a natural point of emphasis. We want to help everyone continue to grow holistically in their spiritual journeys. Obviously, some rhythms always exist, like prayer, but occasionally it will be helpful to draw fresh attention to or spend additional time in one of the rhythms.

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## **LEADER NOTES**

Where needed, each lesson may have several Leader Notes. This material will provide insight on how to steer the conversation and care for your people. Additionally, these notes will provide greater context to help you understand a difficult word, phrase, or verse.

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## **LEAN IN BREAK THE ICE**

These questions will help kick-start your discussion time. The main goal for this time is to get everyone talking and prepare them for the more focused conversation to follow.

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## **LOOK DOWN LOOK AT GOD'S WORD**

The goal for this section is to let the passage speak for itself and stand on its own. This isn't easy! During this time, you will read the passage out loud (twice) and answer questions focused on the details of the biblical text.

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## **LOOK OUT IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD**

Jesus calls us to love others, just as He loved us. Based on your understanding of the text and how God is transforming your heart, how will you treat others? How will you apply this teaching to all of your relationships and to everyone you will see this week and beyond?

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## **LOOK IN APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE**

Transformation comes from renewing your mind (Romans 12:2). The goal for this section is to look inward to allow God's Word to change you from the inside out. Use this time to discuss how your thoughts and feelings are affirmed and/or challenged.

Be sure to close your time together in prayer. You can take requests from the group, invite others to lead, and bring God the needs that stood out to you in your group time.

# WEEK 5: WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT GENDER DYSPHORIA AND THE TRANSGENDER MOVEMENT?

## GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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### PREPARE

Listen and subscribe to the [Mariners Life Group Leader Podcast](#). Each episode includes a quick conversation to help you prepare for your study, discussion, and application. The first week of each series, Eric will share key thoughts and hopes for your group.



### ROOTED RHYTHMNS

If you missed the weekend message or want to review specific points, you can always watch, listen, and find bulletin notes online at [marinerschurch.org/messages](http://marinerschurch.org/messages).

Repentance, worship

### MAIN POINT

The Bible articulates a high view of personhood as beings created in the image of God, male and female, who are united in mind and body. Living according to this truth is to have happiness and health with regard to our sex and gender.

### LEAN IN

BREAK THE ICE

**In what ways have you seen questions related to sex, gender dysphoria, and transgenderism impact your own life, as well as the Church?**

**In general, how well-equipped is the Church to answer questions about gender dysphoria and transgenderism? Explain.**

**Leader Note:** Eric stated that in bringing the truth of the Bible to bear on this topic, he was not looking for issues to discuss, but rather addressing an issue that has come to the Church. The Scriptures are not silent on these issues, and the goal of the group time is to gain clarity on how the gospel applies to issues related to sex and gender. As we do so, it's important to remember what Eric pointed out about how the Bible talks about these things—*Scripture gives us clarity and compassion because it's not merely an abstract issue, but also about people God has created and loves.*

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# LOOK DOWN

LOOK AT  
GOD'S WORD

**Eric defined four key terms so that we could be on the same page when we talked about this very important and sensitive issue. Discuss each of these definitions and ensure clarity for every person in the group.**

**Sex:** Male or female, typically with reference to chromosomes, internal reproductive anatomy, and external genitals (Mark Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*)

**Gender Identity:** A person's self-perception of whether they are male or female, masculine or feminine (Andrew Walker, *What Does The Bible Say About Gender Identity*).

**Gender dysphoria:** The sense of mismatch between physical sex (body) and psychological gender identity (mind). (Nancy Pearcy, *Love Thy Body*)

**Transgender:** An umbrella term for many experiences of gender identity that do not align normatively with a person's biological sex (Mark and Julia Sadusky, *Emerging Gender Identities*)

Read Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

**What things do we learn about humanity and our bodies from this passage? How do these things inform the way we think about sex and gender?**

**Leader Note:** From this passage, Eric pointed out that God articulates a high view of the body. God created each person in His image. He did not set His image on the birds, the animals, the sunset, the ocean, or the forest. He set His image on people, and the verse is clear that He made people male and female. There is distinction between men and women in the first chapter in the Bible, and the distinction is created by God, not us.

Read Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

**What relationship between mind and body exists according to this passage?**

**How does this view inform the way that we treat our bodies? How does it inform the way that we counsel others seeking guidance on this issue?**

**Leader Note:** The general message of the world is, “If you face gender dysphoria, which is a disconnect between your mind and your body, then listen to your mind and change your body.” This is fundamentally opposed to the biblical view of the relationship between the mind and the body. The counsel of the Bible is, “Offer your body and allow God to transform your mind.”

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**LOOK OUT**  
IDENTIFY THE  
RELEVANCE OF  
GOD’S WORD IN  
THE WORLD

**Given what Eric said about the search for happiness being the driving motivation behind gender dysphoria and transgenderism, how does that impact the way we view and communicate the gospel with someone who supports or practices these ideas?**

**Leader Note:** Transgender people want to be happy. God loves transgender people and wants them to be happy. The Scripture offers a different view than the world does on where our bodies came from and how to be happy, and it is a view for all people in all cultures for all of time. To supporters and practitioners of this worldview, we can say, “You have been made by God and He is the One who gives joy.” To follow Jesus and submit our minds and bodies to Him is not to keep people from what brings happiness, but to receive the very happiness we were made to enjoy.

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**LOOK IN**  
APPLY GOD’S  
WORD TO  
YOUR LIFE

**How would you counsel someone who desires to live as the opposite gender than the one they were given? How would you counsel someone who claims that they cannot change their desire to be the opposite gender?**

**Leader Note:** Eric reminded us that we must not dismiss those who struggle in this area, for we know what it is to believe we are not at home in this world, and we believe all people are created in His image. Further, we also believe Christ and His Church want to disciple people toward health and integration of body and mind, and that is where true happiness lies.