

- “...I am proud of you!”
- “...you have what it takes to be a man (or a woman).”
- “...you bring me great joy.”
- “...I believe in you.”
- “...I will fight for you.”
- “...I will never give up on you or desert you.”
- “...you are beautiful.” [if a girl]
- “...you are a strong man.” [if a guy]
- “...I love Jesus and want you to love Him too.”
- “...I love you.”

Years ago: well-known sex symbol was asked, “How does a man know he’s a man?”

“A man knows he’s a man when his daddy tells him he is.” That’s that affirmation.

Affection: can’t cuddle with sons too much. Verbal (“I love you”) and physical. We hear, “I really wanted to be held by a man.”

Attention: For rough and tumble, attention is *proximity*. If dad is nearby, that counts as attention. But a dad’s focused attention is a huge gift. [Ray on the sidelines at soccer games.]

Sensitive boys: not proximity but *presence*.

- Alone, with no other distractions.
- Face-to-face. Eye contact. (“Starbucks boys”)
- Spanish-speaking dad | Chinese-speaking son.

Will seek that attention from somewhere → Mom. Nurturing, relational. Will connect deeply with Mom, disconnect from Dad.

Femininity becomes the known, masculinity is the unknown, the mysterious.

Gender insecurity: no confidence in being male.

God’s plan: connect 1) Mom, 2) Dad, 3) Same-sex peers, 4) Opposite sex.

Dad-shaped hole, or buddy-shaped hole.

Puberty: add sex hormones to the hole in their heart and the mystery of the masculine, BAM! Same-sex attraction.

Female

More complex than males

God's intention: by design, females are:

- Relational
- Nurturing
- Vulnerable
- Responsive
- Desire to be found beautiful

Gender spectrum – femininity

Either girly-girl or tomboy or somewhere in the middle, there are things every girl needs to be emotionally healthy.

Layers: first attach and bond to Mom . . . then Dad . . . then other girls . . . then guys.

3 A's from Dad:

Affirmation: that she's a girl, that he finds her charming and alluring and beautiful. *Celebrating* that she's a girl. Treating her like his princess instead of his tiger cub son. *Cherishing* her, *believing* in her, *blessing* her. Sees her in a dress and says, "You are so beautiful!" The male voice speaks truth and authority. A girl can hear she's beautiful from her mother, but she believes it when she hears it from her daddy. "I am beautiful because my daddy says so."

Affection: Verbal ("I love you") and physical, safe and non-sexual touch. Protective: dad is hero.

Attention: he recognizes what she is feeling and validates her feelings when she expresses them. Not:

"Be quiet, we don't talk about those sorts of things,"

"That's silly, why are you crying over that? Stop crying,"

"Stop being so emotional. That's ridiculous."

From Mom:

Affirmation: the girl needs her mother not so much to tell her that she's beautiful, but

- to show her what beauty is
- to embody that sense of beauty, confidence, and strength,
- to affirm those things in her daughter, saying, "You're like me. You're different from your father."

Affection: verbal and physical. Show her what it means to be a part of the world of girls. Brush her hair, have her sit with you when you put on makeup or the things you do that

confirm you are a woman. Lesbian girls and women have no confidence that they belong in the world of females. The way you learn to be a woman is to hang around women.

Attention: OK to express her feelings and validate them

If anything happens, believe her. Lots of wounds from reporting abuse or violation and mom doesn't believe her.

- Or minimizes it.
- Or says it was her fault.
- Or says, "You must have done something to invite it."

But what happens if this little girl doesn't get these needs met?

- What happens if Dad never blesses/affirms her?
- What happens if instead of celebrating her femininity, he only affirms her in the things that he relates to really well. So, let's say that she becomes very sportsy or very tough. She lives up to his expectation for her to be the replacement for the boy he never had. He doesn't celebrate her beauty, he just kind of treats her like a son.
- Or what if the only attention she gets from dad is when he needs her to go do something with him, and the things that he goes and does are always guy things like fishing or watching sports. Or what if dad's never really around?
- Or he's mean and abusive?

There could be a lot of things that go wrong here, but in every case there develops something in the girl that isn't right, and things begin to change for her.

Or what if things are messed up with her mother?

- What if mom doesn't feel good about her own femininity, and speaks to the daughter about how women are weak and helpless and men are no good and terrible and only want one thing from you anyway, and she degrades women to the girl?
- What if mom is not mentally very healthy, or is at a place in her life where she can't function the way she needs to? What if she's chronically depressed, or an alcoholic, and the girl becomes the mother and the caretaker instead of the other way round?
- Or if she has to protect mom from an abusive father?
- Or if the mom lacked affection as a child and doesn't know how to show affection to the girl and withdraws?

So all of a sudden, something else changes in this little girl. *It is neither safe nor good to be a girl.* Gender identity problems.

Lies from the Culture:

“People are born gay.”

Not a shred of scientific evidence.

No gay gene.

Too complex an issue: like being prejudiced. Or materialistic.

“People choose to be gay.”

Feelings are discovered, not chosen. Actions are chosen. Diving into in the gay life is a choice.

“Being gay is not changeable.”

Ex-gays in the church at Corinth.

1 Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

1 Cor 6:10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 6:11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

“If you have same-sex attractions, that means you're gay or lesbian.”

Unmet, legitimate, God-given needs for attention, affection and approval

Crushes on other people are a normal part of the transition from child to adult

“I can't pray the gay away, so it must be God's design.”

Same-sex attractions are 100% flesh, which is not fixable or redeemable. God calls us to crucify the flesh, not pray for Him to take it away.

You can't pray away SSA, just like you can't pray away dandelions. You have to deal with the root.

Everyone has an area of weakness that makes it easier for us to recognize our need for God and depend on Him more fully, which is His design and intent for us.

Asking for relief: “I want You to make me comfortable so I won’t need You.”

Why doesn’t God take away homosexual feelings? Because they are not a separate part of the person like a nasal polyp or an infected appendix that can be cut out to restore health. Feelings are a part of us. They are the product of beliefs, actions, and the way one sees life and reality. Feelings are like the caboose on a train; they trail along at the end, pulled by the parts that do the work.

God will not “zap” us because to do so would be to eradicate who we are. He will not remove feelings because feelings are part of the *imago Dei*, the image of God. He made us, He loves us just as we are, and He wants to work with us to transform our thinking and our understanding of who He is, who we are, how life works, and what is true. Romans 12:2 says, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” When we change the way we think and the way we do life, our feelings will eventually change. (Not necessarily 180 degrees, but some degree of transformation is part of the power of the Gospel!)

I believe that God says “no” to zapping away homosexual feelings because He has something better. He is passionate about growing us up to maturity (Eph. 4:13-15). There is no shortcut to maturity; it means struggling through to connect, attach and bond with healthy people until we finish growing up.

Kids who struggle with gender identity are going to push for parents and authority figures to accept them as they believe they are.

They will threaten isolation, death.

Parents need to love their children well and draw a line in the sand about what God’s word says about our identity.

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