

TRANSGENDER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE TALKING POINTS SERIES

This series does not aim to say everything there is to say about a subject, but to give an overview and a solid grounding to how Christians should think about the issue from the Bible. We hope that as you discuss this book, and the Bible passages that it is based on, you will gain in confidence to speak faithfully, compassionately and wisely to others.

Below is an extensive list of questions. Please pick and choose the ones that suit your group, and the time you have available. If you are leading a group, try to keep constantly in people's minds that this is not simply a discussion about an "ism"—but that these are real feelings felt by real people who need our love, compassion, and above all the gospel message of hope.

TO START:

- Think about some of the interactions you've had about transgenderism—either people you know, or portrayals you've seen in the media/TV/social media. What has been your instinctive reaction?
- Do you know anyone who might put themselves under the transgender umbrella in some way or another? What are their fears, hopes, confusions as people? If you have not, then read the testimony of a transgender person here: www.thegoodbook.co.uk/blog and discuss what comes out of it.
- Look at the quotes on page 12. What pain lies behind these quotes from transgender people? What confusions are contained in them?

CHAPTER 1: TRANSGENDER

- What do you understand by the term "transgender"? How have the descriptions and definitions in this book helped you understand the breadth and depth of the feelings people have?
- Would you say your natural response has been "*Yuk!*" or "*Yes!*" (p.19)? Why are both of these inadequate responses for a Christian?

CHAPTER 2: THE iWORLD

- Do you recognise the description of the way the world has changed? What is positive about this change? What do you think is negative?
- How much would you say you have been influenced by this shift in thinking yourself?

CHAPTER 3: CREATION

- Why is the Christian view of creation so fundamental to how we think about this issue? Whatever you believe about precisely how God created the world and us, are you convinced that it is true that God is both our designer and creator?
- How would you express this view to someone who was not a Christian believer? How does the "art-restoration" illustration help? (p.36).
- It feels lousy to object when people are celebrating a decision to, say, transition or come out. What might we say that both affirms them as human being, but also registers our reservations? Is there any hope that Christians will not be misunderstood or branded as transphobic?
- How have we unhelpfully contributed to overly rigid gender stereotypes (p. 42-44)? How can we be more affirming of people and children who do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes?

CHAPTER 4: FALL

- How do these twin Christian ideas of Creation and Fall explain so much of the complexity of life?
- “Some of our struggles are more obvious than others, but all of us are works in progress.” How does having this attitude help us when talking to transgender people?

CHAPTER 5: RESCUE

- How is the gospel really good news for people experiencing transgender feelings?
- How might you express this to someone who is deeply distressed by an experience of gender dysphoria?
- How might you express it to someone is hostile to the Christian message?

CHAPTER 6: WISDOM

- Work through each of the 6 questions. Do you agree with the suggestions made? How would you take the conversation further in each case?
- Imagine an obviously transgender person walked into your church. How do you think your church family would respond? How should you respond?
- What are some other issues that you need wisdom on? Using the principles outlined in the book, How would you start to answer them?
- Vaughan writes about the need for our churches to:
 1. promote a rounded, healthy and biblical view of gender that doesn't resort to stereotypes, and;
 2. create a culture of honesty and pastoral sensitivity that allows people experiencing gender dysphoria to be honest and be cared for.
- How do you think your church is doing on both of those counts? Would it be a safe place for Christians experiencing gender dysphoria to be honest and open about their struggles?

TO FINISH

- What's the big thing that has impacted you from reading Transgender?
- How will you work to moderate your Yuk! or Yes! instincts?
- What extra help and information do you think you need to be more confident about what you believe on this subject?

PRAY

- Ask God to help you understand the issue and the people better.
- Pray that your church would be open and welcoming to all kinds of people.
- Pray for any transgender people you may know, and for their families and friends who are seeking to give Christian care and counsel to them.
- Pray especially for parents who will field questions from their children about these things.

