

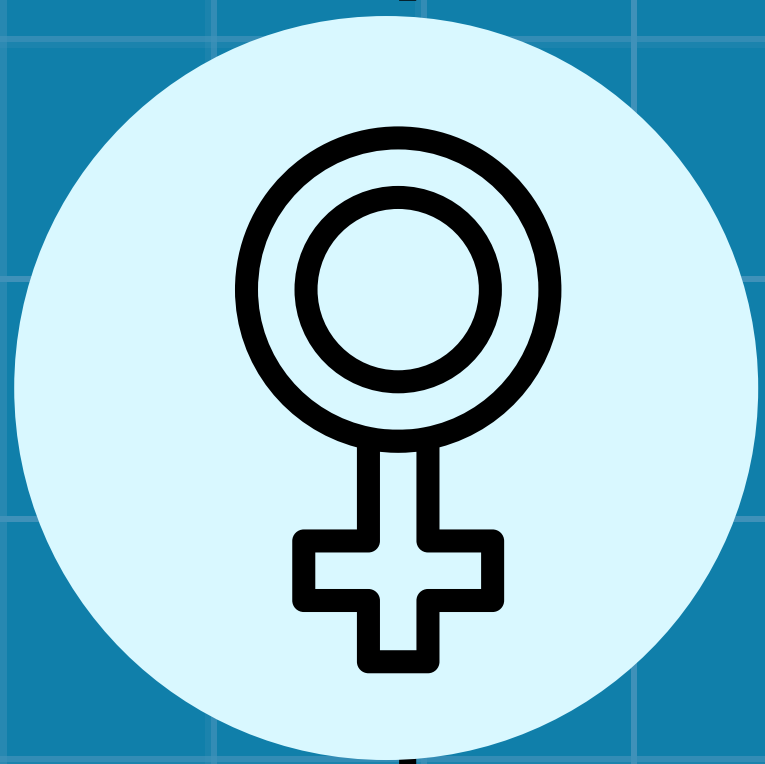
Gender and Sexuality



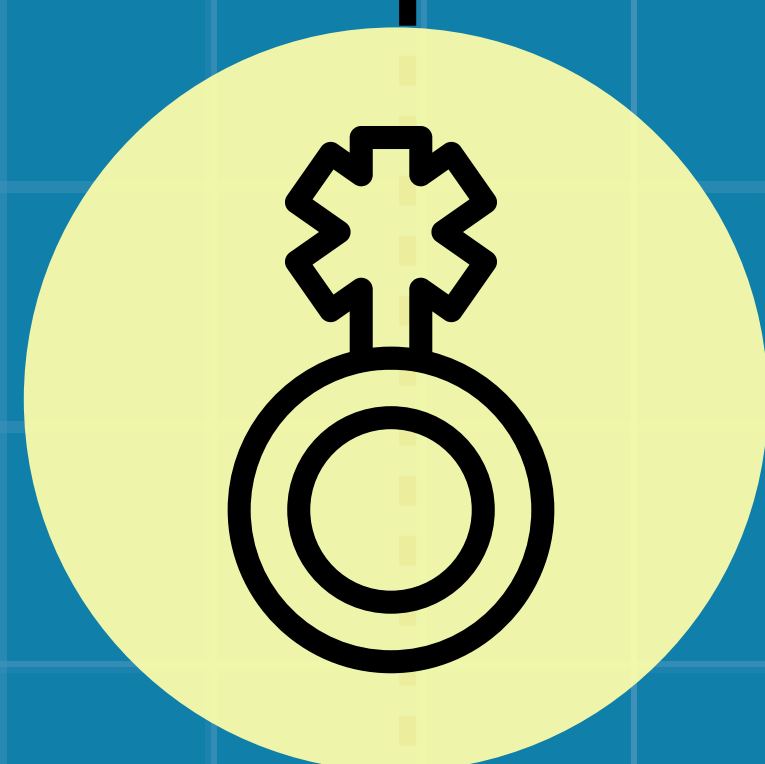
Sex and Gender



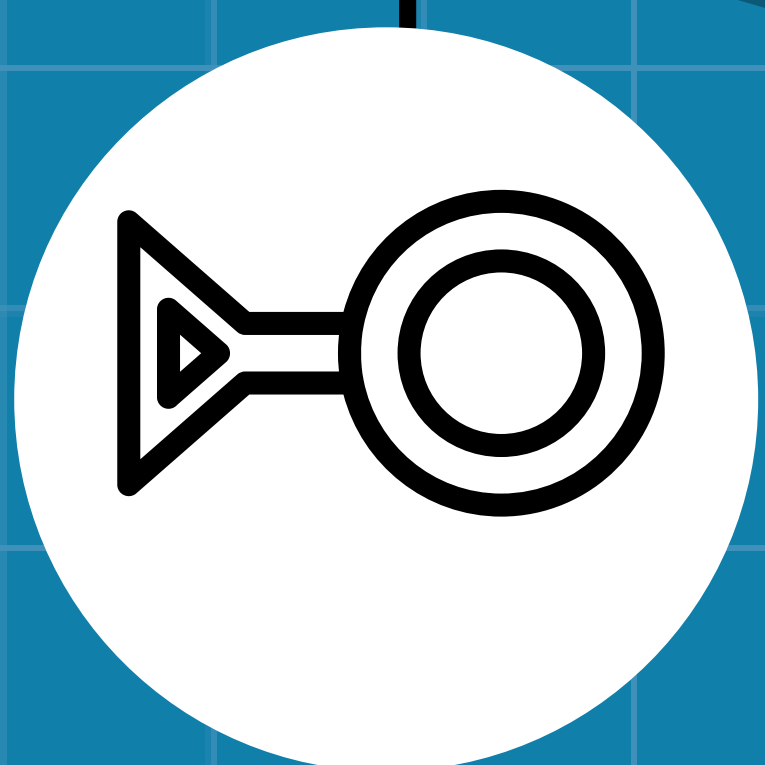
Sex and gender. They're hot topics in today's society, aren't they?



Perhaps you've heard cultural claims that don't seem to line up with the biblical foundation you've been taught at home or at church, statements like, "There are multiple genders" or "Gender is just a construct."

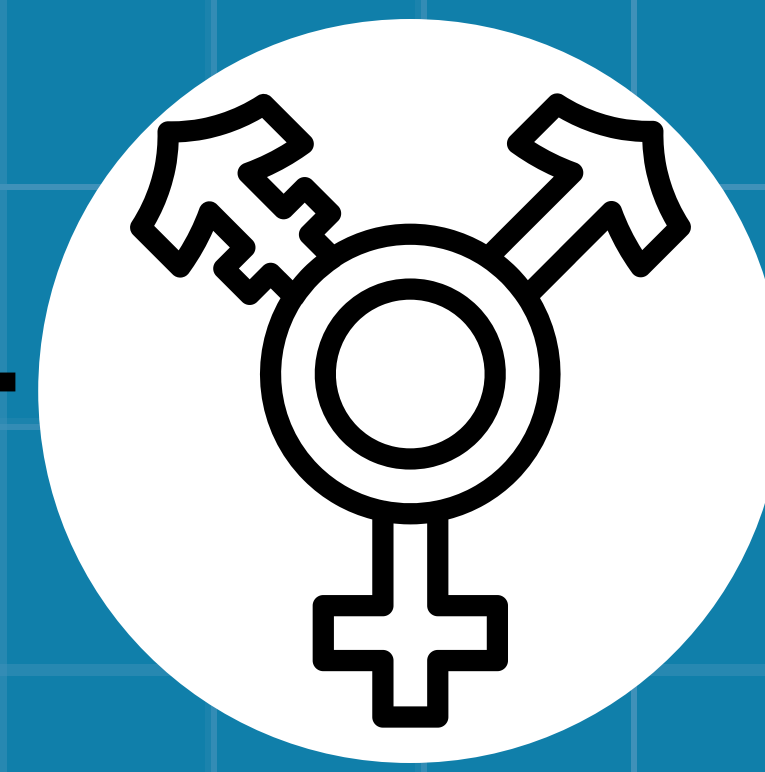
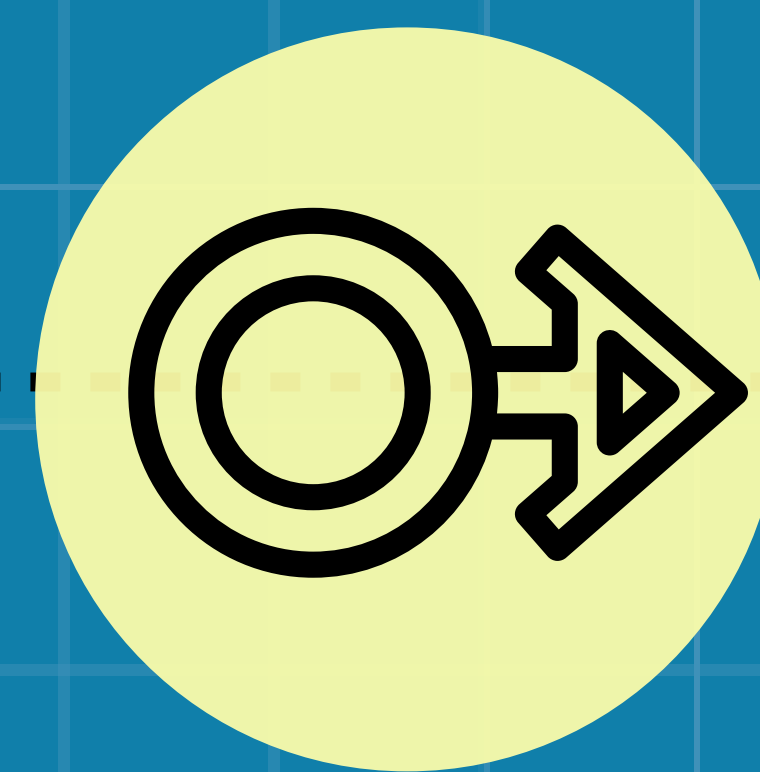
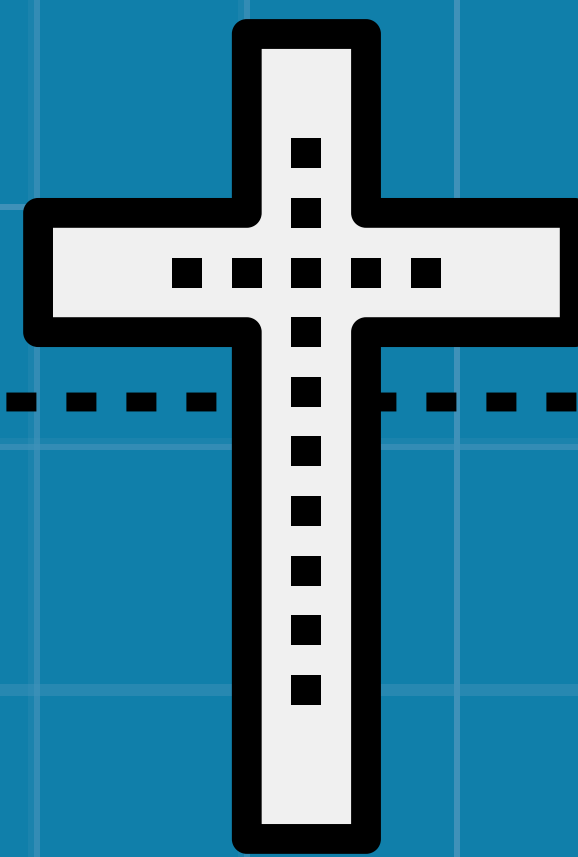
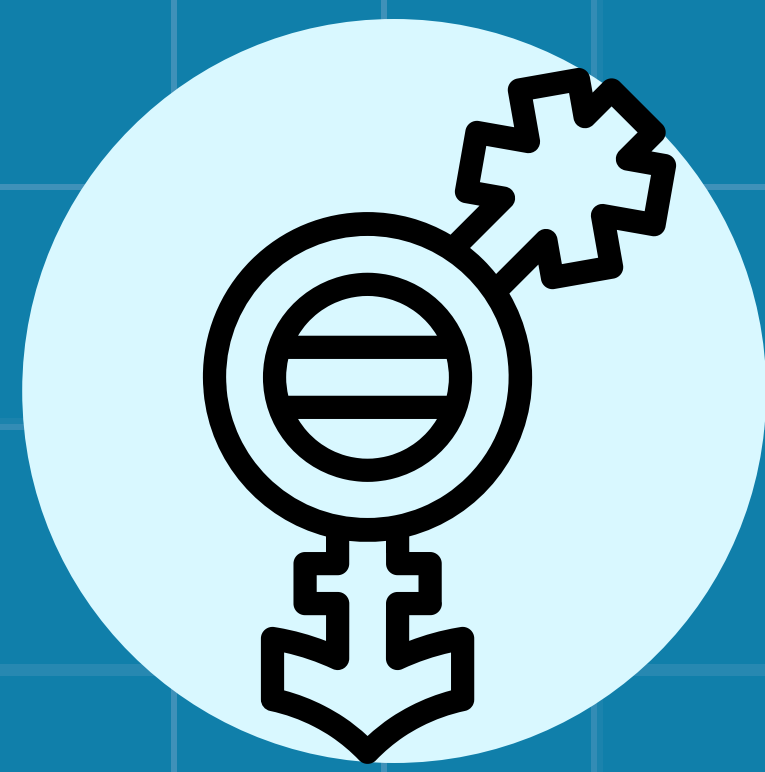
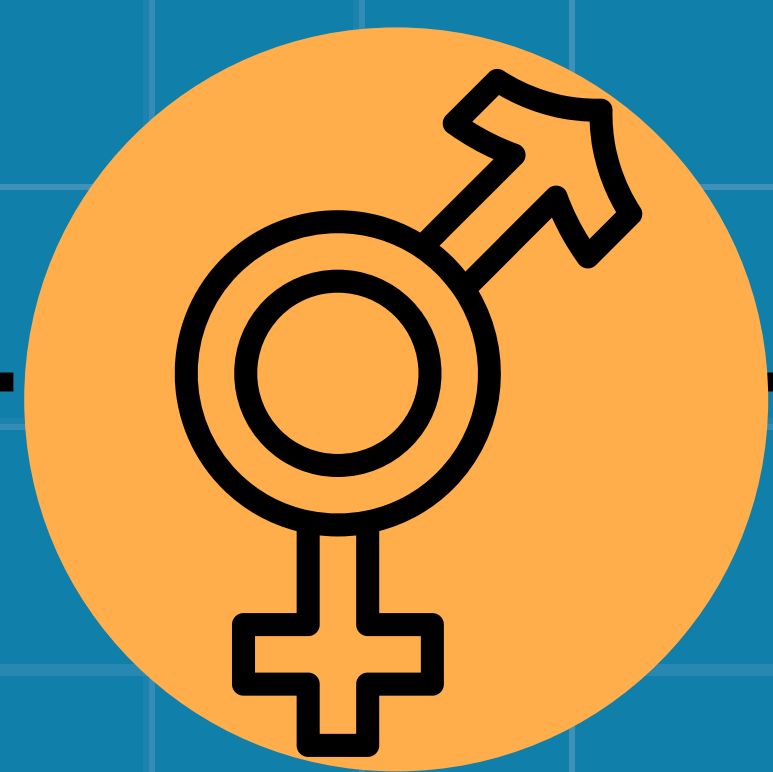


Maybe you've met someone who questions whether he's male or female, or you have a female friend who is struggling to know which pronouns to use.



Or perhaps it's you. Perhaps you're contemplating puberty blockers because you need time to figure out who you are.

If so, this infographic, and its series, is for you.



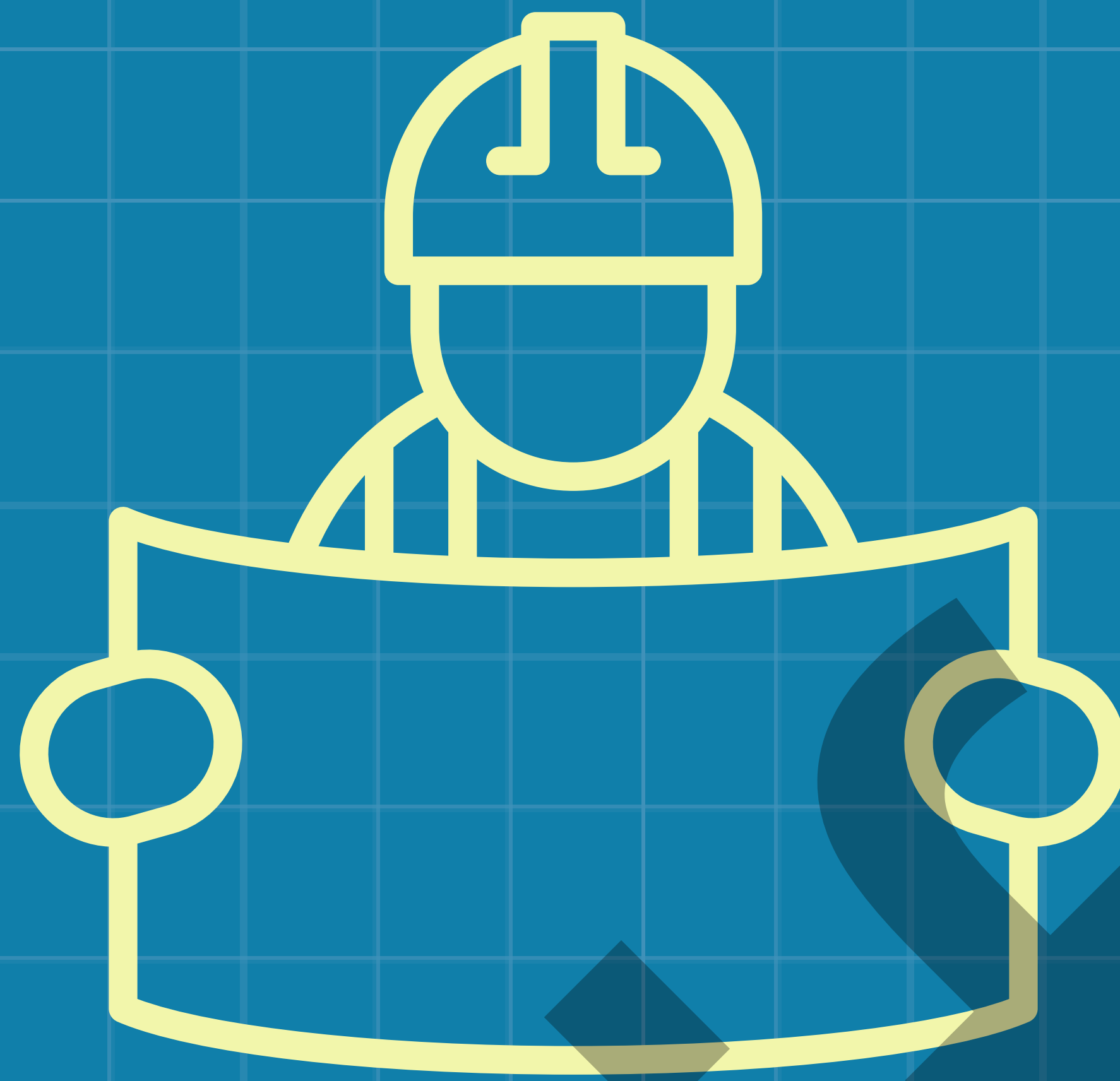
I'll be honest. The truths contained within may be difficult to hear. Why? Because biblical truths are inherently counter-cultural. Instead of ideas created by man, the truths in this infographic come from a holy God, One who hasn't been broken by sin. And because they reflect the Creator of all things, including science, they are scientifically accurate.

Yet, despite their difficulty, it is my hope that these truths will also be delightful, for the message within is not only counter-cultural because it is true, but also because it is loving. Instead of allowing us to remain comfortable in our brokenness, God's Word and truth remind us of the good gifts He intends to give and turn us back toward Him. God's Word is sure and certain; His gifts and mercies are dependable.

Truth 1: Biological sex can't be changed or chosen.

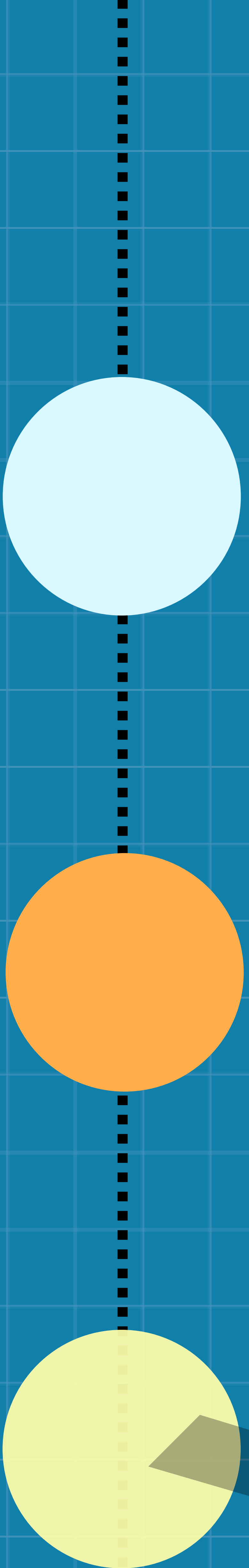
Rather than a cultural construct, our sex is woven into our very DNA from the moment we were first conceived. In fact, it plays a role in every stage of development; it is tied to every cell and organ system. **Sex and DNA cannot be separated.**





Like an architect's building plan, our DNA (our genotype) determines how our body will grow and develop; it details whether we have male or female bodies and features (our phenotype).

This is a person's biological sex, and it is established at the very beginning of a child's life when, by God's grace, two haploid cells meet to form a new human being.



Though the combination of chromosomes – either XX or XY – determines our biological sex, we know that not all boys are identical. Nor are all girls. Boys and girls will grow to varying heights and weights. They will have different hair and eye colors. They will have different interests and abilities.



These differences are good, and none of them has an effect on our sexual identity.

Sex: *the biological combination of chromosomes that makes an individual male or female*

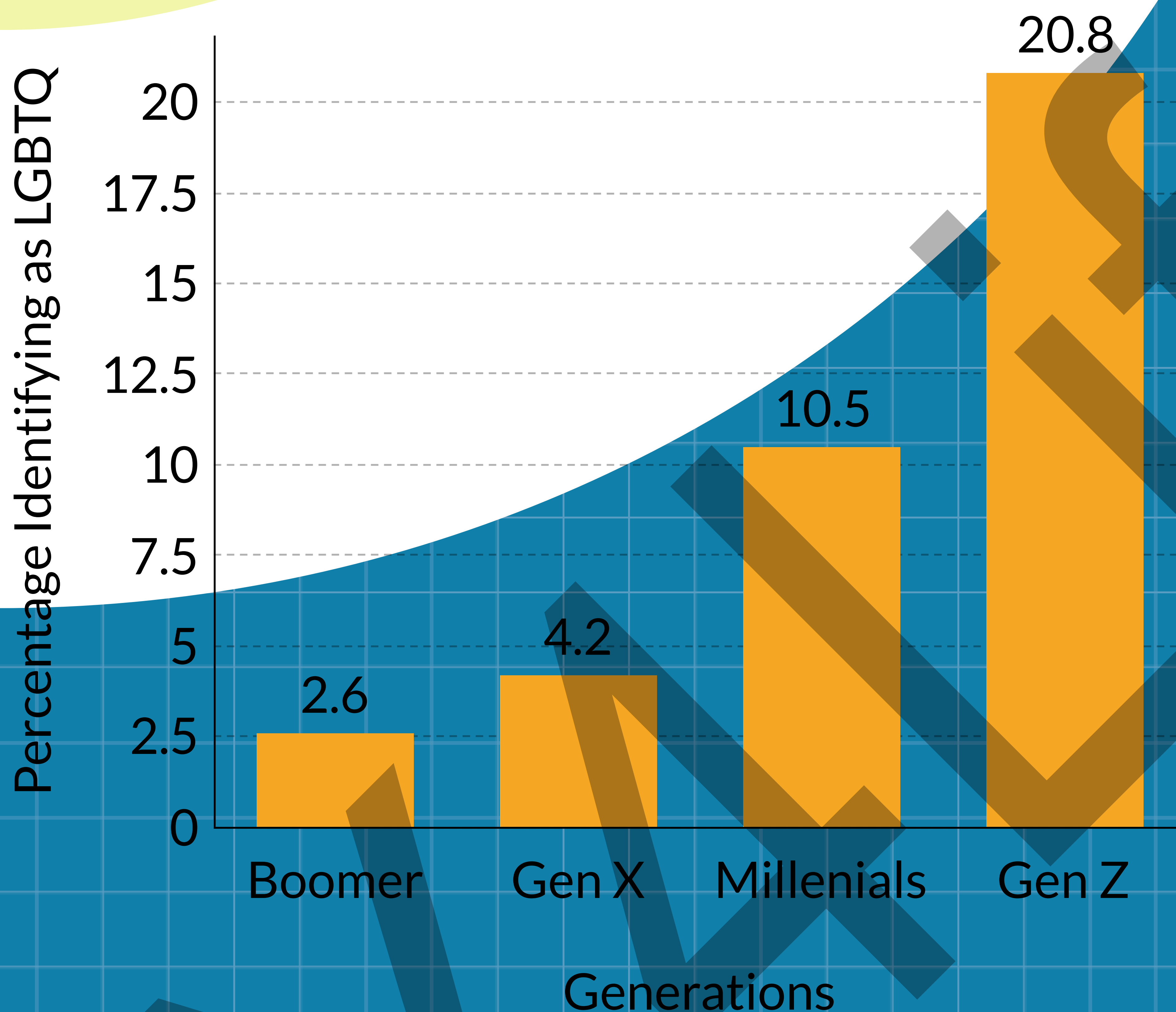
Gender: *putting maleness or femaleness into practice*

Truth 2: Sex and gender are tied together.

Just as our sex is a gift from God, so too is our gender, and it is not something we get to make up for ourselves. Gender, simply stated, is putting maleness or femaleness into practice.

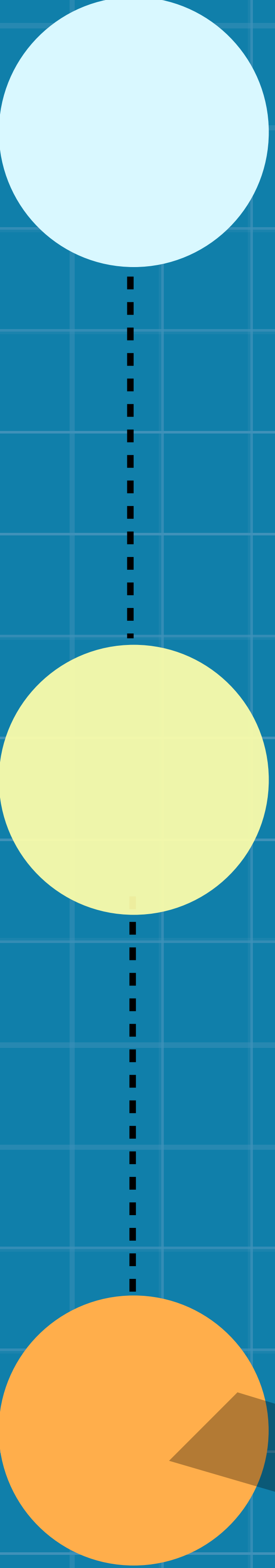
Though gender norms certainly vary somewhat across times and cultures, gender is designed to be intimately connected—tied even—to a person's biological sex.

Contemporary society has seen many efforts to sever those ties.



And those efforts are working.

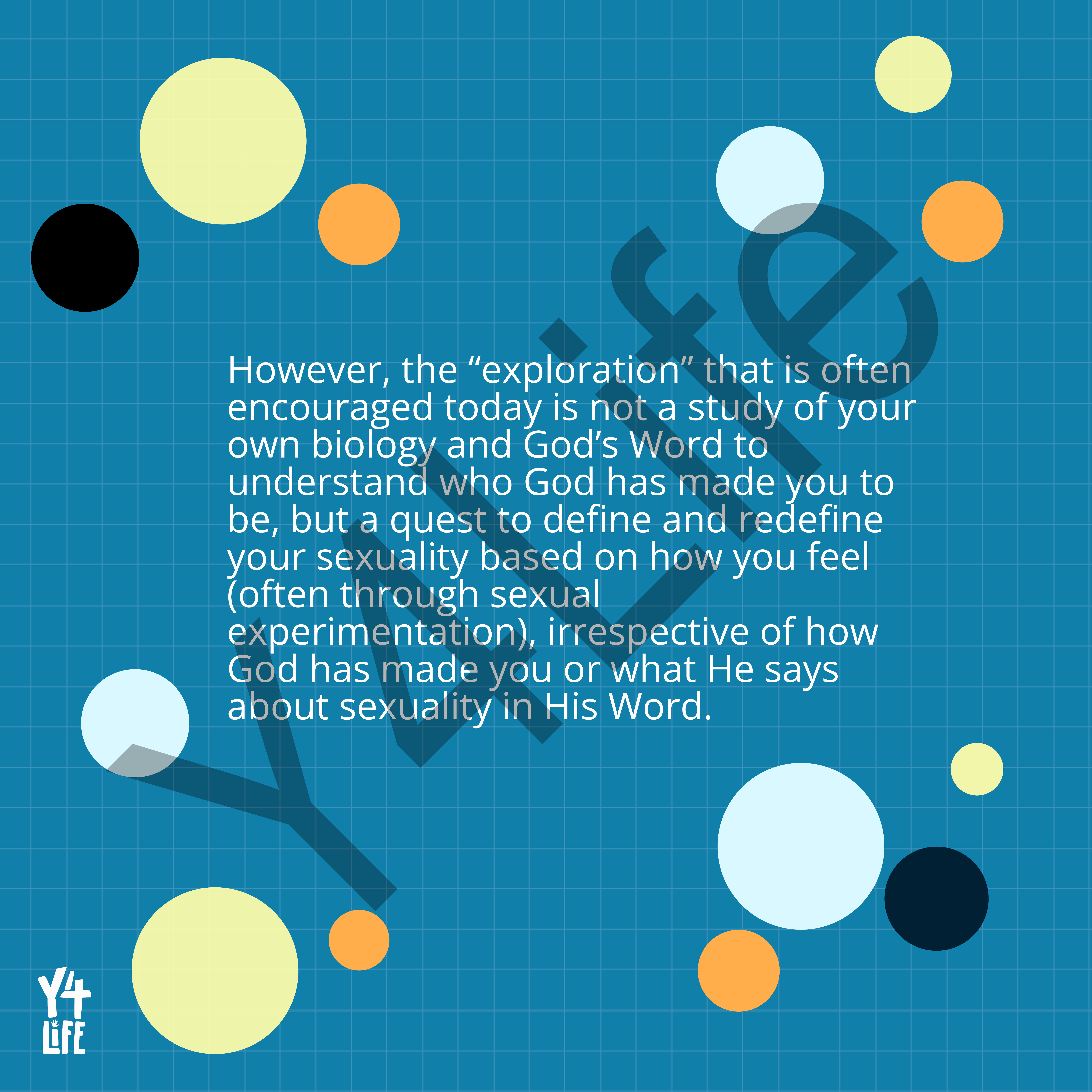
Over 7% of adults in the United States now identify as LGBT+, a dramatic rise from roughly 3.5% of the adult population in the early 2010s. The greatest hike is seen among today's youth. One in five or 20.8% of the adult members of Gen Z now identify as LGBT+, nearly double the rate of millennials (10.5%) and five times the rate of Gen X (4.2%).



Unfortunately, society – and particularly the sex-positive movement – encourages individuals to see themselves as primarily sexual beings rather than the complex and beautifully woven humans God created us to be.

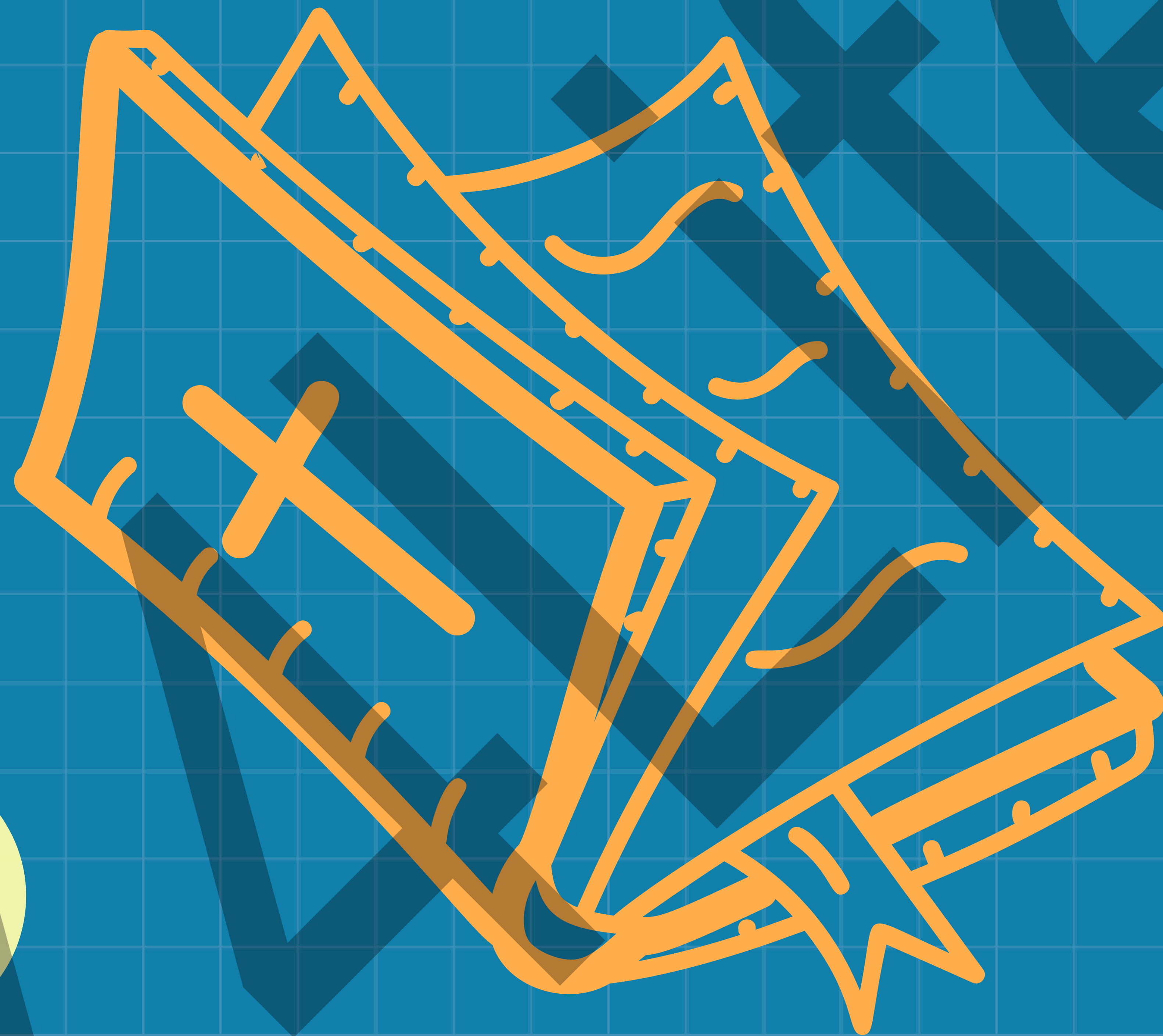
Why is this perspective a risky one? When sex becomes the fundamental aspect of our sense of self, our entire identity is redefined by it.

Here's the thing: It's normal to want to explore your identity, to discover hidden talents and natural abilities, to firm up likes and dislikes, and to understand your place in the world, even as it relates to your gender!

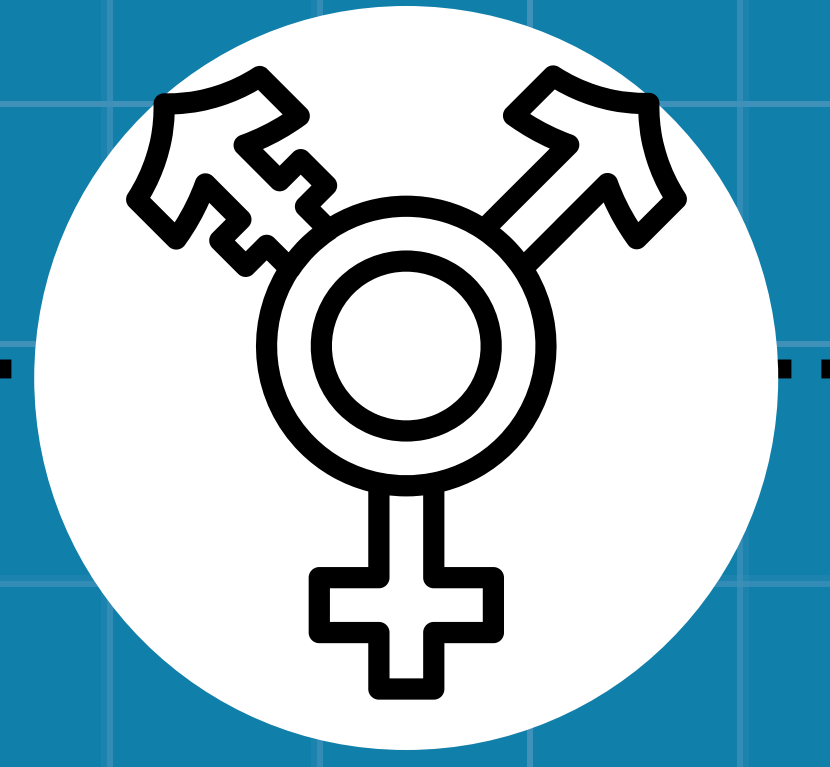
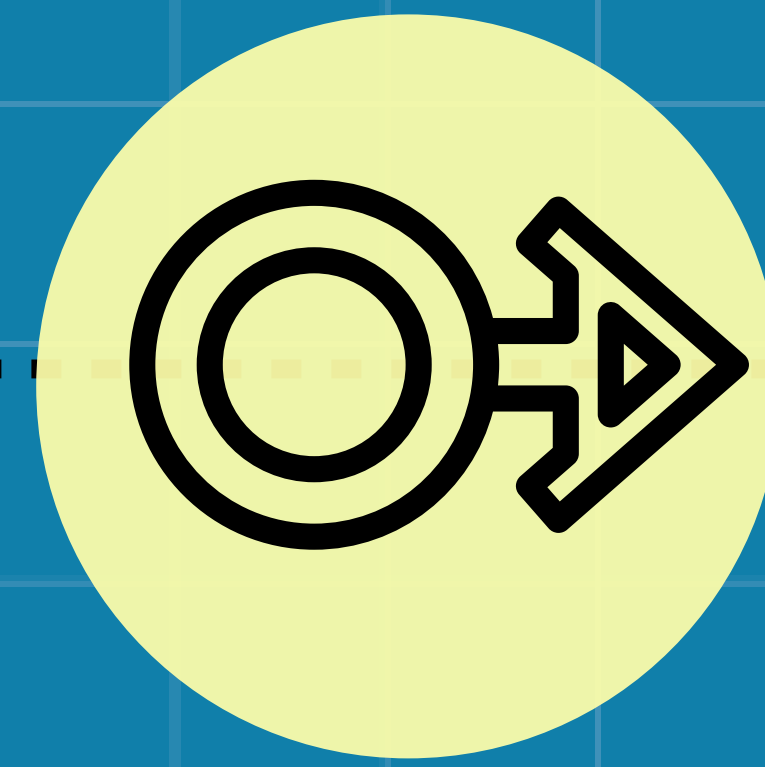
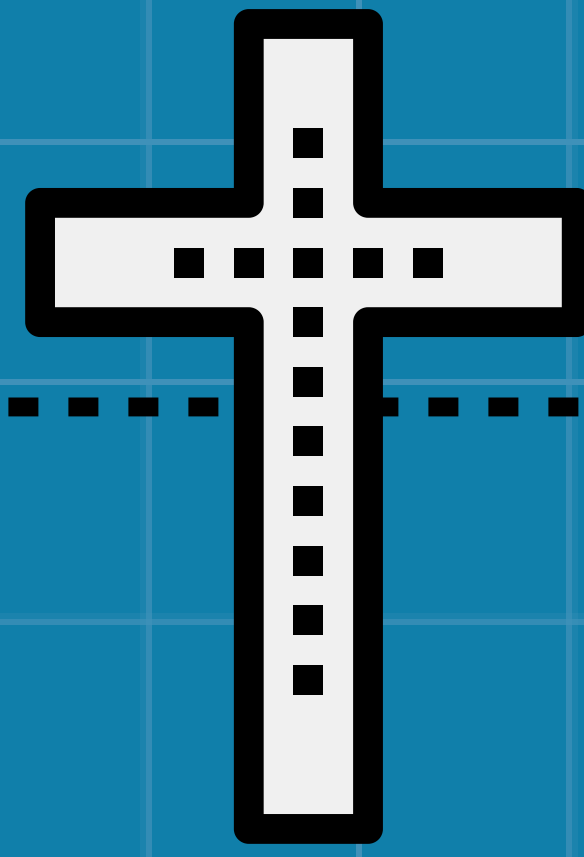
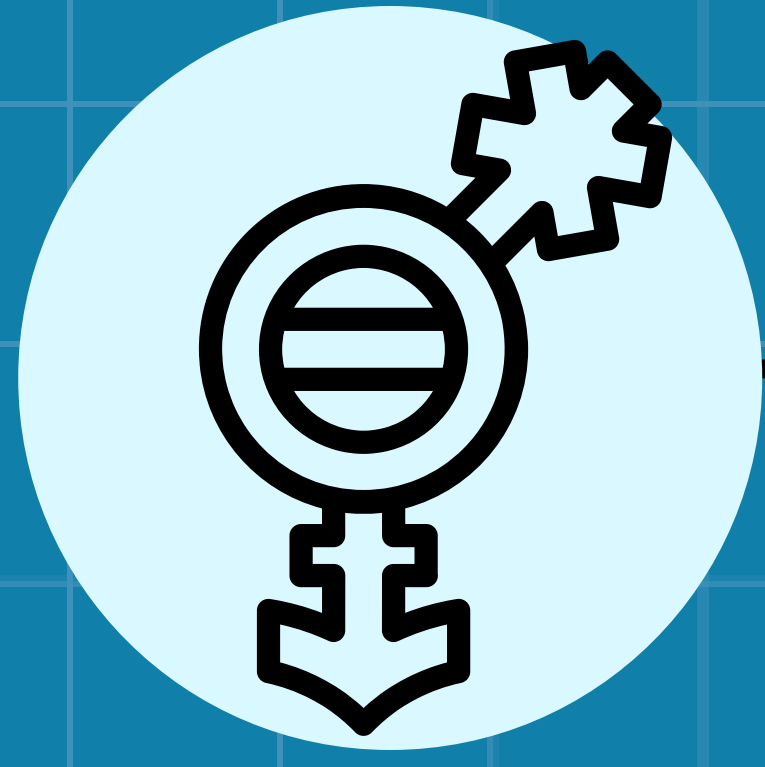
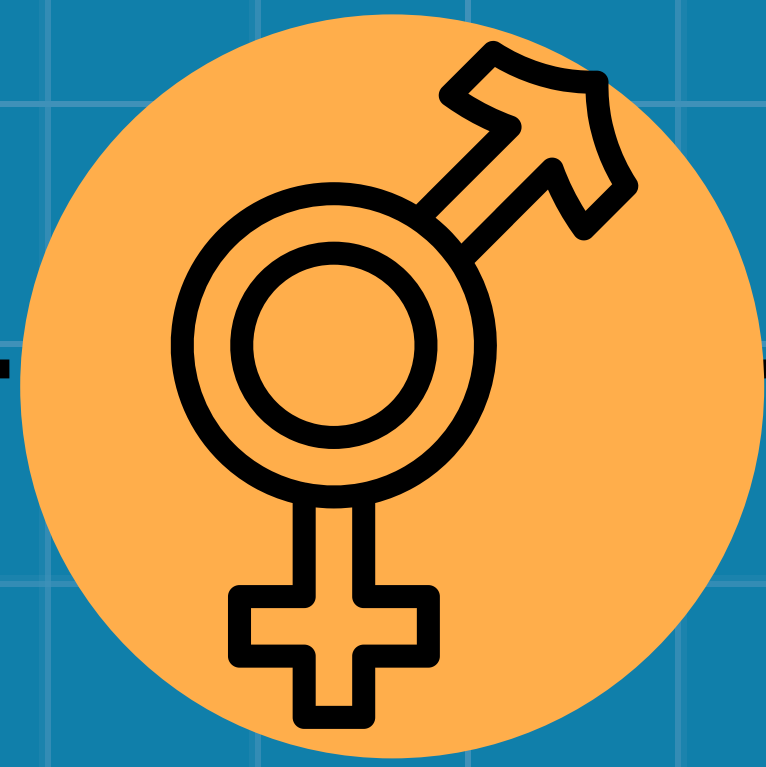


However, the “exploration” that is often encouraged today is not a study of your own biology and God’s Word to understand who God has made you to be, but a quest to define and redefine your sexuality based on how you feel (often through sexual experimentation), irrespective of how God has made you or what He says about sexuality in His Word.

Although some claim Christianity and gender fluidity are perfectly compatible, God's Word says the opposite. In fact, God's Word clearly defines sexuality as a gift we receive from Him, not a self-made tool of personal expression.



Homosexuality, transgenderism, and the like actually deviate from God's design for our lives, rather than affirm it. How do we know these things? Let's start at the beginning...



Truth 3: Biological sex is a gift we receive!

In the beginning, God created...

Man. And woman.

God formed Adam, the first man, out of the dust of the earth and breathed life into him. (See Genesis 1 and 2.) Adam had no hand in making himself; he owed his entire existence to God! Then God created Eve, the first woman, out of Adam's rib. Adam and Eve's biological sex were not something God designed after He gave them life, nor did He give them the freedom to choose which sex they would be. Their sexes were simply part of how God made them.

In the same way, our sex is not something we pick or decide for ourselves. It is part of our createdness, a part of the existence we receive from our Maker. Remember what the prophet Isaiah says,

*"..O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our
potter; we are all the work of
your hand" (Isaiah 64:8).*

*"Does the clay say to him
who forms it, 'What are you
making?' or 'Your work has
no handles?'" (Isaiah 45:9).*

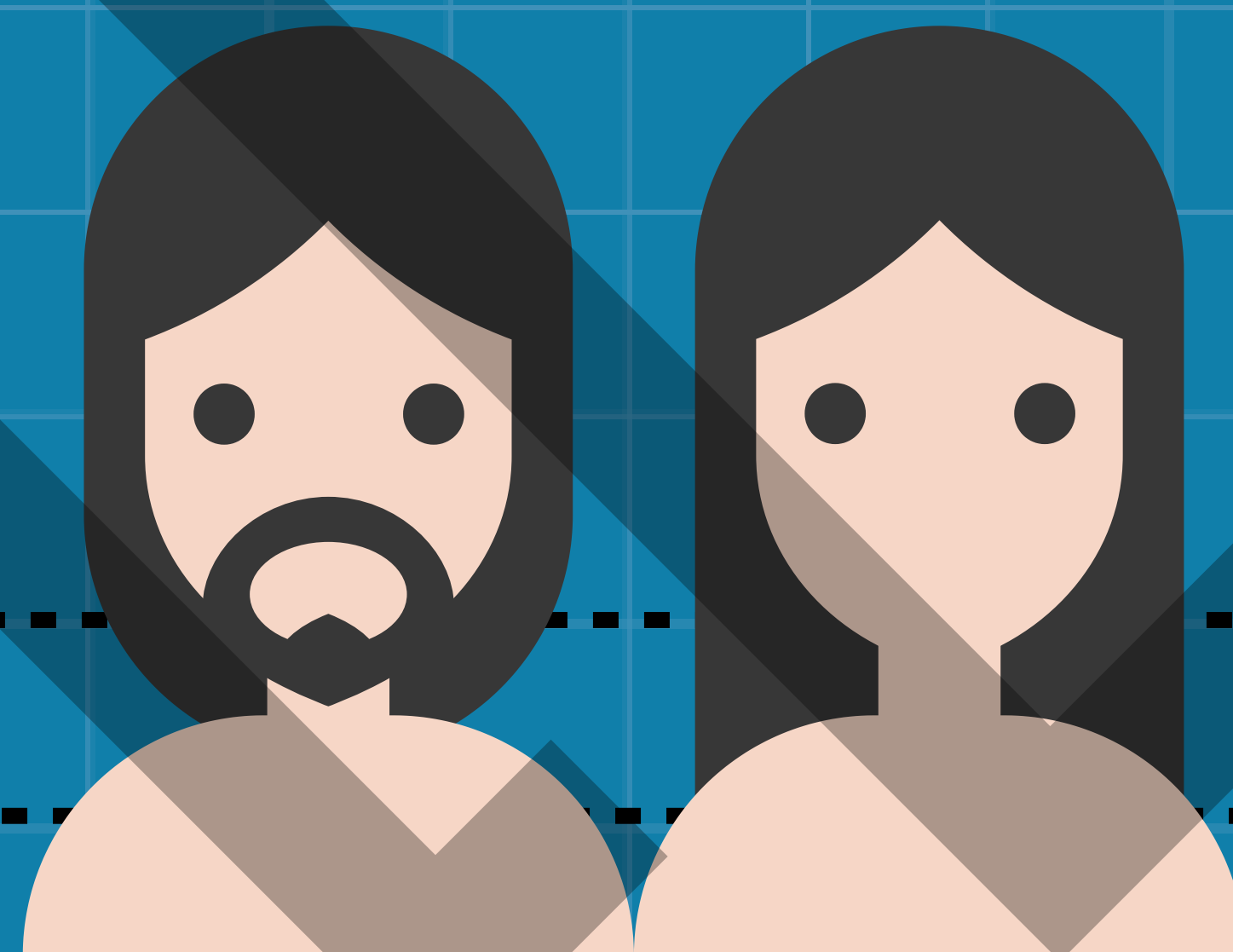


We receive our life—including our biological sex—with thanksgiving to God. It is one of many gifts He designs specifically for us, and we trust His wisdom in giving the best gift to us.

The decision to make us male or female is God's. He ordains our lives and works to "form [our] inward parts," knitting us together in our mother's womb (Psalm 139:13).

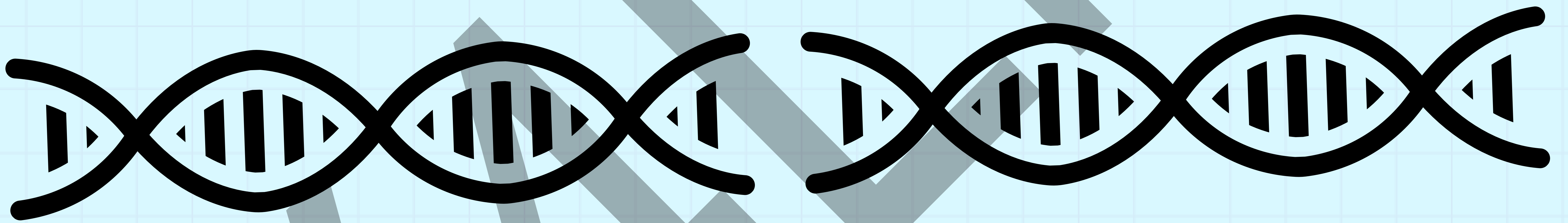
Truth 4: Sex is binary.

Creation also shows us God designed sex as a binary structure: male and female. After God created Adam, He tasked him with tending the garden of Eden. While caring for the garden and the animals within, Adam saw the male-female pattern in the rest of the animals and recognized that there was no suitable companion for him.



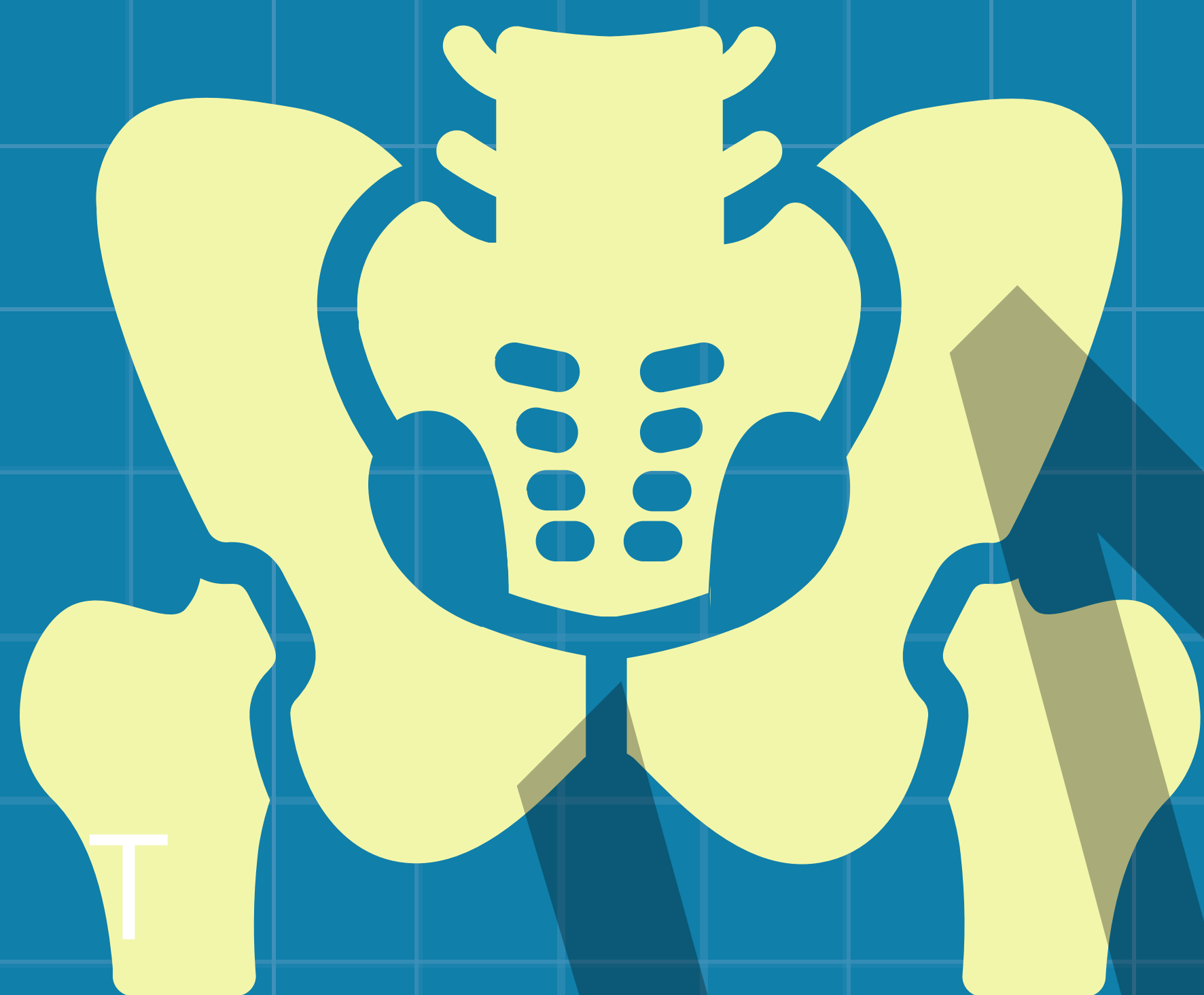
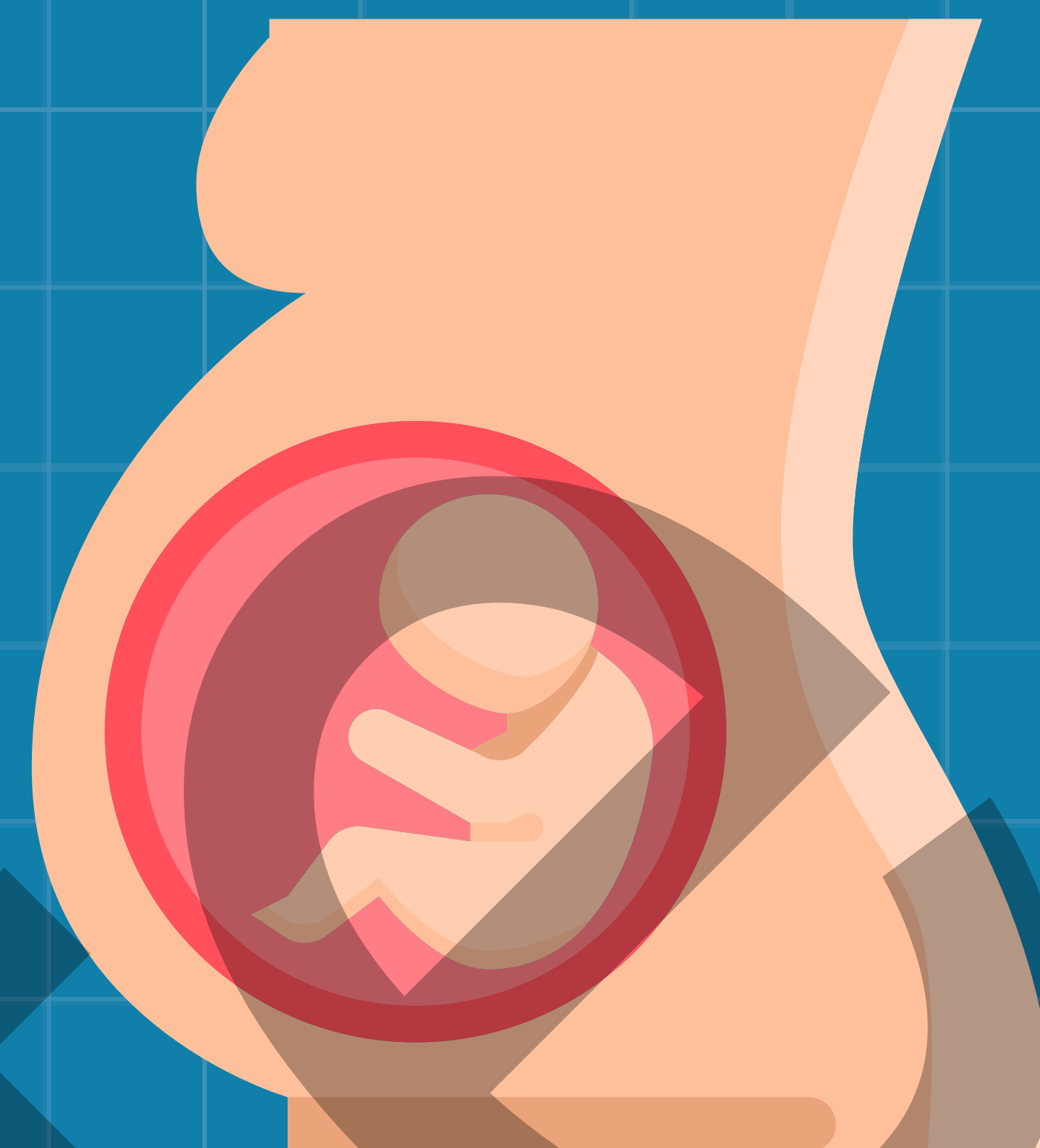
God attended to this by declaring that He would “make [Adam] a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2:18). The helper He made was Eve, the first woman. So, there was man, and there was woman: These are the two types of humans God creates, and these two humans are complementary. In other words, both are needed to create life.

Our own bodies support this binary reality. Rather than a cultural construct, our biological sex was imprinted in our DNA from the moment we were first conceived. In the nucleus of every cell in our bodies, one pair of our chromosomes—called our sex chromosomes—is either XY, making us male, or XX, making us female. These chromosomes direct which sex hormones are present in greater amounts.



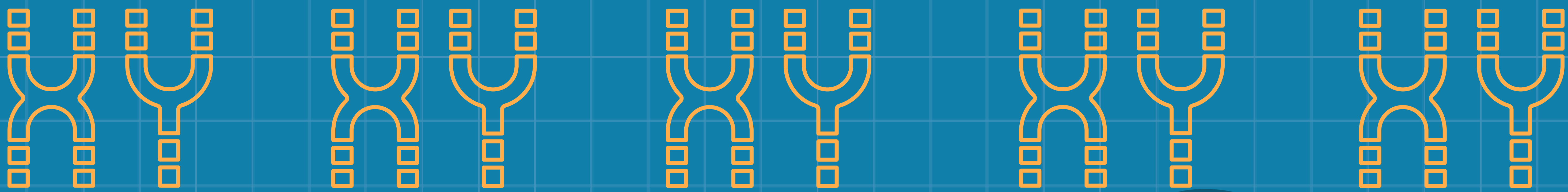
Women have high amounts of estrogen and progesterone, while men have high levels of testosterone and androgens. These chromosomes also direct our muscle mass, which sex organs we have, our skeletal structure, and even how our brain develops.

Those with XX chromosomes, women, have the ability to gestate, bear, and nurse children. Her pelvis is shaped differently than a man's, enabling her not only to carry but also birth a child.

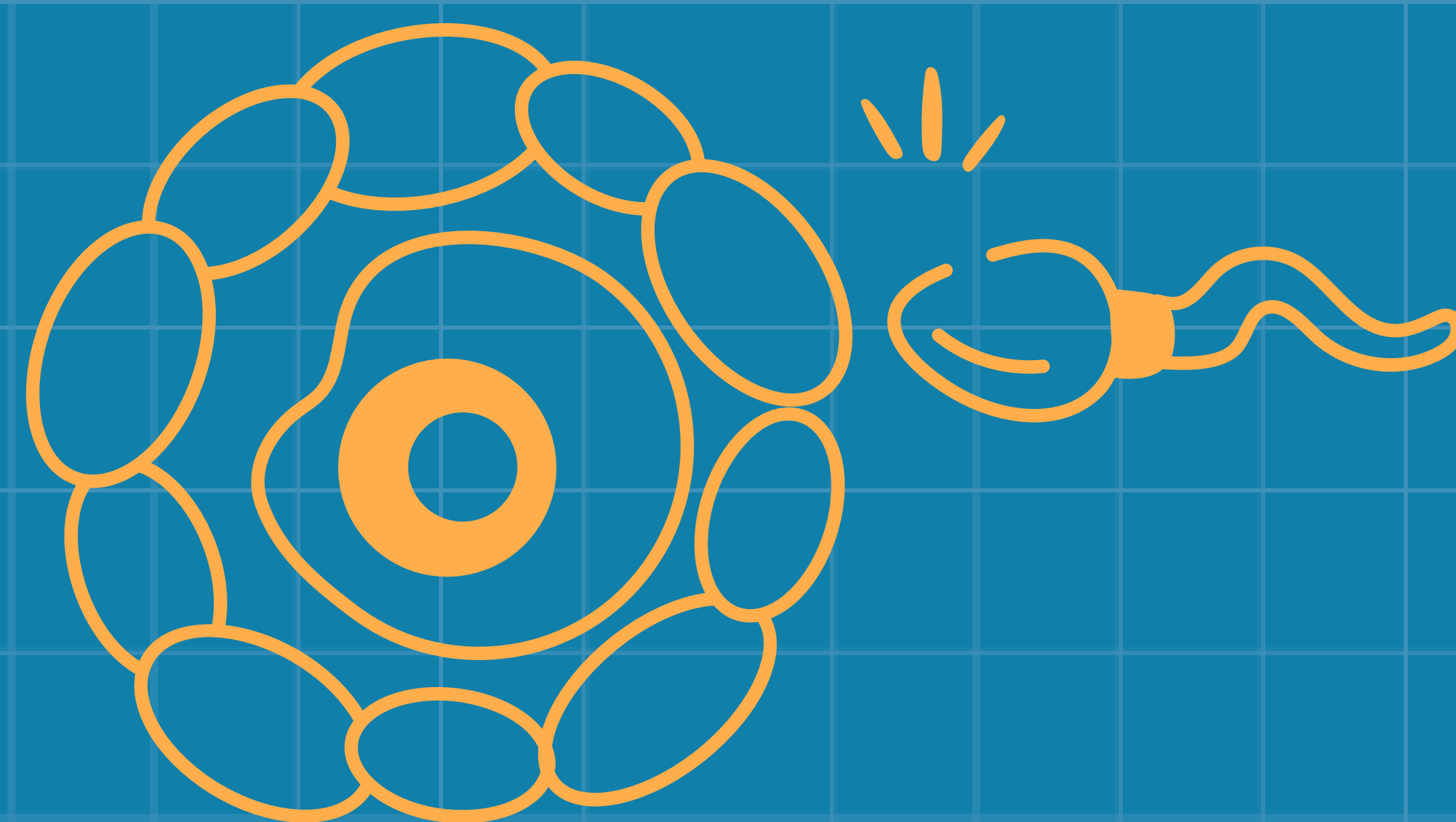
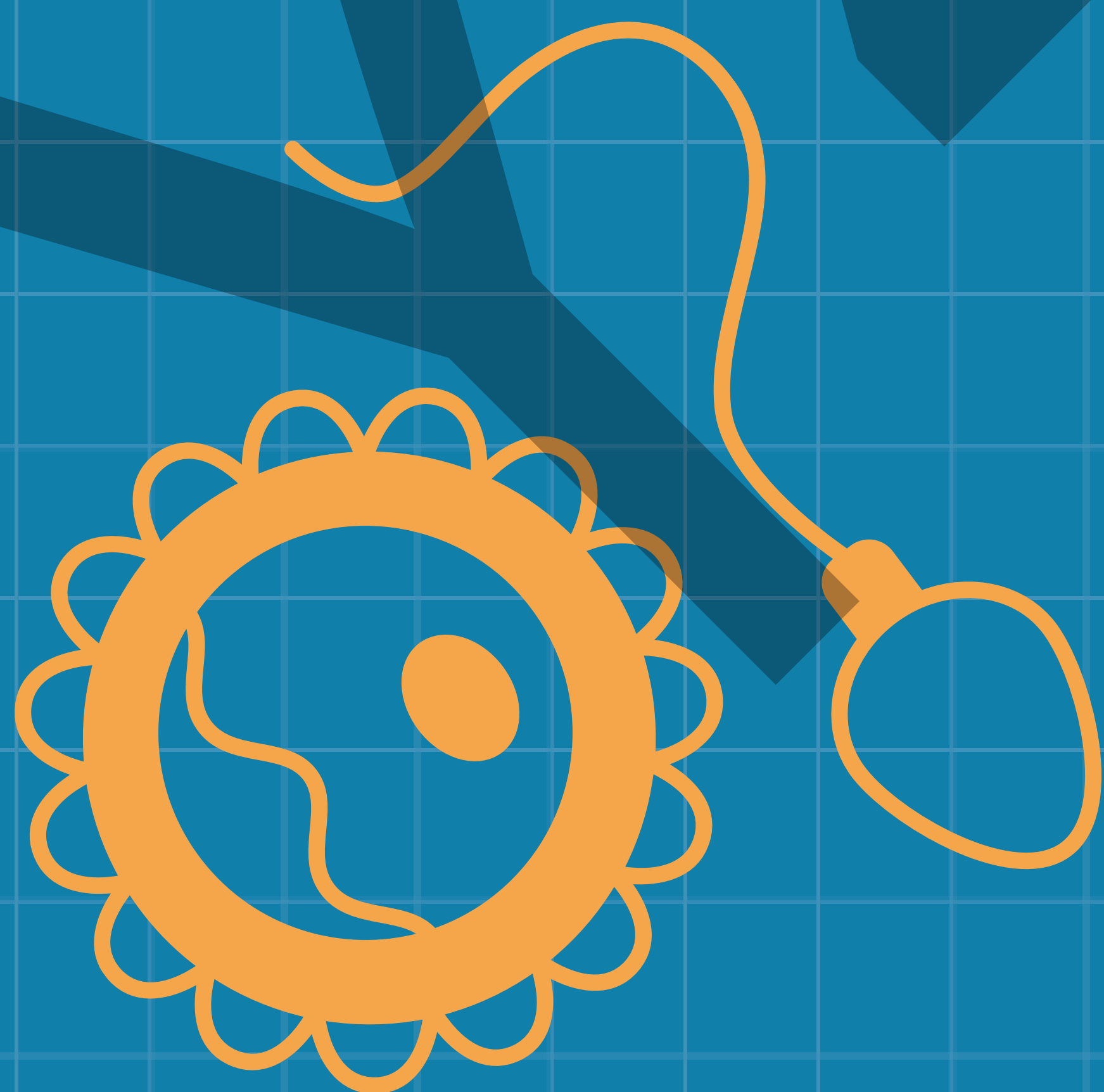


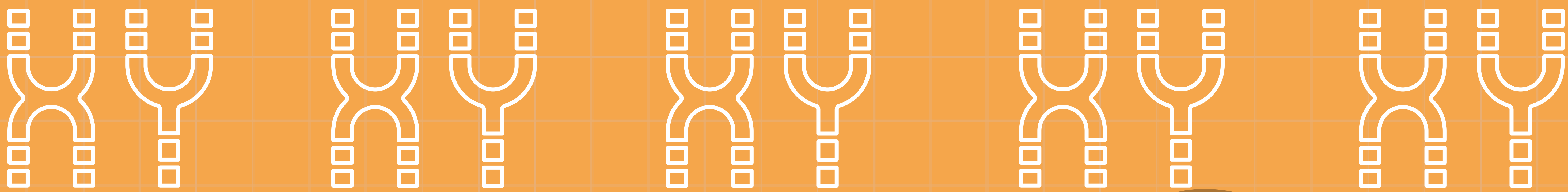
Those with XY chromosomes, men, have the ability to give half of their genetic code to a woman to create a new life. A man's pelvis is narrower than a woman's, and it isn't designed to expand. His ligaments are not as flexible, and in general, his bones are longer and stronger.

It's true that in some cases a person's body may not be able to perform these functions, or its performance is temporarily inhibited. Yet, this does not make a person less male or female, nor does it create a third sex; it is the result of sin in the world.



Another evidence of binary gender comes from the two gametes: "Our sex is determined by the two gametes, the egg and the sperm, that God brought together when He created us. There are only two types of gametes, two types of mature reproductive cells. Though these cells may carry abnormalities in them, there is no third type of gamete. That's what makes sex binary..." (Soh, *The End of Gender*).





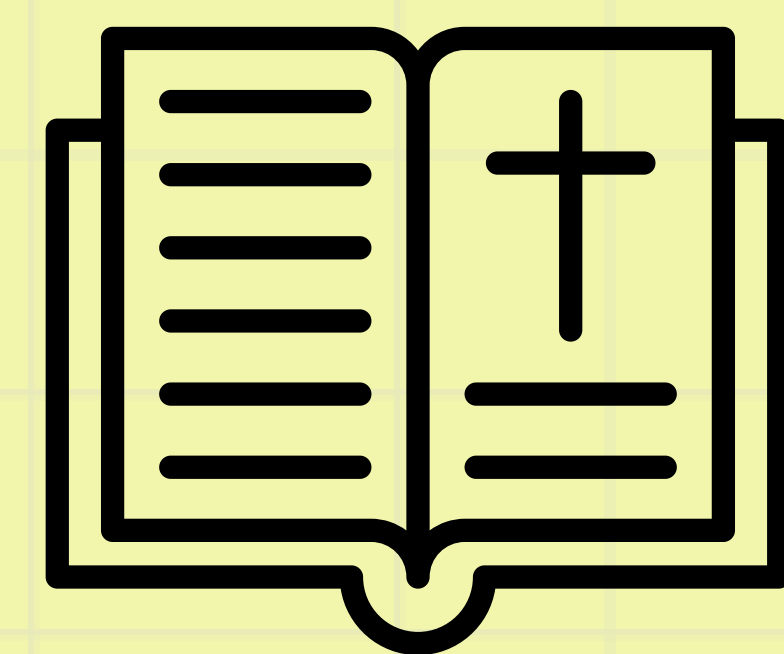
Sex differences even show up in disease. Because of the differences in the genes and hormones of men and women, some diseases are far more common in one sex, or the disease presents differently in one sex than it does the other.

For example, 80% of people with autoimmune disease are women; men, on average, get coronary artery disease a decade before women; and mental health disorders like schizophrenia and PTSD can look very different between men and women.

A person's sex is either male or female; their DNA and their physical characteristics testify to this. In rare cases (1-2% of the population), disorders of sexual development can occur, where a person's body parts or hormones do not match their genetic code. We will discuss these conditions in more depth later.

Debate over this binary reality is roaring now, but it is extremely new. Even in cultures where homosexuality, dual spirits, or other departures from traditional sexuality were fashionable, the concept that male and female were the two binary options for sex was rarely challenged.

There is little, if any, historical basis for denying the binary makeup of the human species; the phenomenon we're seeing finds its roots in very recent history.

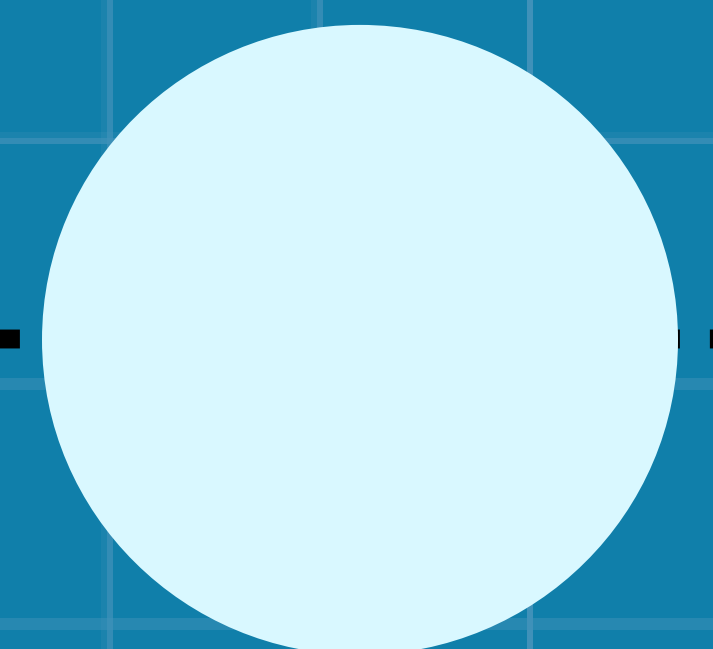
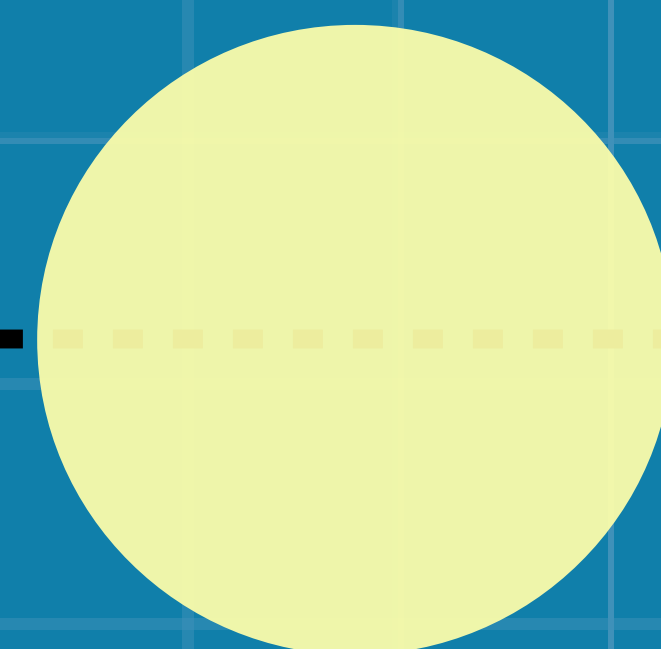
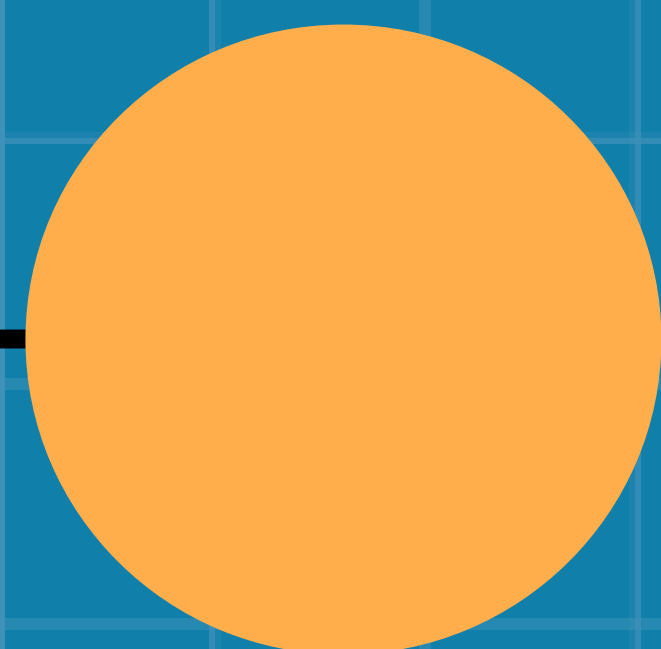
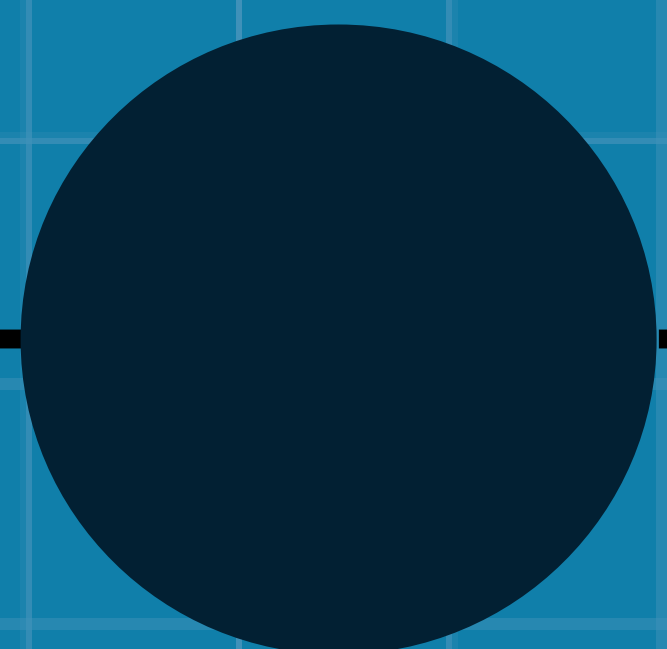


History, biology, and God's Word help us to see that sexuality is not a spectrum. Humans are either male or female.

Truth 5: Because gender and sex are inseparable, gender, too, is binary.

It's a common supposition that gender is entirely socially constructed, a fabricated set of do's and don'ts for men and women. We can certainly acknowledge that some "gender norms" are stereotypes that hyperbolize the expectations for men and women and do not represent God's true design. But some "norms" are based in the reality that men and women are created differently!

While gender is not as straightforward as biological sex, there are certain non-negotiable and mutually exclusive contours to the sexes. However, because we know that the maleness and femaleness of humanity was designed by God *and* that He gave distinct roles to each gender (especially in home and family), we know that gender has basis in concrete reality.



What are these distinct roles?

God created women to be able to be mothers and men to be able to be fathers. **These are not interchangeable.**

To be sure, individual females do not enact their femininity in identical ways to every other individual female. The same is true for males. However, **femininity is not masculinity**, and every female lives out femininity, just as each man lives out masculinity.

Here are Biblical boundaries to how masculinity and femininity might look:

Biblical Boundaries

1. Masculinity and femininity are not interchangeable.

2. God designed distinct and complementary vocations for males and females, **especially in home and family**. In the home, a man is called to headship, to fatherhood, to protection of wife and children, even at the cost of his life. In the home, a woman is called to be a helpmate, to motherhood, and to aid her husband in the sustaining of life.

3. These distinct, complementary differences are reflected in different physiological characteristics, including skeletal structure, body fat distribution, patterns of hair growth, muscle mass, intellectual strengths, organ function, and much more. **Men cannot be mothers. Mothering is a uniquely feminine trait. Women cannot be fathers. Fathering is uniquely masculine.**



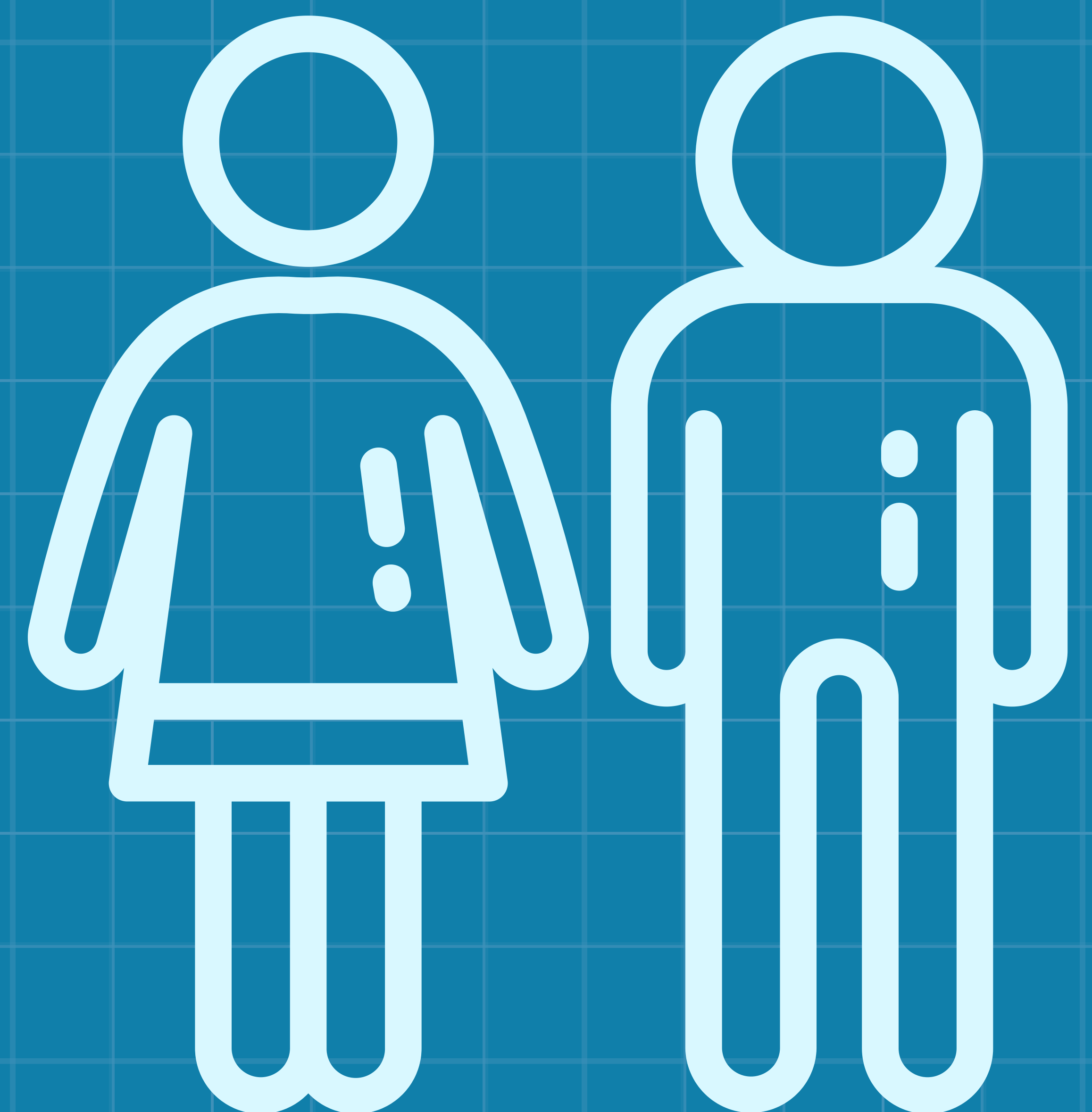
Biblical Boundaries Continued

4. Both male and female, masculine and feminine, are necessary for and beneficial to LIFE in the family. God has made male and female and given them distinct, complementary roles. They are valuable gifts from God. (Even if we don't see it as valuable or struggle to see it as a good gift, we believe it is by faith, allowing God to be God and accepting His gifts as His creatures).

This much we know for sure:

Masculine and feminine are not interchangeable.

It is untruthful/idolatrous to try to present oneself as the opposite sex.

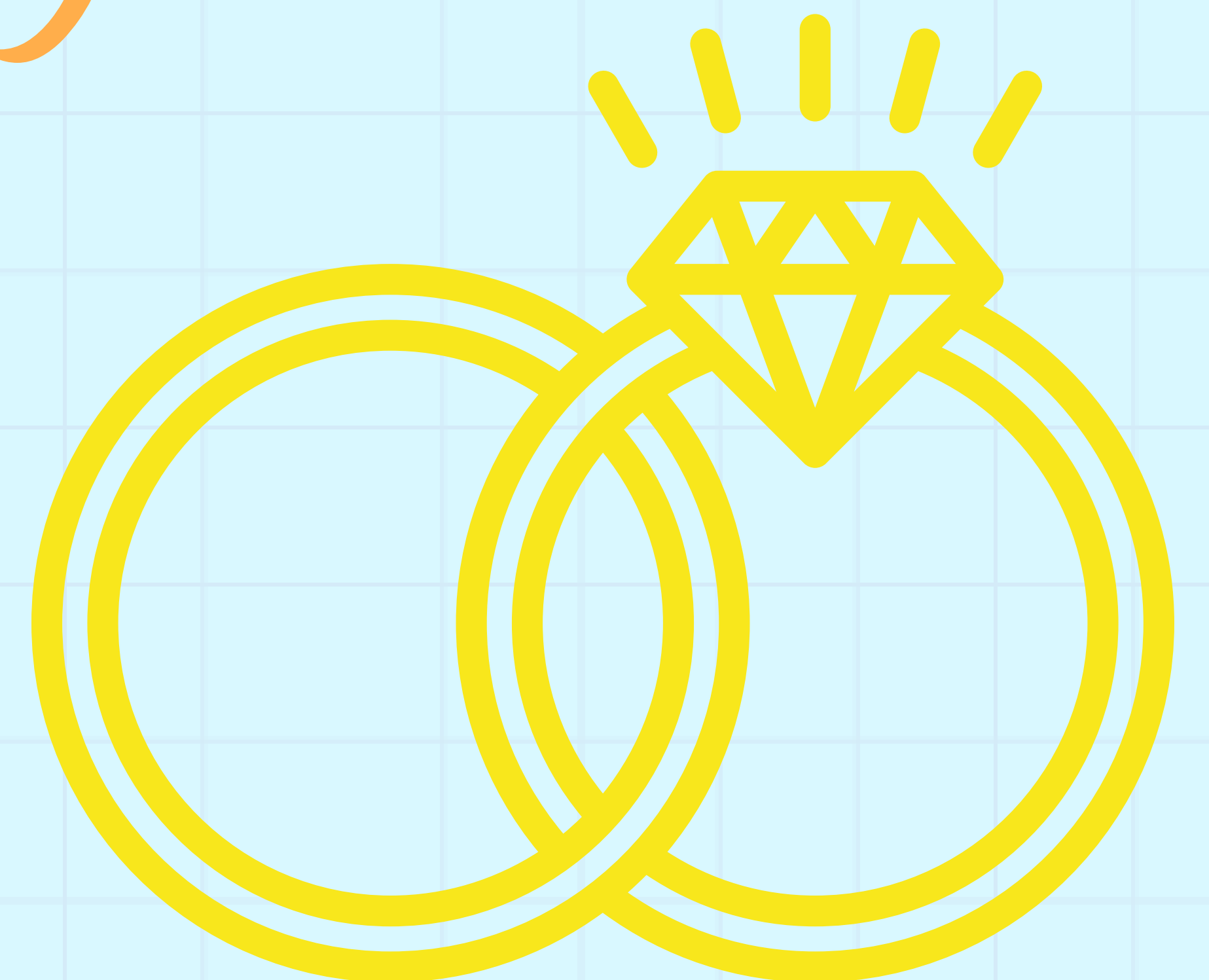


Truth 6: Gender is for serving others.

Perhaps most counter-cultural of all, God's Word shows us that gender is not primarily a tool for sexual self-expression or self-serving exploration. **God intended for our gender to be a means of serving others.**

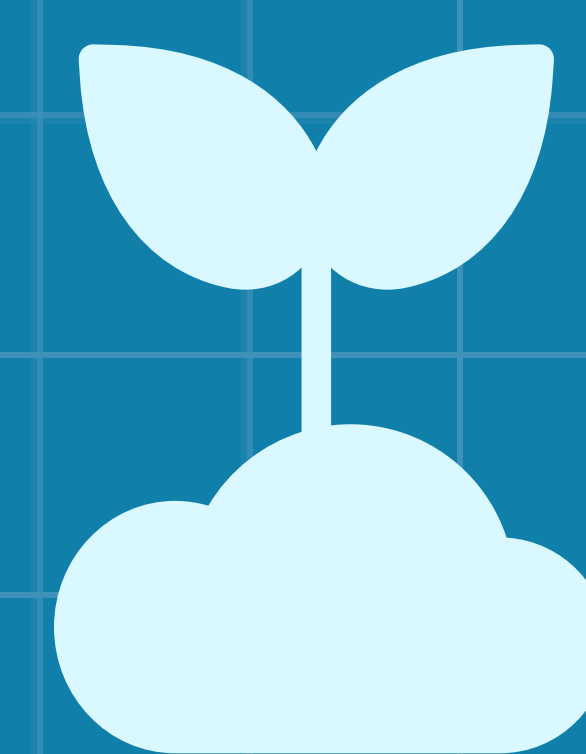
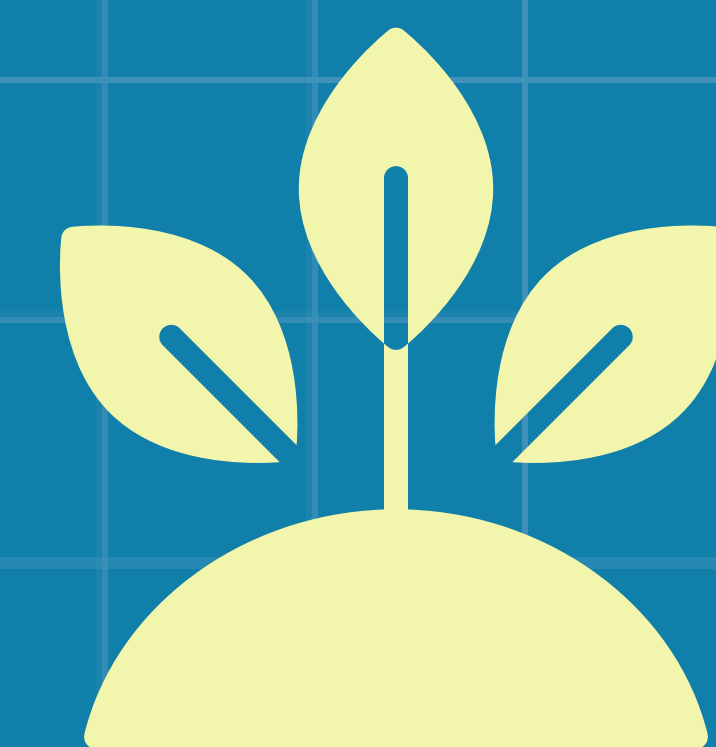
After God created Eve, He brought her to Adam and gave them to each other in the first marriage. God instituted marriage with these words:

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"
(Genesis 2:24).*



St. Paul calls each husband to love his wife as his own body (They are one flesh, after all!) and to lay down his life for her. He calls each wife to submit to the headship of her husband. **Thus, the role of the husband in marriage is to look out for the best interest of the wife, and vice versa.**

But it doesn't stop there. Our gender doesn't only have significance in marriage! God designed the two genders with unique gifts, which, in the creation account, *were to be used **in service of tending the garden.*** Remember, Adam's charge from God was to tend the garden, and God created Eve, the first woman, to aid Adam in that mission! **He did not create a second man to add more manpower to Adam's workforce, but a woman—to whom God gave different talents and abilities – to better accomplish their task of tending the garden.**



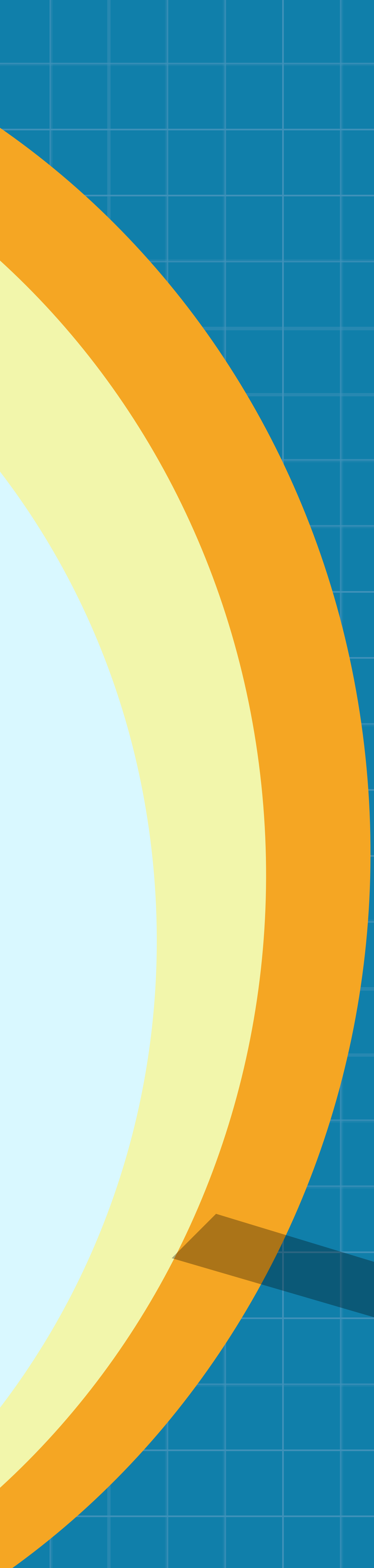
No matter your place in life – married, single, young, or old – you bring unique and gendered gifts to the world, and they are designed to be used in service to others!



Truth 7: Gender is not the most important thing about you.

Our culture is obsessed with sex and with personal sexuality. But far more important to the question of who you are is your identity in Christ! When God looks on you, what He sees is one of His children for whom Christ died. As Paul writes in Galatians 3,

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”



This does not mean that you do not have a gender, ethnicity, or social status, but it does mean that your primary “identifiers” reside in God’s creative work and in the clothes of Christ that you wear. Nothing else has any bearing on your access to God’s grace.

What God sees when He looks at you is Christ, and this is what others should see when they look at you, too!

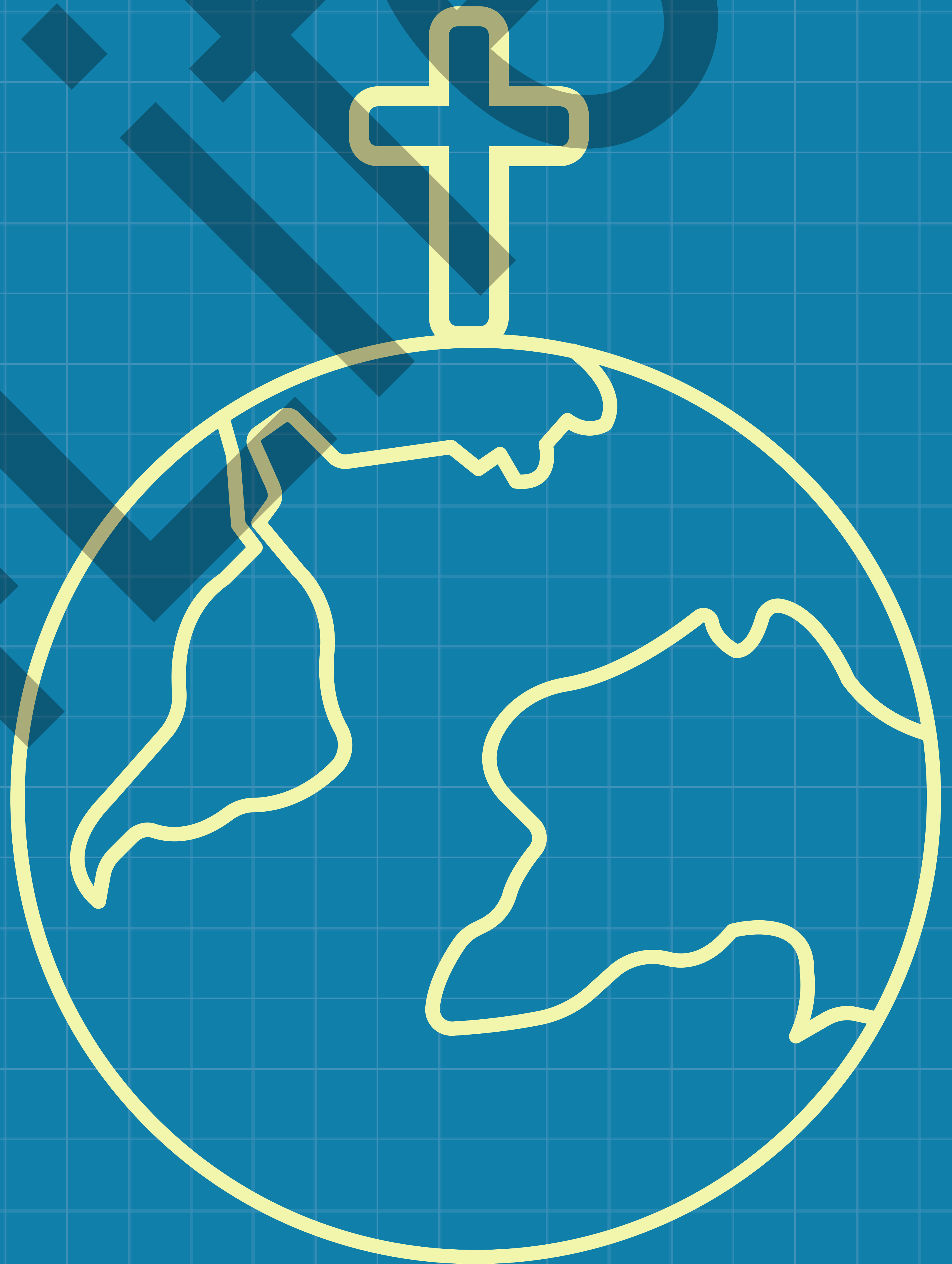
Truth 8: Gender, like everything else in this world, is affected by sin.

Although God created and designed us, we are naturally sinful because of Adam and Eve's first sin in the garden. Our gender and sexuality, like everything else, are subject to the curse of sin. They are broken.

Our loves are disordered, and our desires are twisted. Love of sexual pleasure often trumps love of God and His gift of marriage: This is displayed as promiscuity, sex outside of marriage, and adultery.

Sometimes, because of our brokenness, loves become so disordered that someone feels sexual attraction to the same sex: This is seen in homosexual relationships.

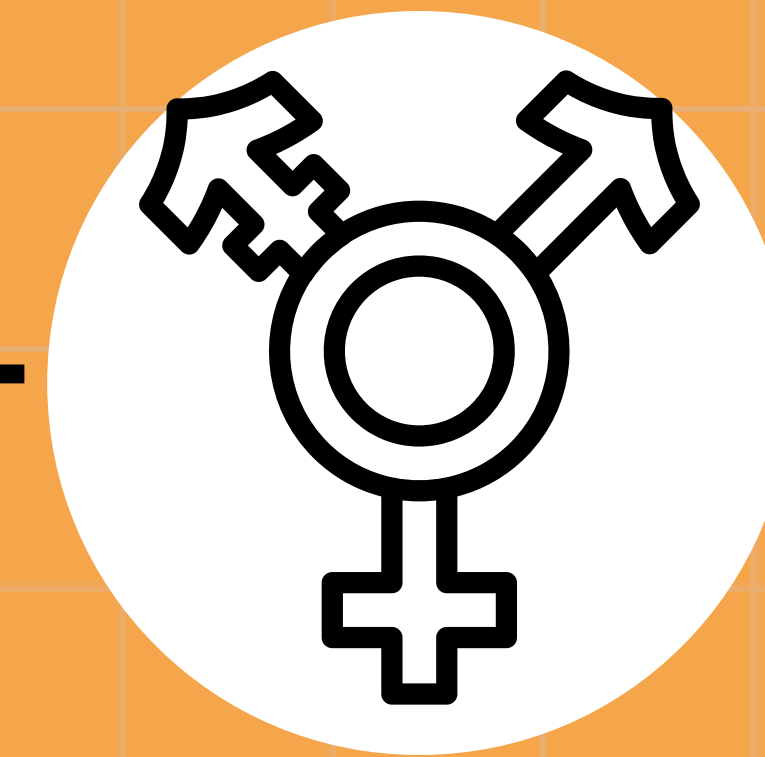
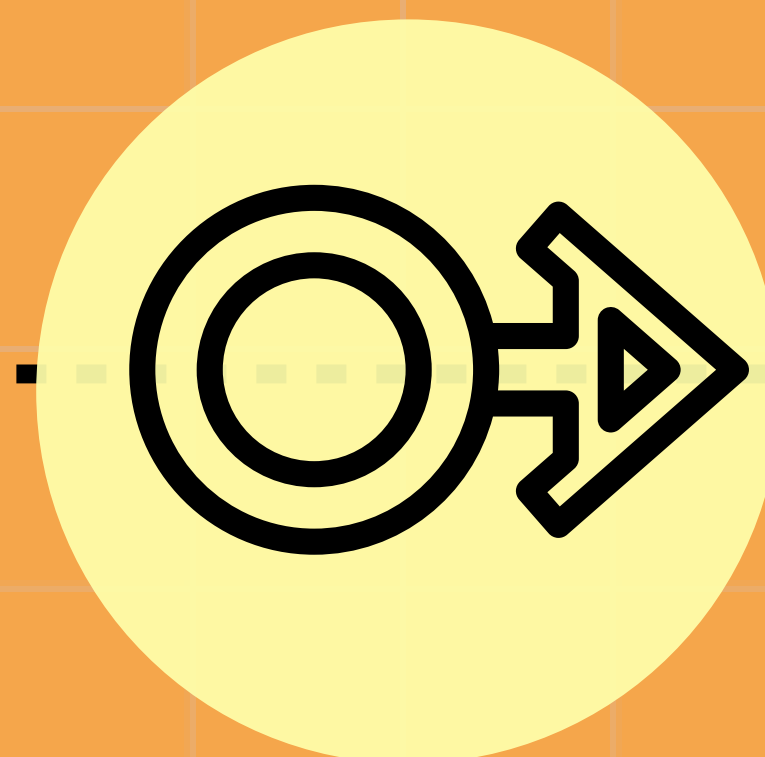
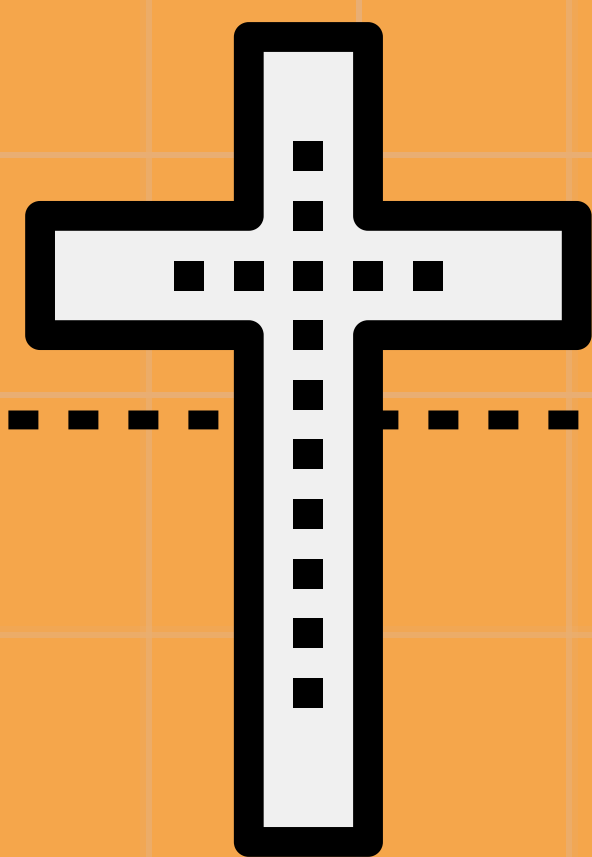
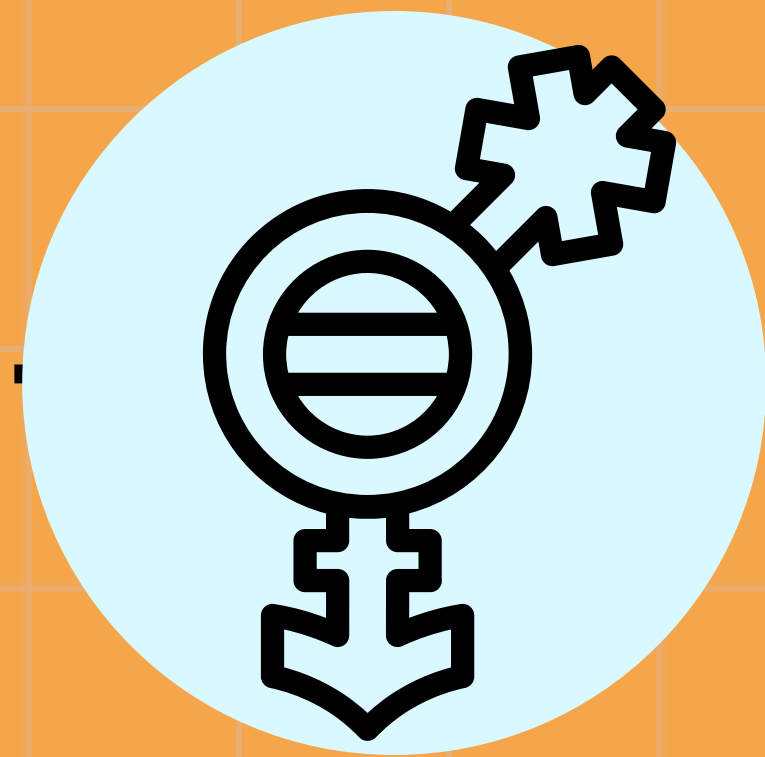
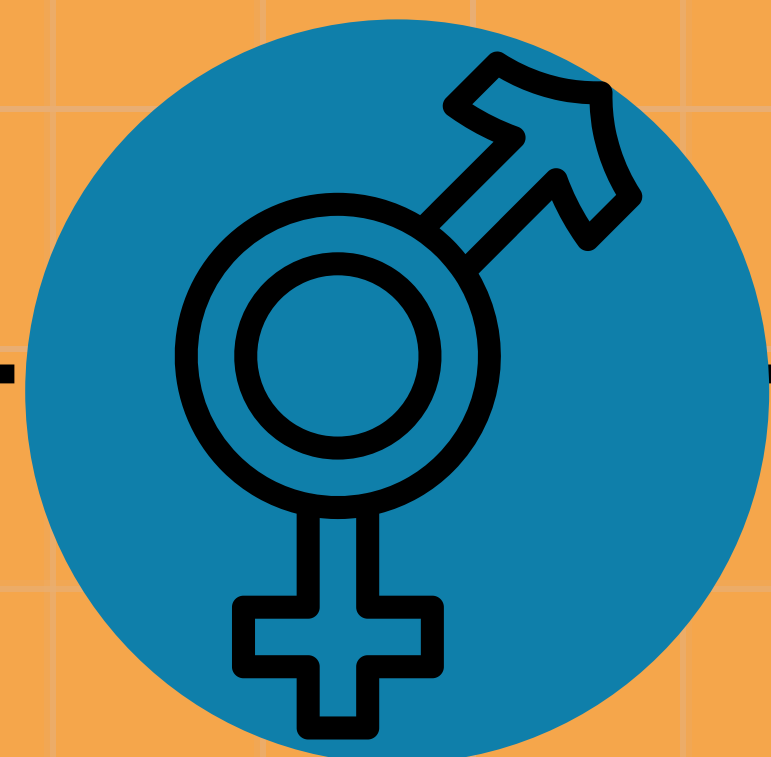
Insecurity and confusion about self, both results of a broken world, can lead to people questioning their gender or feeling uncomfortable in the body God gave them. Though there are many factors, confusion about one's identity is often one of the major contributors to transgenderism.



And just like other genetic or physical conditions, a person's sex chromosomes and organs can be affected by brokenness in the world, too. This is seen in disorders of sexual development.

These disorders include:

- *having XX DNA with ovaries and a uterus, but external genitalia that appear male;*
- *having XY DNA with ambiguous external genitalia or external genitalia that appear female;*
- *having either XX or XY DNA and male, female, or ambiguous external genitalia, but possessing both ovarian and testicular tissue;*
- *and having mutations at the genetic level, such as missing the second sex chromosome altogether (XO) or having an extra X chromosome (XXX, which is called Triple X syndrome, or XXY, which is called Klinefelter syndrome).*



The reproductive organs of persons with disorders of sexual development are often dysfunctional, and they usually suffer from a number of health difficulties due to their condition. Just as people are born missing a limb or with a cleft palate or a genetic disease, disorders of sexual development are examples of something going wrong in human development.

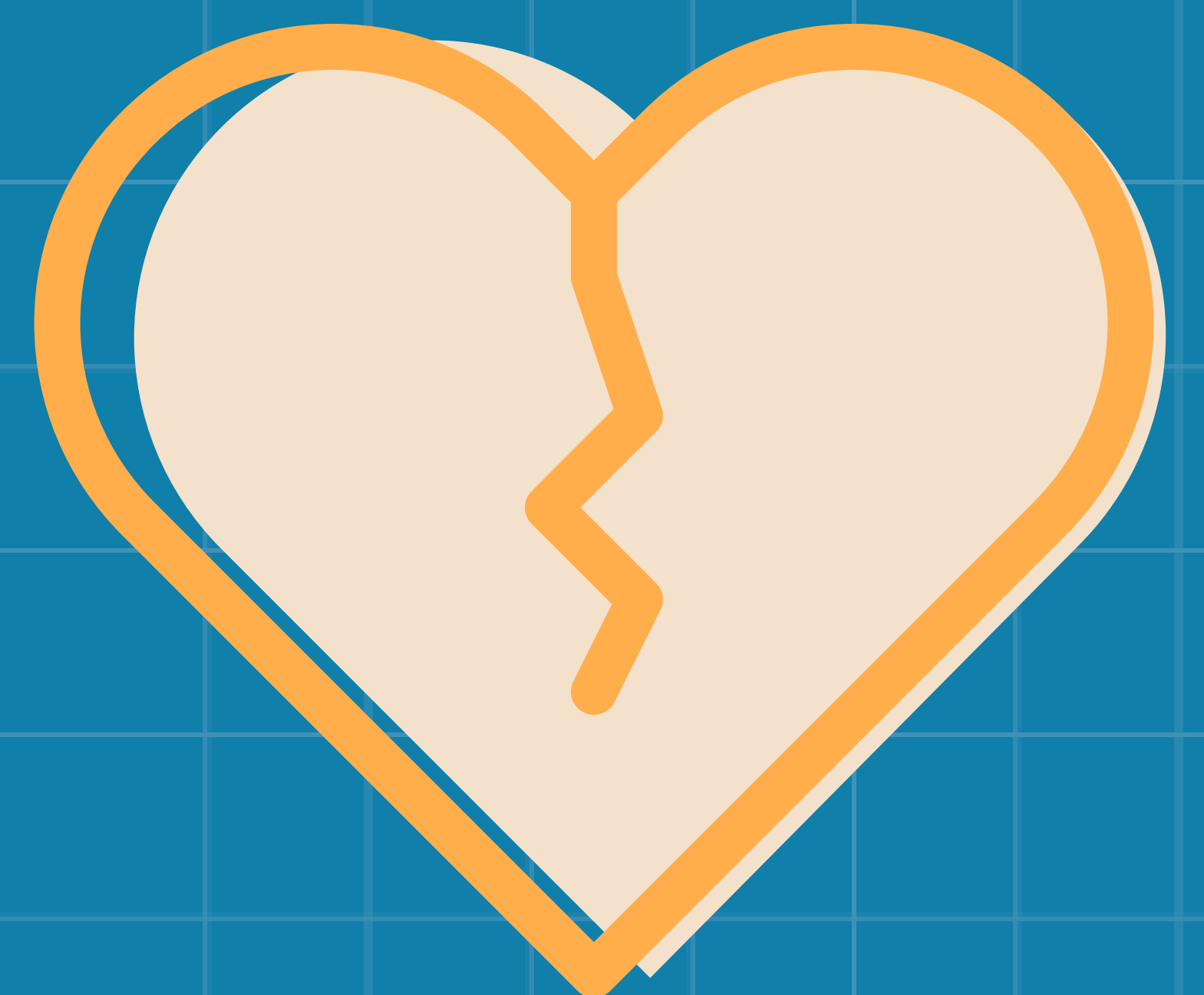
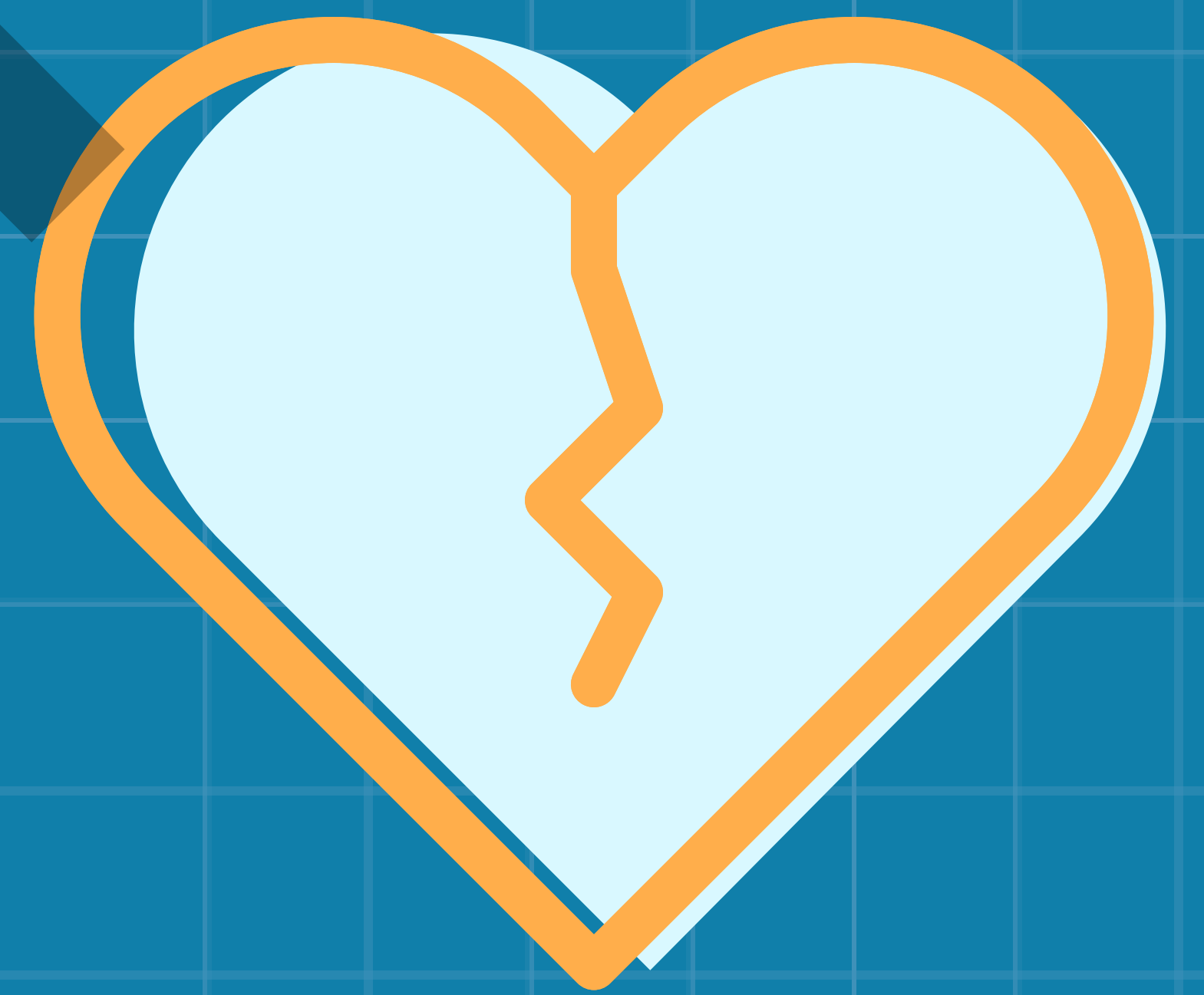
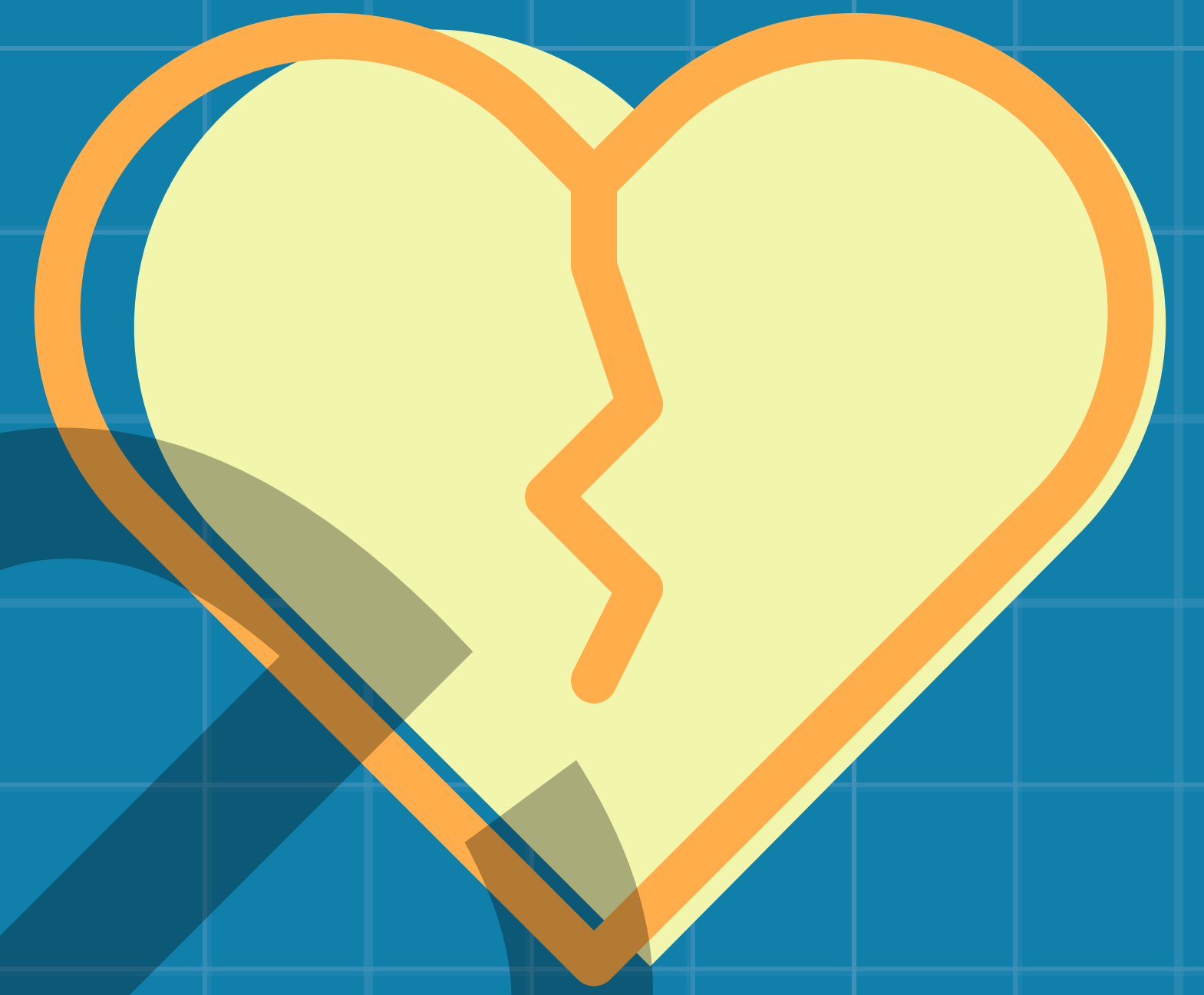
These actions, inclinations, and conditions are not what God intends for us to do or experience. It can be tempting to blame God for these things—He is the one who creates us after all. And if God hand-crafted us, didn't He make us this way? Shouldn't we just accept—celebrate even—our sexual brokenness, since God made us?

Though it would be easy to do, the short answer is no. **We know that sin in the world is the result of *man's rebellion*, not God's lack of faithfulness.**

Although God does create each of us, our sinful nature is passed down through our parents.

We are all broken by sin, yet God desires to bless us with His goodness. He calls us to live according to His holy design for our lives. This, He shows clearly in the Genesis account that we have already looked at: Men are to live as men, and women as women.

The institution of marriage should be honored, and gender should be seen as a gift to be used in service toward others!



In addition to living God-pleasing lives, Christians also have the responsibility and privilege of extending compassion and sensitivity to individuals suffering disorders of sexual development.

Even though we may not suffer in the same way, we are all broken by sin, and that brokenness affects our sexuality.

Only the unconditional love of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ can provide healing and enable us to turn from temptation.



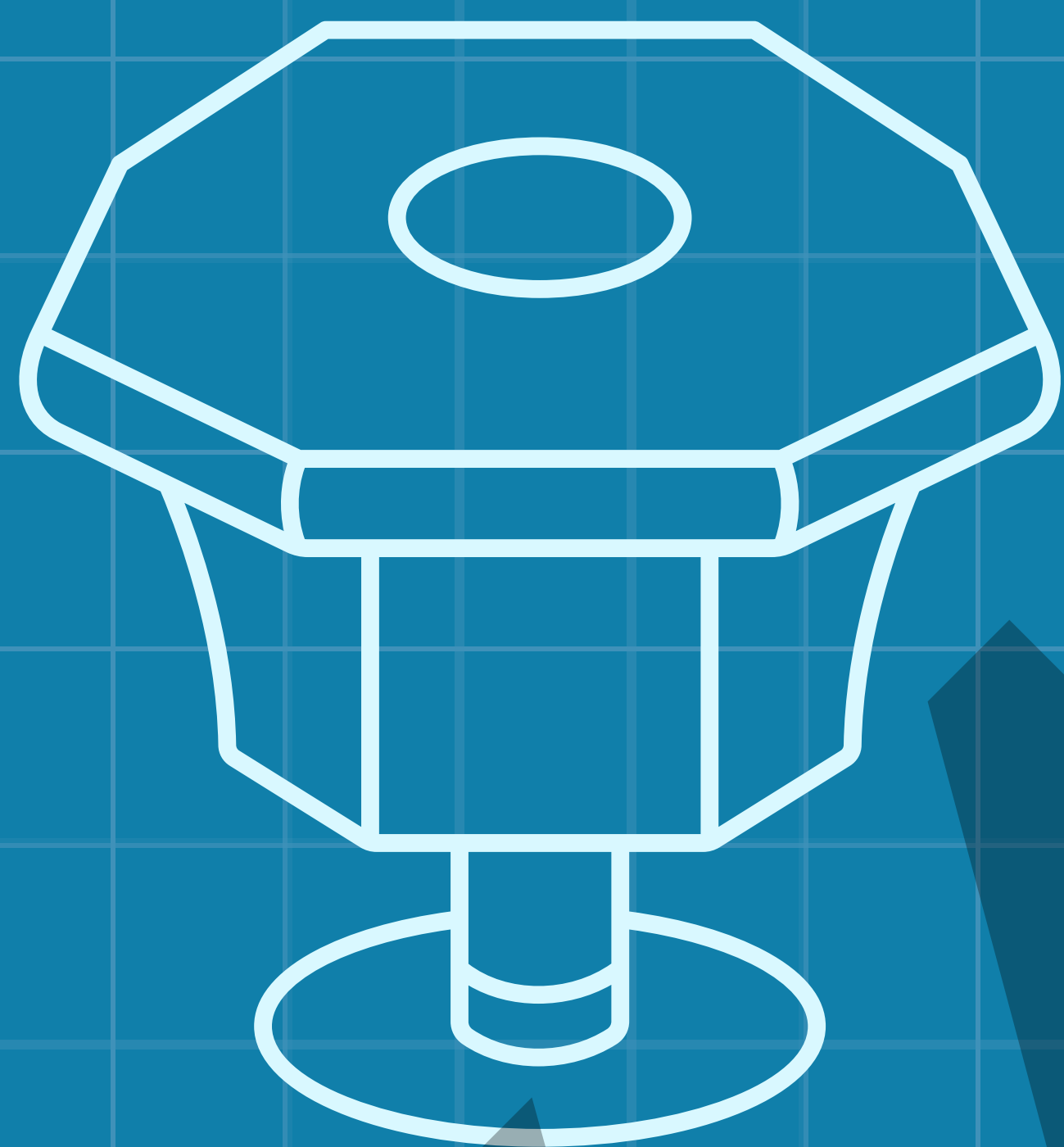
Truth 9: Gender, like everything else in this world, is redeemed in Christ!

If God's answer to sin's effect on gender was for us simply to try harder to live according to His plan, it would be an impossible and hopeless challenge. We know that our sin is so deeply part of our nature that we cannot escape it by good intentions and efforts. **We need something more than self-help to give us hope!**

Thankfully, His answer is much more than this—it is the cross of Jesus Christ. By dying on the cross, Jesus atoned for our sins—including our sexual sins. For all our failures to be who God intended us to be, there is forgiveness because of Jesus.

Jesus also made us children of God. **Though we suffer and struggle, we can be certain that God, our heavenly Father, not only loves us but also meets us in our suffering.**

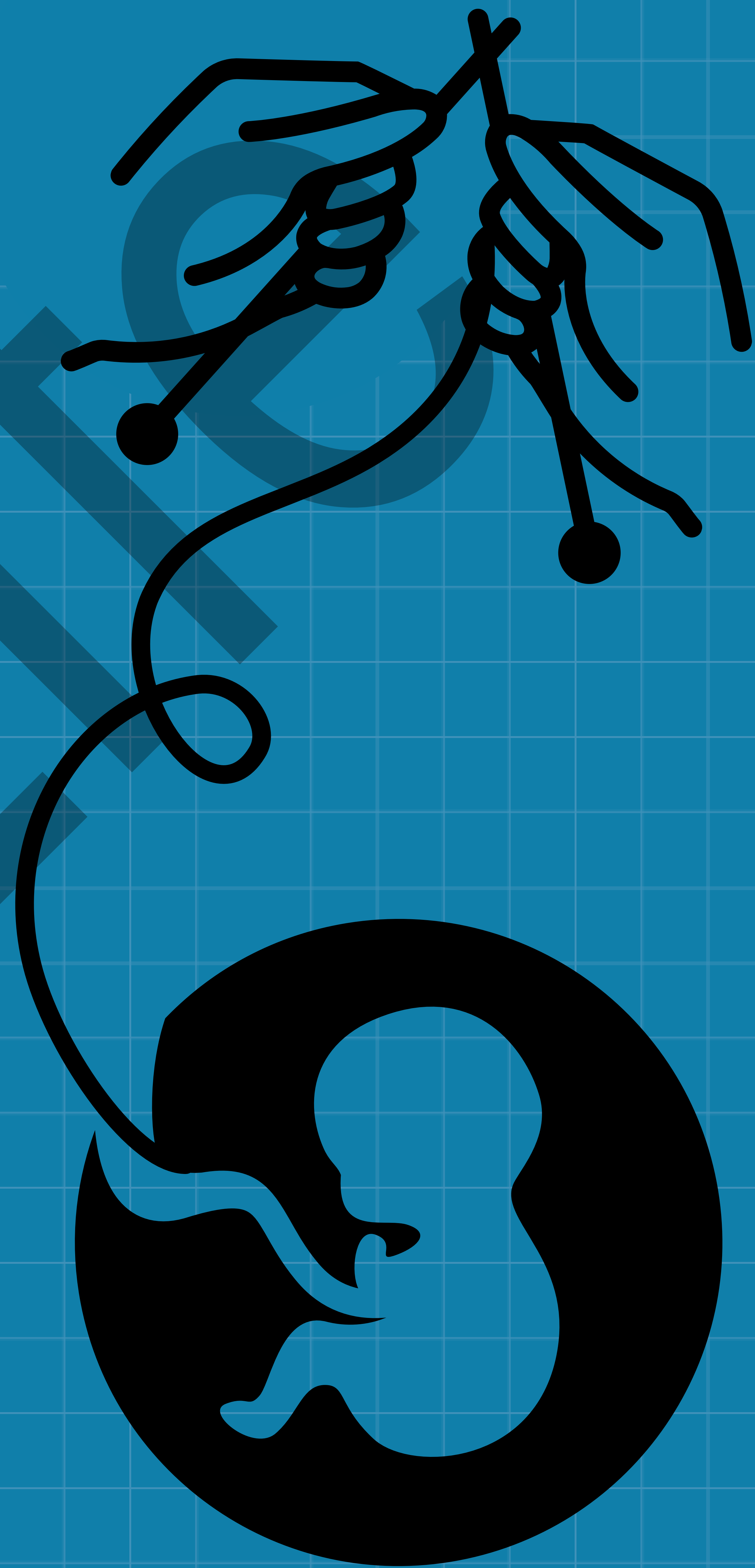
Through His Word and Sacraments, as well as through the work of Christian family, friends, and medical professionals, God provides the strength and forgiveness we need in this life.




Because of Christ, Christians have hope despite the suffering we experience in this world. And our hope is not only for tomorrow but also for eternity. We know that one day our bodies will be perfected; that means our sex and gender will be perfected, too. Our design and desires will be perfectly ordered to God's will.

Because God knits each person together in his or her mother's womb, one's gender is not interchangeable. We are creatures, hand-crafted by God, and our gender is a gift we receive from HIM!

God intended us to have the sex and gender that He marked on the DNA in every cell in our bodies. And the Bible is clear that God created just two sexes—male and female. Sex and its associated gender is not a sliding scale.





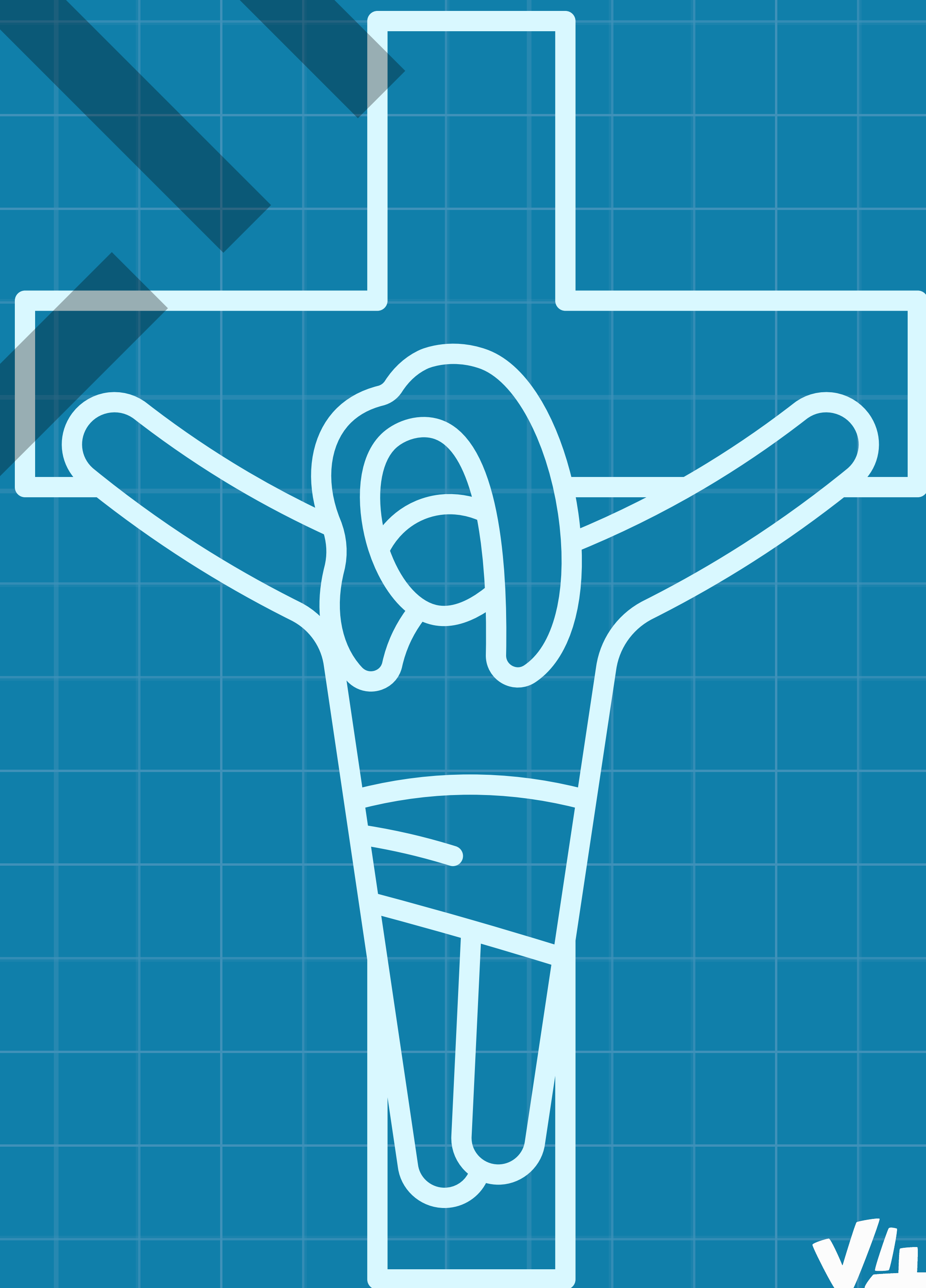
Sexuality and gender were not intended to be burdens. Given as a gift, they are an amazing part of God's creation of human beings. Men and women are distinct—by God's design—and were created to complement one another. God gave distinct characteristics and capabilities to each gender which we use to serve one another in our daily lives, whether married or single.

Because of sin, we do struggle with disordered loves and twisted desires. No matter the nature of the sexual sin—and each of us has them—Jesus has atoned for it.



His perfect life and sacrificial death on the cross are the remedy we need for complete healing. And that remedy is ours, both today and at the final resurrection when Christ will make all things, even our broken bodies, new. As we await that day, we turn toward God in repentance. He desires to forgive, restore, and strengthen us!

If you or someone you know is struggling with sexual or gender brokenness, reach out to your pastor and a trusted adult for care and support. Connect with Y4Life (y4life.org) and Word of Hope (word-of-hope.org) to be reminded of your value. Your struggle does not define you; your identity is firmly founded in Christ. You are valuable and you are loved.



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