



MISSING THE TARGET

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In August Target became the next corporate power,¹ after Amazon,² to rid themselves of all gender designations and labels for children's toys and bedding. In the corporate rush to not be the company behind the ever-moving gender eight ball, all it seems to take is a few social-media punches from disgruntled, progressive customers, and companies are swift to jump on the winding, zigzag gender line.

The problem is, the line keeps moving and twisting, and in this case, disappearing. Not that it will matter to most boys and girls. Boys will still want to play with Legos and sleep on Superman sheets, and girls will still want Barbie dolls and a Sofia pillow-case. But in a world where the very concept of gender is being neutralized, and in a society where parents themselves are trying to outrun their own gender identities, dragging their children onto their own dark labyrinths (look no further than Bruce Jenner at the ESPY's),³ this only adds to the problem. Rather than reinforcing maleness and femaleness, this confuses it. Instead of helping guide children towards embracing who they actually are, this blurs reality.

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1. Jennifer Calfas, "Target to Remove Gender-Based Labeling," *USA Today*, August 9, 2015, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2015/08/09/target-remove-gender-based-labeling/31375863/>.
 2. Alejandro Alba, "Amazon Becomes Gender Neutral, Removes 'Boys' and 'Girls' Labels in Toy Department," *New York Daily News*, May 7, 2015, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/amazon-gender-neutral-removes-boys-girls-labels-article-1.2214550>.
 3. Emily Shapiro, "See Caitlin Jenner Preach Acceptance in Emotion ESPYs Award Speech," *ABC News*, July 15, 2015, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/caitlyn-jenner-preaches-acceptance-emotional-espy-award-speech/story?id=32479971>.

GENDER HAS MEANING

There is a jar-headish catch-phrase used in the Marine Corps that says, “Words mean things.” As silly as it sounds, it is eerily true. Lives depend, especially in combat, on speaking accurately and truthfully.

The principle holds true regarding gender. Gender means things. Despite the culture’s belief that we can outrun our gender—and the God of the universe who created it—we are ultimately destined to be as God has intended: male and female.

Sex is an integral part of being an image bearer of God; we are fundamentally at our very core either male or female (Gen 1:27). Furthermore, our sexuality is not merely the product of our parents’ reproductive systems. It is so much more than that. Every person’s sexuality was planned and designed before the foundation of the world by a God who loves each person, as he made him or her to be, male or female.

SO WHAT’S THE POINT OF GENDER?

Progressives will say that gender-designated toys only serve to reinforce gender stereotypes. By that they are largely referring to the gender-designated roles lying just beneath the surface of both G.I. Joe and Barbie.

The Bible teaches that men are wired by God to protect and to pursue, so it is not surprising that they naturally like toys that by-and-large involve fighting, building, and racing. Women, on the other hand, are wired by God to nurture and to be pursued, so it is also not surprising that they largely enjoy playing with American Girl Dolls, Barbies, and Disney princess dresses.

Toy companies, of course, aren’t basing their marketing strategy on the Bible, but they do understand to a large degree God’s natural wiring of boys and girls, and they shape the production of their toys accordingly.

GENDER IDENTITY IN A WORLD WITHOUT LIMITS

The problem with gender roles for the secular mind, and in this case, gender-designated signs for the toy aisles at Target, is that they confine. Anything that remotely suggests any type of “boundary” must go, because it limits the progressive nature of humanity—that we can forge our own path in the universe.

However, in the end, the secular ideology is a losing game because it does not work. It is untrue. There are fixed realities in the universe, and they do not change, even if our postmodern minds refuse to acknowledge them. And that’s a good thing!

After all God’s good design, which includes our gender, is not meant to restrict, but to enable us to flourish. Ultimately, God has created boys and girls for more than toys. He’s created them for a purpose far greater than Mattel or American Girl Doll. He’s created every boy and girl for himself, to display his image and glory in the world. And he has created them as male and female.

And no Target sign can change that.