

### Cultural Trends & Individual Identity

#### Introduction:

#### Some SYMPTOMS:

- New ways to “identify” oneself that have become all too familiar. Things like:
  - Heterosexual man / woman
  - Queer
  - Homosexual... Bisexual...
  - Cisgender male / female
  - Transgender man / woman
- In our current culture, it seems like it makes sense to a lot of people for someone to say: “I’m a man who was born in a woman’s body.”

#### There has been a LONG trajectory to bring us to this place.

- ➔ The internalization (or “psychologizing”) of identity and personhood...
  - something like, “I am a son, husband, father, carpenter” became “I am a person who cares deeply about the environment.”
- ➔ Because sexual / romantic desires are just about the strongest and deepest internal feelings that we have (besides survival instincts like hunger and thirst), this internalization of identity gradually became the sexualization of identity.
  - Something like, “I am a man” became “I am a cisgender male.”  
*“Cisgender (adj.): Designating a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds to his or her sex at birth; of or relating to such persons. Contrasted with transgender.” – Oxford English Dictionary*
- ➔ Because sexuality is now equated with identity, to be critical of a sexual behavior is understood as a rejection of personhood.
  - Within our current cultural environment, saying that homosexuality is a sin is now understood to mean the rejection of the individual personhood of any homosexual person.
  - Within our current cultural environment, to say that a person is male or female because of their biological anatomy or to question the wisdom of “gender affirming treatment” is interpreted as saying that they as a person do not have the right to define their own reality or “be who they really are.”

#### So... let’s get started by talking about identity and personhood:

- How do we know who we are? - answer as a human before discussing Biblical answers.

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- We’ve all asked “identity questions.” – things like, “I wonder if I’m adopted?” 😊

Are there things that we should NOT allow to define us? – What would be some examples?

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- Should our sense of identity come from inside of us? Or outside of us?
- **BOTTOM LINE... WHAT ARE WE ANYWAY?** -- \_\_\_\_\_

**Biblical Personhood and Identity:**

➔ CREATURES –

- Genesis 1.26a, 27a – *God made man...*
- Psalm 139.13-17

➔ MADE IN GOD’S IMAGE

- Genesis 1.26-27 – *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*
- The image of God in Genesis 1:
  - reigning (dominion)                      - rational
  - relational                                      - responsible
- Implications of being made in God’s image:
  - Dignity - “majesty” of humanity – Psalm 8
  - Purpose – *glorify God and enjoy Him forever* – Ephesians 2.10
  - Diversity – *every nation, tribe, people, and language* – Revelation 7.9-10
  - Human rights – Exodus 20, Matthew 22.39, Matthew 5.37, 7.12
  - Destiny – 1 John 3.2-3 (contrast Satan’s temptation in Genesis 3.5)

**Personhood & Identity vs. Roles:**

➔ **What are some of our ROLES in life?**

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- ➔ Identity = creatures in God’s image
- ➔ Roles = callings from God (vocation)

**We can’t confuse our identity with our roles.**

*“Perhaps you construct a self by the roles and accomplishments listed on your resume. You might identify yourself by your lineage or ethnicity, by your job history or the schools you attended, by your marital status or parental role. Perhaps you define who you are by your political leanings or the objects of your sexual longings. Maybe you consider yourself to be summed up in a Myers-Briggs category or a psychiatric diagnosis. Your sense of self might be based on money or your lack thereof; on achievement or failures; on the approval of others or their rejection; or your self-esteem or self-hatred. Perhaps you think that your sins define you—an angry man, an addict, an anxious people-pleaser. Perhaps afflictions define you—disability, cancer, divorce. Even your Christian identity might anchor in something that is not God—Bible knowledge, giftedness, or the church denomination to which you belong. In each case, your sense of identity comes unglued from the God who actually defines you.” – David Powlison*

**But neither can we create our own identity** – for example - *You create you!*

**False gospel of transgender ideology** = *Believe and receive a new name, a new identity, a new body, a new and loving community.* – see Josh Glaser and Paula Rinehart in

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/tips-talking-kids-transgender/>