

## What does it mean to have an identity, and what kinds of identities are best?

You may have seen that embracing a new gender identity harms your child's happiness. But in fact many other types of identities also will harm people's happiness, both for children and adults. Here's the thing most people will never tell you: the deepest, most stable happiness is only truly possible by finding your identity in Jesus Christ.

Before we talk about finding peace through finding your identity in Christ, let's look at why you shouldn't find your identity within yourself. That phrase—finding your identity within yourself—can sound vague, or even hyper-obvious. Where else would you find your identity? But think of it this way: identity is about who you are, and the big question of identity is who gets to say who you are.

One option is yourself: you get to say who you are. It might be surprising, but this idea is also part of transgender ideology. The activists, therapists, and doctors pushing children and teens into transgender identities do so by telling them to discover their true self. They encourage kids to focus on how they feel inside, whether they feel male, or female, neither, or both. Then, if the child feels different from the reality of their body, these same professionals offer drugs and surgeries to change that child's body to match their feelings. It's all so inward, and it assumes that whatever inner feelings a child has are the essential part of their identity. But a child who looks within to find an identity—who they really are—only finds deeper confusion.

But if your own feelings don't get to say who you are, who does? The Biblical answer is God. Since he's our maker, he gets to say who we are. Not to mention, God doesn't make mistakes. When he makes someone male, he's giving him the gift of being a man. And when he makes someone female, he is giving her the gift of being a woman.

Since God gets to say who we are, our identity is in Him. Anyone who has their identity in God, or in His son Jesus Christ, knows certain things about themselves. Looking at what the Bible says about human beings, we see four things God says is true of everyone.

- 1. Human beings are valuable.*
- 2. God says about our identity is that we are made in His image as either male or female.*
- 3. We are all deserving of life and love.*
- 4. What God says is true of everyone's identity might sound contradictory to the third—it's that we all need salvation from God's judgment.*

Even though humans deserve life and love in their relationships with each other, there still is an impossibly deep break in our relationship with God. Jesus himself says that those who break God's law will be sent to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46).

These four truths about everyone's identity form a strong foundation for understanding identity in Christ. But the deepest identity in Christ is reserved for Christians with a personal, transformative relationship with God. This identity is based on the fact that the Holy Spirit changes a person's heart through faith in Jesus Christ, God forgives this person's sins because of Christ's death on the cross, and the Holy Spirit empowers this person to live a new and transformed life of joyful obedience to and closeness with God. That's salvation, and God says he wants everyone to believe in him and receive salvation.

The things God says are true also apply to your child. When your teenager talks about their trans identity, or any other sense of self-identity, try to help them see how they're letting their inner feelings define their identity. This includes negative comments about themselves, like "I'm so pathetic," or "Everyone hates me." Asking gentle questions can help them notice that they aren't letting God define who they are.

This process of helping your child see that they're allowing their inner feelings to be their standard of truth may extend for months or years. Try to be patient, reminding them gently that their self-identity is not their highest identity. Remind them over and over of the things God says are true: they are valuable, they are made in his image, they are male (or female), they deserve life and love, and they need salvation.

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