

observed in many other countries. In the US, the prevalence of adolescent gender dysphoria has increased by over 1000% in the last decade. In 2016, natal females accounted for 46% of all sex reassignment surgeries; a year later it was 70%. (Abigail Shrier)

### **B. "Expressive Individualism"**

"The capacity of individuals to define the terms of their own existence by defining their personal identities." (Yuval Levin)

### **C. Examples of Other Identities Changing**

- Furries
- Transracialism
- Body integrity identity disorder

## **IV. Resolving Identity**

### **A. The Inconsistency in Today's Society**

- The Case of Rachel Dolezal

### **B. Many Questions, Inadequate Answers**

When does a characteristic become an identity?

How do we know when to align our mind with our body or our body with our mind?

How do we know what "True self" feelings should be rejected and which ones should be followed?

When we choose an identity, to what extent must we demand others affirm it?

Is it ever appropriate to refuse to identify someone by their chosen identity?

Which categories are fluid? Which are fixed?

How does our participation in a group determine who we are? How much of our identity is individual?

What scientific discipline do we follow? Sociology? Psychology?

Biology? What about when these contradict?

### **C. We Need a Standard!**

There is no better place to look for guidance than to the One who created us. If he created us, and his nature transcends us, then he alone would have the right to tell us who we really are.

"You have made us for yourself O Lord & our heart is restless until it rests in you." (St. Augustine)

# **IDENTITY**

## **Who Determines Who We Are?**

### Class 1:

## *The Buzz about Identity*

### **Bread of Life Fellowship**

65 Oakwood Ave, Kearny NJ

Bolkearny.org

fb.com/bolkearny

instagram.com/bolkearny

sermonaudio.com/breadoflife

Sunday worship @1:30pm

Tuesday Prayer or Bible Study @7:15pm

# The Buzz about Identity

Questions for Consideration:

1. What exactly is "identity?" How would you define it?
2. What are ways in which people try to discover their identity?
3. What are some current controversies and conversations happening about identity in our society today?

*Objective: To identify current perspectives about the concept of identity and establish why a standard is needed to help sort through the confusion.*

Outline:

- I. **Defining Identity**
- II. **Finding Identity**
- III. **Debating Identity**
- IV. **Resolving Identity**

## The Buzz about Identity

### I. Defining Identity

- A. **Dictionary and scientific definitions**
- B. **Modern Usage**

The modern concept of identity is "the sense of worth we attribute to how our personal characteristics interact with social categories."

Personal Characteristic	Social category	Sense of worth	Result
Appearance: "ugly"	Trend: good-looking people elevated in status	Appearance is a roadblock to social and personal value	Frustration with identity or urge to change
Skills: highly proficient in basketball	Cultural expectations: basketball players trend and generate wealth	Basketball skills are an asset for social and personal value	Pride in basketball skills and a life revolving around them
Possessions: cheap, generic sneakers	Institutional expectations (middle school): Cool kids wear expensive, name-brand sneakers	Type of sneaker de-values social standing in school	Frustration with identity (poor, not-cool, etc) or urge to change

### II. Finding Identity

#### A. **Methods of Discovery**

Peers: friends, co-workers, teammates

Culture: trends, politics, media

Careers: wealth, workaholism, retirement

Assessments: enneagram, personality tests, zodiac signs

Social media: likes, follows, personas

#### B. **Historical and Modern Differences**

"And where do our Anglo-Saxon warrior and our modern Manhattan man get their grids? From their cultures, their communities, their heroic stories. They are actually not simply "choosing to be themselves" - they are filtering their feelings, jettisoning some and embracing others. They are choosing to be the selves their cultures tell them they may be." (Tim Keller)

### III. Debating Identity

#### A. **Current Controversies**

In 2018 the UK reported a 4,400% rise over the previous decade in teenage girls seeking gender treatments; similar spikes have been