

Who Do You Think You Are? How the Biblical Worldview Transforms Self-Understanding

The Apostle Peter urged 'prepare your minds for action' (1 Peter 1:12). As Christians we are called to 'renew' our minds (Rom 12:2), to think critically about the world, resist its pressures to conform, and live in ways that please God. A truly biblical worldview isn't just about the way we think about the world however. It transforms the way we think about *ourselves* too. But how should we think about ourselves? Developing a sense of personal identity –“who I am” - has never been easy. As we move between different social roles - dad, pastor, daughter, company executive- it can be hard to see how they hang together and discern what story they tell. And in modern life this task has been vastly complicated by the fast-multiplying interfaces of technology and social media. Add to this the modern deconstruction of gender, sexuality, and the family and we have a perfect storm in which the self is 'under siege'. The Bible speaks into this modern confusion with profound and far-reaching implications. It calls us into a transformed understanding of self. Christian believers are made in the Image of God and, 'In Christ', adopted as God's own children. This is the only secure foundation on which to build and shape our self-understanding.

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Introduction: self-understanding and the biblical worldview

1. 'World-shaped' identities

Developing a sense of 'who I am' has never been easy. So we adopt identity labels based on the social roles we perform, our sexual attractions, or the status we achieve. With modern technology and social media, it is more difficult than ever to work out how these different identities cohere.

A. Social-roles, sexualities, status.

B. Recent social and technological developments

1. Technology and social networks

2. Designer selves: image management and information over-supply

3. Queer theory: the deconstruction of gender and hetero-normative culture

2. Gospel-shaped identity

We are made in his image and, in Christ, adopted as God's own children. 'Adopted child of God' is not a metaphor - it is a reality that carries profound and far-reaching implications for self-understanding.

A. Made in the image of God

B. Adopted children

3. Minds prepared for action

The reformation of the self: living out our identity as God's adopted children:

Resources

Harrison G (2012) *The Big Ego Trip*. IVP, UK

Jensen, M (2010) *Martyrdom and Identity*. T & T Clark Theology

Keyes, D (1984) *Beyond Identity* (Servant Books)

Sanlon, P (2010) *Plastic People: how queer theory is changing us*. Latimer Press

Williams Paris, J (2011) *The End of Sexual Identity*. IVP Books