

## SELF-CHOSEN IDENTITIES ARE SATANIC

One of the main facets of pagan living today is that most choose a label to identify themselves and then base their standing and value on some activity or action around it. Mostly, it revolves around sexual preferences or relationships. At its root, this is satanic. In modern times, sexual practice - or absence thereof - is a large part of our identities. And in our country, we're very into identity labels. Our concepts of self are supported by the lists of words demarcating who we are. And who we are is frequently discussed as static, when the reality is that we grow, shift, and develop over the course of our entire lifetimes. As an example: You were once a swinger. You can decide whether you want to be one now, and in the future, you will have that choice to make it all over again.

But to determine your own being and life, by naming yourself, is problematic. We are sinners through and through. All our endeavours are sinful, because we do not fear and love the true God. False gods creep in. We also want control over our body - by naming it, choosing our activities, and following our passions. In many instances sinners want to brand or tattoo the flesh to make it more fully their own and in line with personal views and desires. The body is dominated and passions are elevated, but at the same time the body is degraded in practice (with meaningless sexual immorality) and not valued much for its natural state or intended purposes.

But all self-chosen identities are idolatry. The fact that so many modern identities revolve around sexual sin and bodily misuse is no surprise. Relationships and gender identity have been separated from God's creation of the body, so God is denied in practice - by rebellion against the purpose and intention of our own flesh. This is punishment in itself, so Romans 1 speaks of homosexual perversions. It is a crime against nature, as it used to be called by the world, which is truly a crime against God, who made us according to His holy institution of marriage.

Christ Himself formed us and setup our lives, to a large extent. Our lives revolve around being male or female, being a helper or leader in marriage, caring for our families, children, and congregation. We have little say in these things, because we did not create ourselves or choose our bodies. But our good and gracious Lord did. Our physically determined identity is to be accepted as a gift.

The Christian is freed from making and enacting his own sinful identity. Our identity is invisible, not merely one of looks or image or actions. It is rather the resurrection power of Jesus given in Baptism, washing us from sin our entire lives. We are called by the divine promise of Christ to be children of God, not following our own sinful passions, but resisting them and following Jesus through suffering to glory. This is the only identity that does not lead to eternal death. We understand the weakness and mortality of this earthly body, neither worshipping its lusts, nor degrading it in sexual immorality or intentional harm, but have the certain promise of glory in this body to come, when Christ returns.

God chose us. We choose many things in this world, but do not trust in what man desires or values. Our inner sexual proclivities are to be subjugated and the godly Christian is called to exercise self-control - not the worship of what sinners crave and lust after. We serve at the pleasure of our Lord, in this body He has given, for as long as He determines. It is sown in weakness but will be raised in glory (1 Corinthians 15:35f).

We are given a heavenly righteousness in Christ - a divine identity and adoption far above all human choices. We have the eternal Gospel call of our heavenly Father to live in faith and holiness above all earthly suffering and mortal decisions. Whether we are single or married, have a family to care for or live alone, we have been chosen to be a part of God's family and be renewed daily in the image of the holy Lord, who gives us His own body and righteousness. We are no longer our own, but His. This is our blessed, perfect identity: to live in Christ's forgiveness.