

pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:2-4)

A. Ableism

You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:14)

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. (Matthew 25:40)

B. Ageism

"You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord." (Lev 19:32)

Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. (1 Tim 5:1-2)

III. The Bible's Teaching on How We Should Treat One Another

A. Extreme 1: Partiality - avoid it!

So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34)

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. (James 2:1)

B. Extreme 2: Indiscretion - avoid it!

"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." (John 7:24)
Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? (Galatians 4:16)
speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)

C. Command: Treat fellow human beings as image-bearers of God the Creator.

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-4)

IV. The Christian's Identity within Society

- A. In the world, but not of the world
- B. Vertical, then horizontal
- C. Reject both *escapism* and *dominionism*
- D. Be salt and light and let God shape identities.

IDENTITY

Who Determines Who We Are?

Class 4: *Identity and Society*

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

Identity and Society

Questions for Consideration:

1. If human beings have inherent worth and dignity, why is history filled with cruelty toward one another?
2. What are some of the reasons people mistreated one another?
3. What are the limits, if any, of "doing good" toward our fellow human beings?

Objective: To provide an overview of what the Bible teaches about how humans should relate to one another.

Outline:

- I. **How Society Informs Identity**
- II. **Society's Poor Track Record**
- III. **The Bible's Teaching on How We Should Treat One Another**
- IV. **The Christian's Identity within Society**

Identity and Society

I. **How Society Informs Identity**

- A. What sociologists and psychologists say
- B. Examples

Christians in the Roman Empire, Jewish persecution in Europe, Homosexuality in modern culture

- C. Yet, the Bible often offers *counter-cultural* identities

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2 ESV)

Daniel and his friends in Babylon (OT)

Tolerated	Rejected
Babylonian education (1:4-5) New Babylonian names (1:7)	Eating the king's food (1:8) Bowling to the king's statue (3:16-18)
Identity: People of the One True God of Israel Living in Pagan Babylon	

Jewish Christians in the Roman Empire (NT)

Tolerated	Rejected
Attending the temple (Acts 2:46) Submitting to authority (Romans 13:1-2) Paying taxes (Romans 13:6-7) Associating with worldly people (1 Cor 5:10)	Worshiping idols (1 Thess 1:9) Refusing to preach the gospel (Acts 5:29) Engaging in the sins of the world (1 John 2:15-16)
Identity: Followers of Jesus Living in a Sin-Cursed World	

- D. Society *influences* identity but cannot *determine* identity

II. **Society's Poor Track Record**

- A. Racism

"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28)

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9)

- B. Sexism

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27)

- C. Xenophobia

"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself." (Leviticus 19:34)

- D. Classism

For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you