The virtue of integrity is central to mature moral identity. Integrity means having moral wholeness such that one’s conduct fits with her convictions and values (her moral center of gravity). Mature Christian identity avoids the extremes of identity diffusion and premature identity and, instead, achieves moral integrity.

1. **Identity diffusion** shows itself in a lack of conviction and focus. We have all encountered the person who seems unable to initiate or sustain commitments. Such a person simply can’t be relied upon.

2. **Premature identity**. On the other hand, we also encounter the person who knows when she is in high school that she will be a doctor, married with 2.5 children, a with a certain kind of home, etc. We can be so eager to avoid the uncertainty that helps us to mature that we can jump into a “ready made” identity. We prematurely foreclose our development and avoid the difficult work of sorting out who we really are called to become.

3. **Integral identity (Moral Integrity)**. Mature identity requires continual growth through exploring different roles on the way toward ever-deeper commitment and focus. Stories provide precisely this well focused yet dynamic or developing integrity. The mark of authentic human flourishing is continual growth. As Hauerwas argues, the more fully that we possess character, the greater the range of our freedom, i.e., we are able to claim more of our responses as our own choices and fewer as beyond our capacity to choose or shape.

Identity results from identification.
Christian identity emerges through identification with the story of Jesus, the persons and causes with whom Jesus identified, and the practices that characterize and develop such identification.

Identity arises out of **4 forms of identification and accountability**.

a) **Relationships and Roles**.
In the final analysis relationships are the driving force of our morality. Who we care about shapes what roles we take on and what expectations guide our behavior. When we identify with other persons and we identify with the roles entailed thereby. For example, the role of parent arises out of love for a one’s child. We behave according to our relationships and roles.

b) **Common Cause**
Any healthy relationship must be triadic, i.e., there must be something greater than the relationship that unites two people in a shared purpose. Their gaze must not be wholly inward on each other, but also outward on a higher source of value.
c) **Common Story**

To enter into such a relationship united in the pursuit of a common cause is to embark upon a shared adventure. As humans our sense of worth comes from our participation in a meaningful story (see Hauerwas, 13). Together we learn our story and carry it on in new ways. Story provides the flexible coherence that fits the uncertainty and freedom of human existence. Human integrity depends upon being faithful our story in ways both “ever ancient and ever new.”

d) **Common Practices**

Our commitment to a relationship united around a common cause and story becomes real when it is practiced. Practices deepen and sustain our relationships, values, and story. On page 186 Spohn mentions a number of practices that deepen Christian identity (baptism, intercessory prayer, biblical meditation, forgiveness, and service to and solidarity with the poor and suffering. He identifies the Eucharist as the central Christian practice. [Eucharist—eu-good + kharis—gift = giving thanks, gratitude]. The proper response to a God of love is the gratitude that is shown by loving each other “as I have loved you” (John 13:34).