Individualism

I am the Center of the Universe
Individualism

- The belief that the individual is the primary reality and that our understanding of the universe and lifestyle should be centered in oneself.
Individualism

• Doesn’t find its origins in an intellectual system, but as a type of *story* about who we should be.
Habits of the Heart

- Utilitarian Individualism
  - Dominate force in America
  - Pleasure over Pain
  - American Dream
  - Conforms to the rules
Habits of the Heart

• Before and After… “It’s a gift to be simple…”
Habits of the Heart

• Expressive Individualism
  – Reaction to Utilitarian Individualism
  – Worships the freedom to express our uniqueness…
  – Rules are threats
  – “I need to be free to be me” (28).
Habits of the Heart

• Expressive Individualism (Fashion)
Habits of the Heart

- Expressive Individualism (Music)
Habits of the Heart

- Christianity
I am the Primary Reality of the Universe

• Sacrificial self-benefiting interests
• Self-Centeredness
• Social and Religious Institutions are a Threat
  – Utilitarian Individualism
  – Expressive Individualism
My Ends Justifies My Means

• Speeding
• Cheating on your assignments, tests, hours at work, taxes
• Not listening to a people group, moving a people group into the gettos, getting rid of a people group
• Climb the corporate ladder despite the: other employees, the environment, the poor, etc.
I am My only Moral Conscience

My goals determine what I find valuable...
Who is to judge?
Freedom and Fullfillment are My Right

• Basic Virtues of Classical Thought
  – Prudence
  – Courage
  – Moderation
  – Justice

• Individualism: Freedom is the cardinal virtue
  – Justice…
  – Goodness…
  – Traditional Values…
Performance Defines our Value
The Truth in Individualism

• “Individualism acknowledges the extent of our freedom and the responsibility that comes with freedom” (Wilkens and Sanford, 34).
• “Individualism affirms my need to make a difference” (35).
• “Individualism recognizes the strength of chosen beliefs” (36).
The Potential Problems of Individualism

• “Individualism is constructed on a flawed view of reality” (37).

• Individualism is constructed on a flawed view of human nature” (38).

• “Individualism has a flawed view of freedom and achievement” (39).