

PART ONE: GETTING PAST LABELS

We all wear labels. Many of the labels we wear were placed on us by others—parents, siblings, friends, teachers, coaches, or coworkers. But what if we're carrying around the wrong labels?

Who has the right to label you? Who are you going to allow to label you? Who knows best how to label you? Labels create expectations, and expectations influence the direction of our lives.

BIG IDEA: **God's power is always bigger than your past labels**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name some of the labels people have placed on you. What kind of kid were you in middle school? Were those years fun or difficult for you?
2. What was one of your least favorite nicknames you were called growing up? Why did you dislike your nickname?
3. Why do you think we tend to label people?
4. I tend to label a person based upon his or her...
 - a. accomplishments
 - b. appearance
 - c. future potential
 - d. educational background
 - e. character
5. *With your Bible or Bible App, read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Isaiah 62:2.* We learn in these verses that in Christ we are all new creations and labels no longer apply because of the new name God has given us!

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! *2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)*

And you will be given a new name by the Lord's own mouth. *Isaiah 62:3 (NLT)*
6. What negative labels follow your name? How have these labels influenced the way you see yourself? Why do so many of us accept negative labels and let them define us?
7. How should having a God-centered view of yourself change the way you see yourself?
8. Chris said, "God will give you a new name." What new name would best describe your new life in Christ?
9. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Matthew 16:17-18.*

Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it." *Matthew 16:17-18 (NLT)*
10. In what ways have you seen your strengths grow out of your weaknesses?
11. Chris said, "God will give you a new purpose." What God-given purpose are you growing into? What next step do you need to take to embrace that purpose?
12. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Jeremiah 29:11.*

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." *Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)*
13. Chris said, "God will give you a new future." How have you let the labels of your past limit God's plan for your future?
14. How can knowing the future God has planned for you help you overcome your negative labels?
15. Why is it so difficult not to let the labels people put on us influence the way we behave, even when those labels are inaccurate?
16. Is it difficult for you to believe that God has a plan for your life? Why or why not?

