

onechurch bigIdea

BIG IDEA: People's labels limit us—God's labels liberate us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Choose a number between 1 and 10 that represents how much you accept yourself, 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest. Write this number down.
2. What do most people base their identity and self-worth on? (Examples: appearance, possessions, other's opinions, behavior, work, etc.)
3. Many times we see things in the mirror that other people would never see about ourselves. What are some things you see in the mirror that bother you about yourself? What would you change about yourself if you could?
4. With your Bible or YouVersion, read *2 Corinthians 5:17-21* 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.
5. What negative labels follow your name? How have these labels influenced the way you see yourself?
6. 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. What new name would best describe your new life in Christ?
9. Read *Matthew 16:17-18*, *Jeremiah 29:11* and *Philippians 3:13-14*. These passages show us that God has given us a purpose and a new future.
10. In what ways have you seen your strengths grow out of your weaknesses?
11. What God-given purpose are you growing into? What next step do you need to take to embrace that purpose?
12. How have you let the labels of your past limit God's plan for your future?
13. How can knowing the future God has planned for you help you overcome your negative labels?
14. What will you do this week to begin renewing your mind and putting on your "true identity" in Christ? (Suggestion: see handout, Reclaiming My True Label.)

THINK ABOUT IT

Write down the negative labels that continue to define you and influence the way you see yourself. Next to each label write the new name that God has given you to replace that label. For example if your label is "average," write "extraordinary" next to it. If your label is "addict," write "overcomer" next to it. Place your list somewhere you'll see it often to remind you that you no longer will let labels define you, but instead be defined by your life in Christ. Commit to God that you will no longer allow the labels of your past hold you back from embracing your purpose and future.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Break up into groups of 2 and Share the number that represents your acceptance of yourself (see question #1). How does this compare with how God accepts you? (God gives you a 10.) On what have you been basing God's acceptance of you? What makes it so difficult for you to believe the truth that God has made you acceptable?

As a Community Group, pray for one another concerning the acceptance of your true identity in Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to make each person aware of the lies that need to be rejected and replaced with God's Truth. Release right words over one another in prayer. (See Reclaiming My True Label handout)



RECLAIMING MY TRUE LABEL

Many Christians are confused because of the difference they see between who they are (their new identity in Christ) and what they experience in their daily lives. We have been programmed by our experiences and environment to believe certain things to be true about ourselves whether they are true or not. As Christians, we entered into a new relationship with God that guarantees us a new identity—a new label. For many, their lifestyle and behavior reflects more of their old label than their new label in Christ. This is because we must know and believe who God has made us to be in order to change what we do. Our old life has ended, but we still have to deal with the memory of it. We must daily reject the wrong beliefs we have about ourselves and accept the truth of what God says. This process is called renewing our mind. The following exercise will help you begin to “reject” your old label and “reclaim” your new label—our identity in Jesus. There is usually a time-lag between our acceptance of our new identity in Christ and our experience of this in our daily lives.

1. Select five labels from column one, which reflect how you most often view yourself. Write these down on a separate sheet of paper.
2. Read the truths in column two for each one you selected. Write down any thoughts or feelings that do not agree with these truths. How do you see the old labels from column one affecting your daily life? Your behavior? Your relationships?
3. Next, read the verses in column three. Select one verse to memorize for each truth that you checked, Write the truths from column two and one of the corresponding verses from column three, on 3x5 cards and/or post it notes. Place them in prominent places where you will see them several times a day. Agree with God (out loud when possible) many times throughout your day. The more you think about God’s truth the more it will label you and affect your belief about your true identity.
4. Develop the practice of recognizing and rejecting the old labels, replacing them with the truth of your new labels. Your negative thoughts and feelings will remind you when you need to renew your mind with God’s Truth. Continue to do this for the next three weeks.
5. Ask God to show you one area of your life where you are not presently experiencing your new identity. What lies are you believing? What steps of faith can you begin to take to act on your new identity? Depend on the Holy Spirit to empower you to live out the truth of who God has made you to be.

| <i>What I feel or think about myself</i> | <i>Because Christ lives in me...</i> | <i>Scripture References</i> |
|---|---|--|
| I am a failure/inadequate | I am adequate | 2 Corinthians 3:5-6; |
| I am responsible for my life | He is faithful and responsible for me | Philippians 1:6; 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3 |
| I am not good enough | I am perfect and complete | Hebrews 10:14; Colossians 2:9-10 |
| I am weak/powerless | I have God’s power | Ephesians 1:19; 3:16; Philippians 4:13 |
| I am undisciplined | I have self-control | Galatians 5:22-23 |
| I feel guilty | I am totally forgiven | Colossians 2:13; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:10-14 |
| I feel unloved and/or un-worthy of love | I am unconditionally loved | John 15:9; 16:27, Jeremiah 31:3 |
| I feel alone or lonely | I am never alone or forsaken | Romans 8:38-39; Hebrews 13:5b |
| I can do whatever I set my mind to | I am to humbly surrender my life to God | Romans 12:1; James 4:10,13-15 |
| God expects me to do my best for Him | God asks me to believe what He says and depend on Him | Galatians 2:20, 3:2-3,11; Hebrews 11:6 |
| I am not very smart | I have God’s wisdom | 1 Corinthians 1:30; James 1:5 |
| God expects me to just try harder | He wants me to rest in Him | Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:10-11 |
| I must meet certain standards to feel good about myself | He is my righteousness | Romans 8:10, 2 Corinthians 5:21 |
| I need others approval and acceptance | He accepts me and has made me acceptable | Romans 15:7 |

