



Think of all the things we give power to define us. Our last name. The accidents of our birth. The community to which we choose to belong. What we do for a living. The Christian story says that, in Christ, and through the gospel, God is calling you to a new identity. It comes with a new name. A new birth. A new community. And a new vocation. This is who you are called to be. This is who you really are.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker:

Break into small groups and pretend to be strangers. Go!

Now, what did you say to each other? What are the most common questions you ask others (or they ask you) when you meet strangers. Why is that?

THE CULTURAL STORY. Defined by our name. Think of some famous last names. What would it feel like to be born into that family? How is your name something that tends to define you?

Defined by our past. Events in life can limit or direct our options in the future. How can painful or impactful moments in your past come to define you? Share your own story if you are comfortable.

Defined by the accidents of our birth. Share some basic statistics about you: height, gender, skin color, place of birth. How do these things help define you?

Defined by our desires & loves. Do you have a favorite sports team? Do you love your state or your country? How does this affect how you define yourself?

Defined by our community. Think of how we tend to find identity in groups (southern, republican, veteran, etc.). Is this good or bad or neither? Discuss.

Defined by our job. For many of us, what we do determines who we think we are. Discuss.

THE CHRISTIAN STORY. God gives us a new name. Read **Matt 16:15-18; Isa 62:2; Rev. 2:17; 3:12.** What does it mean to have a new name? **Follow up:** Read **Mark 2:17; Rom 8:30; 1 Thess 2:12; 5:24; 1 Pet 2:9.** What does it mean for God to “call” us? Read **2 Thess 2:14.** Discuss how God calls us.

God’s calling gives us lenses to re-evaluate how we see our past. Read **Philippians 3:1-11.** Compare this story to your own story. Discuss.

God’s calling transcends the accidents of our birth. Read **1 Cor 1:26-30; Gal 3:26-28.** How does the gospel move past where we came from, or what we look like?

God’s calling shapes our desires and loves. Read **Gal 5:13-14.** How do our desires change through God’s calling?

God’s calling provides us with a new community. Read **Col 3:15; 1 Cor 1:2, 9; Rom 1:6-7.** How is the church a new defining element for us? How does the church become our primary communal identity?

God’s calling gives us a new vocation. How is the kingdom your primary job?