

This midweek study will explore what it means to have a new identity in Christ. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: New Identity of the Believer

When a person places his or her faith in Christ, that person undergoes a fundamental change of identity. He or she goes from being an enemy under God's wrath to being welcomed into God's family as a beloved child (Eph. 2:1-3,19). The believer in Christ is declared righteous on account of Christ's perfect life and substitutionary death and resurrection. No longer is the person a slave to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. The person has been delivered from the realm of darkness and now belongs to the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). Anyone who is in Christ is a "new creation" in whom the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

1 When we give our lives to Christ, we become new creations (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20).

Option: Think back to science class. What is the difference between a chemical and a physical change? When something undergoes a chemical change, it cannot be changed back into its original state (like baking a cake or burning a piece of paper).

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

- ▶ *When Christ changes us, is it like a physical or a chemical change? Why?*

When Christ comes into our lives we are permanently changed.

- ▶ *How do our priorities and desires change when we become new creations?*

2 We have been adopted into God's family (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 3:26).

Option: Do you know anyone who has been adopted? Does that person treat his/her parents any differently than you do? Of course not! They have been adopted into a new family. Their parents are just as legitimate as anyone else's. Christians are also brought into new families with a new father: God. Once you enter into God's family, you will never be cast out.

- ▶ *What does it mean to say God is our Father?*

Read Romans 8:15-17.

- ▶ *In what way does our adoption into God's family keep us from falling back into fear? Fear of what?*
- ▶ *What are some ways your new identity in Christ has taken fear from you?*

Once we have been adopted into Christ's family, we are His forever. We will never fall back into our spiritual deadness again.

Read Galatians 3:26.

- ▶ *How does this passage tell us we become sons of God?*
- ▶ *Does it always feel like you are a son/daughter of God? What makes it difficult to feel that way?*

No matter how we feel, God has made us His children through Christ. That can never be reversed.

3 Our righteousness before God is based on Christ's work, not ours (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- ▶ *How did Jesus make it possible for us to become the righteousness of God?*

We can be counted righteous before God because of Christ's righteousness transferred to us. When we place our faith in Him, God sees Christ's perfect righteousness covering us.

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *List some specific ways your life (identity, dreams, desires, etc.) has changed since you have come to know Christ.*
- ▶ *Think of some practical ways you can remind yourself of who you are in Christ everyday.*

Encourage students to always strive to remember who they are in Christ, and let that reality affect the way they fight sin, treat others, and worship God.