

LIVING OUT MY GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY

Identity • Part 4

Discussion Guide

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Romans 8:18 (NKJV)

Nick Vujicic, a man born with no arms and no legs, asks us to consider our purpose in this life. More than arms and legs, Nick wants to have a purpose. God knew your name before he created the world. God has a plan for your life. With faith in God comes purpose, conviction, and contentment in him. It all begins with an active relationship with Jesus Christ.

Open your group with a prayer. This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss.

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord...

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (TNIV)

1. Imagine a circumstance in your life, or if you feel comfortable, share a REAL event, when in one day your world was changed forever. Dreams for a “normal” life dissolved. What faith steps do you see in these verses that could help you in such heartache?

2. Have you experienced a time when you have felt utter despair, as though God could not possibly be there? How could these verses be a comfort, an encouragement, a strong foundation, even when you have no answers to your most painful questions?

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:1 (NASB)

“I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...”

Psalms 139:14 (NASB)

3. By the grace of God you exist - with or without arms or legs, regardless of whether everyone else has them or not. You may not be able to change your circumstances. You don't need more faith, you don't need to pray more. God knows your heart and your faith. He doesn't wait for enough faith or prayers, he has the right plan for you. Just because we don't understand his plan doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Name one thing that has happened in your own life that caused your faith to be challenged, or your purpose in doubt. How can these verses help you to believe God in the midst of any circumstance of life?

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation... I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:11-13 (TNIV)

4. Spend some time talking about what it means to be content. From these verses, why do you think we should never give up on God? What do you think causes us to quit asking or doubt God's plan?

5. If God doesn't do a miracle in your life, he may cause you to BE a miracle in someone else's life. Imagine God gives you what you most desire, instead of what he has planned for your life? Think about it. What difference would it make?

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. As we compare ourselves with others we rarely see an accurate picture of ourselves. Compared to God, how do I measure up? Jesus is the only human who is holy and perfect.

Consider this week how God can use your imperfections for his glory. Give each day to God, to use you for his purpose, and to accomplish his goals.

2. Meditate on Romans 8:18 daily this week. Let God begin to reveal to you the future glory he has for you.

Review any assignments or commitments made during your previous meeting.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week's Study

If you could ask God for anything, what would you want him to do for you?

God has given each life a plan and a purpose. Only when we surrender our life to God and his plan for us do we walk in the fullness of life.

Dear God, your word tells us in Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Help us hold fast to your word and the faith that you have given us. Let us live our lives in that faith.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

Pray for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.

Plan where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.

Ponder your progress after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.

Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.

The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.

Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.

Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.