

I Quit!
Week 2
Day 1

When someone says the phrase “I quit,” it is normally in a negative context. It normally means someone is giving up or surrendering, waving the white flag. It’s when an army is defeated, when a wrestler is pinned, and when a task or job becomes too difficult. We don’t often think of quitting as something positive. But what happens when there are things that overwhelm us, that get in the way of moving forward. Are we will to surrender, to give over those things to God, to say “I quit” to the things in our lives which have us pinned on the mat?

Over the next few weeks, we’ll be doing just that. It’s our hope that we will give up and quit the things which keep us from becoming the people God dreams we can be. Together we’re going to discover what can happen when we finally get to the place where we’re willing to say, “I quit.”

This week we’re going to talk about what it would look like to say “I quit letting my past determine my future.” The truth is, for many of us, we live our lives wearing certain labels. Some people throughout history have labels attached to their names. Finish each of these labels.

Attila the _____

Conan the _____

Billy the _____

Buffy the _____

Winnie the _____

(The answers are Hun, Barbarian, Kid, Vampire Slayer, and Pooh)

Sometimes we get labels attached to our lives as well. What is the negative label that follows your name? Perhaps it’s the doormat, the person who always gets

stepped on, who has no backbone, and who doesn't ever stand up for themselves. Maybe it's the lazy one who never seems to get anywhere and who has trouble holding a job. Perhaps it's the wild child, the one who gets in trouble. Or the black sheep, the person who never seems to fit in and who doesn't belong. Average. Dumb. Ugly. Strange. The list goes on.

Over this week we'll be looking at what it would mean for our lives if we decided to quit allowing the labels of this world to direct our lives.

What negative label follows your name? Where did you first "hear" this label attached to your name?

I Quit!
Week 2
Day 2

If we're going to say "I quit" to allowing our past dictate our future, there is one thing we need to know about God. Simply put, God's truth about you is bigger than any other label you might have been given. No matter what labels you've been given, no matter what type of past you've lived, and no matter who you are, God's truth about you is bigger than any other label.

It's easy to slip into the mentality that whatever label we've been given is permanent, something as indelible as our fingerprints or our DNA. It's easy to feel like the road we're walking right now is the only road we will ever walk. But what's true about you today doesn't have to be true about you tomorrow. God longs to break the labels that bind us so we can embrace the truth he has for our lives.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

What this passage reminds us is that it doesn't matter who you are, whatever labels you wear (whether these labels are deserved or not), when we come to God through Jesus, something amazing happens. When we come to Jesus, we become new. We are transformed into a new person. The old is gone, the new has come. All of the old labels of your life, all of the old tags we have used to determine who we are, they are all gone. But God doesn't just remove the old labels, he longs to give us a new one.

What label do you think God wants to replace in your life? What is your reaction to hearing that what is true now doesn't have to be true tomorrow?

I Quit!
Week 2
Day 3

The way God hopes we will quit allowing our past to determine our future is not only by removing the labels we wear but also by replacing those labels with something new. Our God longs to give us a new name.

Read Isaiah 62:2.

We read in the Bible how God wants to call us by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will bestow. This isn't a name given to us by our parents, our workplace, or our world, but from God himself.

Little girls will sometimes do this when there's someone they have a crush on. They will write their first name and the last name of the boy they like together (normally surrounded by hearts and smiley faces), creating a new name. God wants to take away the old names we've embraced and give us new names, names spoken directly from his mouth to us.

God did this all the time in the Bible. There was once an elderly couple named Abram and Sarai. Abram and Sarai, for one reason or another, couldn't have children. In the ancient world (and in many ways still today), there is a massive stigma on someone who is unable to have children. There's a label that gets attached. But God gave them new names.

God told them they would have new names and from then on they should be called Abraham and Sarah because they would become the father and mother of many nations (Genesis 17). God took the old label away and gave them a new name.

There was once a man named Jacob, which means trickster, huckster, or swindler. It was a name he did everything in his power to live up to by cheating his brother out of his birthright and fooling his father into bestowing a blessing on him. But God wanted to take the label away and gave Jacob a new name. God called him Israel, which means to wrestle with God or to struggle with God, a name which would be given to an entire nation of people (Genesis 35).

There was once a man named Gideon. He was a wimp. A wuss. A pushover. He was small and insignificant, the youngest son of the lowest family. When an enemy was attacking his town, he hides, hoping to escape the conflict because he was afraid. But God had a different name for Gideon. God told Gideon that he was a might warrior, a man of valor, powerful and strong. (Judges 6)

God longs to give you a new name. God longs to take away the old labels and the old names and to give you a new name, a name directly from him.

What would it mean to be given a new name directly from God? How might it change your life?

I Quit!

Week 2

Day 4

The struggle for many people, and the thing which makes saying I quit to allowing our past to dictate our future so difficult is the new names don't always feel like they fit. They feel too large. They feel too impressive. We don't feel worthy of our new names from God.

God will not give us a new name without giving us help growing into our new name.

For some people the new name is Forgiven, even when you might not feel it yet in your life. God wants you to know you are Forgiven. You are no longer simply a list of mistakes or faults, but you are something new and clean.

Perhaps your new name is Overcomer. Maybe your whole life people have told you how you'd never beat your addictions or your bad habits. But maybe God has a new name for you, even when it doesn't seem to fit on you right now.

Some people reading this feel completely inadequate as a mom or a dad, and perhaps God's new name for you is Spiritual Mom or Spiritual Dad, even when it doesn't feel realistic at the moment.

For other people God's new name for you is Spiritual Leader. Maybe God is calling you to begin to leading here at CCC, to serving in bigger ways, perhaps stepping up to lead a small group, even when you might not feel qualified.

Do not believe what others have said about you. Believe what God says about you.

There was a woman we read about in the Bible (Joshua 2, 6) who have two different negative labels attached to her: Rahab the Prostitute or Rahab the Harlot. These labels weren't figurative, she literally was a prostitute. I'm sure when she heard herself referred to that way she thought, I'm used goods. I'm only valuable for one thing. God could never use me. I'll never get a husband

who really loves me. I'll never be worth anything but what men can get out of me.

We read in the Bible that when she heard about God her heart melted. And when two spies came to her city to scout the area, Rahab hid them and saved their lives. When they leave the city she leaves with them, and enters into a new life. She met a Godly man named Salmon, whom she married. God gave her a new name and a new purpose.

Rahab, the one who used to be called the Prostitute and the Harlot, had a son. And a grandson. And a greatgrandson, and on and on for generations. And do you know who was born from her family tree? Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

With God's power we can get past our past, we can get a new name, and we will grow into our names.

How difficult is it for you to accept a new name from God? What do you think it would mean for you to grow into your new name?

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Day 5

Not only will God give us new name, but God uses our new names to give us a new purpose. Our old names tend to limits our purpose, but God wants to give us a new name and a new purpose.

In the Bible we read about Simon who was a fisherman. Until he met Jesus, he had always been defined by his job and the purpose it held for him. He had been defined up to this point by catching fish. Then one day he met Jesus and everything changed. Jesus said his new purpose was not to merely catch fish,

but to tell people about God, to be an evangelist (just a fancy way of saying telling and teaching people about God and Jesus). Jesus called Simon a fisher of men.

Read Matthew 16:13-19.

Jesus asked his disciples who the crowds said he was, but then pressed his disciples on who they thought he was. It was Simon who replies to him that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Then Jesus gave him a new name. Jesus said you are now called Peter, which means “the rock.”

But was Peter always a rock moving forward? Was he always steady? Was he always strong? No. He waivers. He folds. He denies Jesus three times. But Jesus restores Peter, the rock, because Jesus knows the greater purpose God has for Peter’s life.

On Pentecost, who does God use as the guest speaker of the day? Peter. God empowered Peter and on that day alone Peter reached thousands of people for Jesus.

God wants to give us a new name and a purpose and a new future. We might be tempted to think things are never going to work out. I’m always going to be alone, always going to be in debt, always going to have headaches, always going to have this addiction, always going to be alone.

But God is bigger than your old name. God is bigger than your old purpose. God is bigger than anything you’re struggling with right now.

Read Jeremiah 29:11.

God has a new name for you and plan for your life. He wants to give you a hope and a good future. God wants to remove your old label and help you quit allowing the past to determine your future.

What do you think it would look like for God to give you a new purpose?

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Small Group Guide

1. What are some of the labels you've been given in your life?
2. What impact do you think it makes to have a label given to you?

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Isaiah 62:2

3. In what ways does God replace the old things in our lives with new things?
4. In what way does God give us new names?
5. What new name might God be giving to you?

Read: Matthew 16:13-19

6. In what way was Simon's new name related to the purpose God had for him?
7. How might God's new name for you be related to his purpose for your life?