

I BECAME A CHRISTIAN AND ALL
I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY T-SHIRT

SMALL GROUP GUIDES

WEEK 1 - 5

I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt
Week One: Small Group Questions
Correlates with Chapters 1-5

Open (Answer 1 or 2 of these questions as time permits):

1. Have you ever had a nickname? What was it? How did you get it? Did you like it?
2. In chapter 4 of the book *I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt* the author discusses his struggles to feel loved and wanted by God because he had grown up not feeling loved and wanted. Do you think this is a common problem for people? Why or why not? Have you had this (or a similar) problem in your own life?

Think about it:

3. What things help you form your identity? How do these affect your life?
4. In this series, we're talking about *really* living the Christian life (rather than just wearing the T-shirt because we've missed out on the journey). Why do you think this issue of identity is so critical in our truly living the Christian life?

Bible: Read Colossians 3:1–12

5. Verse 3 tells Christians that they have died and their life is hidden with Christ in God. What does this say to you about your new and true identity?
6. We're challenged, in verse 5, to put some things to death. Since verse 3 teaches us that we've already died, what might it mean to put parts of our life to death? Why might it be necessary?
7. Do you think it's possible that "identity issues" have been holding you back? In what ways might that be true? What do you need to do about that?

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Week Two: Small Group Questions
Correlates with Chapter 6

Open (Answer 1 or 2 of these questions as time permits):

1. What is your favorite thing to eat at home? How about in a restaurant?
2. Some of us are reading a book called *I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt*. In the book the author talks about how we have “roving appetites”—that we’ve tried to “eat” all kinds of things that we’re sure will fill us up but ultimately don’t. When you were growing up, what were some things you wanted intensely but that did not satisfy you?

Think about it:

3. What are some things that you are ‘passionate’ or ‘intense’ about? Why?
4. This world has a lot to say about what will fulfill us. What are some of the messages that you have heard or seen regarding this?

Bible: Read Mark 10:46-52

5. Bartimaeus was blind and a beggar. Are there any ways in which you can relate to him?
6. Bartimaeus was obviously very hungry for Jesus and for what Jesus could do in his life. How would you describe your hunger for Jesus right now? (Starving, kind of hungry, no thanks I’m not hungry, I’ll take a look at the menu, etc . . .)
7. What will you actually *do* this week to increase your intensity for God and to get your hunger for him filled? How can this group help you?

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Week Three: Small Group Questions
Correlates with Chapters 7–9

Open (Answer 1 or 2 of these questions as time permits):

1. Tell us about one of your most memorable experiences that involved dancing.
2. What is one of the best Halloween costumes you've ever had? When you were younger, did you like to dress up like or imitate anyone?

Think about it:

3. Christians talk about “following” or “imitating” Jesus. When you hear these things, what typically comes to mind?
4. The author of *Lousy T-Shirt* mentions (in chapter 9) the monks' idea of *perichoresis*—that God is a God who dances, and we've been invited into that dance with God. What is your reaction to this metaphor?

Bible: Read Luke 10:38–42.

5. In this story, both Mary and Martha wanted to follow Jesus, yet, in this instance they follow Jesus differently. What are some of the key differences? Why do you think Jesus commends Mary? Would you agree that Mary's approach to following Jesus looks more like dancing than Martha's?
6. How might your efforts to imitate (and become more like) Jesus be impacted if you viewed it as learning from him how to dance through life rather than merely trying to not sin so much?
7. Learning how to dance takes some effort and practice. What are some things you can do to learn how to do the “spiritual” dance of following and imitating Jesus better?

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Week Four: Small Group Questions
Correlates with Chapters 12

Open (Answer 1 or 2 of these questions as time permits):

1. As a child, what was your favorite part about playing hide-and-seek? What was your least favorite part? Any special memories of playing this game?
2. Did you have a favorite hiding place as a child? When would you hide there?

Think about it:

3. Some of us have been reading the book *I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt*. In the book the author talks about how the Christian life is all about loving God and loving people. What do you find appealing or concerning about a life of loving God and loving people?
4. In that book (chapter 12) the author tells of being “burned” by his father and how it caused him not to trust and to shy away from relationships. In what ways can you relate?

Bible: Read Genesis 2:25–3:13

5. Adam and Eve engaged in the first ever cover-up (3:7), game of hide-and-seek (3:8–10), and blame game (3:12–13). When in your life has sin caused you to cover up, hide, or blame?
6. God comes looking for Adam and Eve, even though (as all-knowing God) he already knew what they had done. In what ways does it comfort you to know that God did not give up on Adam and Eve or ignore them but instead calls them out of hiding?
7. God is calling us out of hiding and toward a life of loving God and loving people. What is one practical thing you can do this week to take a step out of hiding and toward loving God and loving people?

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Week Five: Small Group Questions
Correlates with Chapters 13–15

Open (Answer 1 or 2 of these questions as time permits):

1. What is the most “near death” experience you’ve ever had?
2. When was a time when you had to make a sacrifice for something or someone that was important to you?

Think about it:

3. What do you think makes it so difficult to choose to die to ourselves (our selfishness) and truly live for God and others?
4. In *Lousy T-Shirt* the author claims one of the reasons it’s difficult to die to ourselves is that it feels risky. We think that if we don’t look out for ourselves, no one will look out for us. When do you most feel that way?

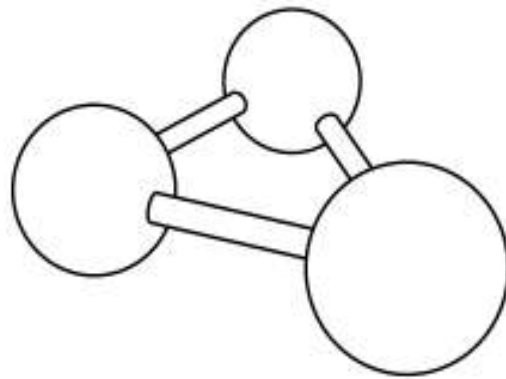
Bible: Read John 12:23–26

5. Jesus says that for us to really live, we must be willing to lose our lives. What do you think he means by that?
6. Jesus says that God the Father will honor those who serve. Often in this life those who serve are *not* honored. How can we better stay focused on receiving the honor of God and try to care less about receiving honor from people?
7. The author of *Lousy T-Shirt* also claims that not only is a selfless life of serving the “right” or “best” way to live, but it is also the way that will allow our lives to have the most influence. Why do you think “losing our lives” and serving are the keys to living lives of influence?

This marks the last day in our series. For five weeks we’ve been on a journey of trying to “take off the T-shirt” and start truly living the Christian life. What do you think is the most important principle you’ll take away from this series? What do you still most need to apply?

For further reading and used as a resource:

Antonucci, Vince. *I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008. *as well as material made available at <http://www.lousytshirtbook.com>*



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