

*"Think Different."*

*"You Rule."*

*"No Rules, Just Right."*

*"Dare To Be Different"*

*"Embrace Your Individuality"*

*"Because You're Worth It."*

*"Belong Anywhere."*

*"Broadcast Yourself"*

**All around you (all the time), messages similar to these pop onto the screens you scroll, bombard the ads in between the videos you watch, are plastered across the windows of the stores you shop, weave their way into the music you listen to, get amplified by the latest influencers on the scene, and dig deep into your subconscious mind.**

Have you noticed the extreme value that our culture places on you? Think about it. You are the center of 99% of advertising campaigns. If you listen to the world around you, defining "you" may actually be the most important thing you'll ever do.

Listen to the right music. Why? It tells the world who you are. Wear the right clothes. Why? It shows the world how you express yourself. Make your version of this trending video. Why? Because people need to see you be you. Drink this, don't drink that. Say this, don't say that. Date this person, not that person. You do you. Be your authentic self. Live your truth. Weigh in this way about this thing on social media because doing so will show the world you are YOU.

### **YOU. YOU. YOU.**

It's all about you. All about "I." All about the individual. You are your own brand. You are the manager and marketer of that brand. You are in control. You are in the driver's seat. You are the center of your own universe.

However, when Jesus rescued you—when you accepted the **Exchange of death for life** that He made possible for you through His death on the Cross—you accepted an **Exchange of values**. You accepted an *Exchange* of identity.

This new life you're living, this "exchanged life"? Yeah, well, the truth is that your identity has been exchanged. You are no longer the center of your world anymore.

### **The "you" has been exchanged for the "Him."**

So, how do we respond to this *Exchange*? Glad you asked; let's explore that together!

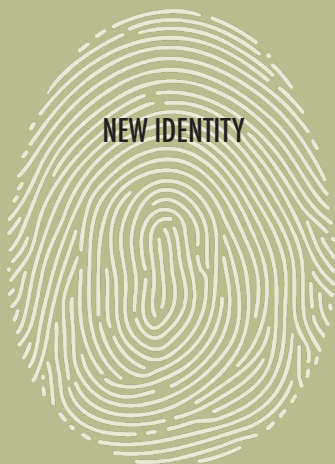
# GETTING STARTED

## SESSION 4

*Follow your leader's instructions to work through this activity. Then, work through the questions together as a group.*

Students will use the space provided inside the mirror to write down a sentence, word, or phrase that describes, defines, or identifies them. In other words, it is something that they believe defines who they are.

Another student will use the space provided inside the fingerprint to create a new identity for the student who owns this book by writing down a sentence, word, or phrase that describes and defines this new identity. This new identity can be anything (except mean or critical about their partner).



- How did it feel to have someone other than yourself define your identity?

ANSWERS WILL VARY

- What made this activity difficult?

Answers will vary but may include: They don't know me well enough to define me. I feel judged when someone besides me attempts to define me. I'm in control of who I am, not anyone else.

- What is it about our identities that makes them so hard to give them up?

Answers will vary. Lead students to understand that our identities are so very personal. They often feel like literal parts of who we are. Making any sort of change to them feels weird, scary, unfamiliar, and difficult.

- What would it take in real life for you to give up your identity and take on someone else's?

ANSWERS WILL VARY

# SESSION 2 DIGGING IN

Before we get started, let's define what it means to deny something or someone.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO DENY SOMETHING OR SOMEONE.

**DENY:**

Students will use this space to write down how they would define in their own words what it means to deny something or someone.

WHAT IS YOUR GROUP'S WORKING DEFINITION?

Students will use this space to write down your group's working definition of denying something or someone.

**:DENY**

**WHY DO WE NEED THIS EXCHANGE OF ME FOR JESUS?**

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him **DENY HIMSELF** and **TAKE UP HIS CROSS** and **FOLLOW ME**. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

**MATTHEW 16:24-25**

Students will write the word "ME" here.

EXCHANGE OF SELF FOR JESUS

Answers will vary but may include: Drawing a cross, writing the word Jesus or God or salvation, etc., here.

**DENY**

**ἀπαρνέομαι**  
(aparneomai)

**REJECT OR DISOWN**

Students will write down some examples from their life of how they get in the way of following God.

Answers will vary but may include: Moral decisions that go against the norm or those that are celebrated in our culture. Being wrongly perceived as mean, close-minded, or intolerant. Standing up for your faith may feel judgmental to others. People simply don't understand.

Answers will vary but may include: When I feel God leading me to do something but I don't follow through. When I selfishly pursue dreams, goals, or relationships that are opposite of what God wants for me. When I do things to gain glory for myself. When my life doesn't match up with my faith. When I keep certain parts of my life "off limits" from God's control.

EXCHANGE OF SELF FOR JESUS

Answers will vary but may include: A friend's initials, team name, or something that symbolizes anything other than Jesus that you may have built your identity around.

EXCHANGE OF SELF FOR JESUS

Students will write the words "MY PLAN" here.

Students will write the words "GOD'S PLAN" here.

# WHAT DOES THIS EXCHANGE LOOK LIKE?

GALATIANS 2:20

***I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.***

- How does Paul describe what has happened to you once you've made the Exchange of death for life through faith in Jesus? **You have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer you who lives, but Christ who lives in you.**
- What does this mean to you? **When you accepted Jesus' Exchange of death for life through faith, you died.**
- How does what Paul says here relate to this idea of exchanging a me-centered (self-centered) life for a Jesus-centered one? **This is the description of what this Exchange of self for Jesus looks like. When this Exchange is made, our lives will now reflect Jesus to the world.**
- How does it make you feel that Jesus bought you this new life with the Exchange of His own life simply because He loves you? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**

***Name Or An "X" has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer Name Or An "X" who lives, but Christ who lives in Name Or An "X". And the life Name Or An "X" now lives in the flesh Name Or An "X" lives by faith in the Son of God, who loved Name Or An "X" and gave himself for Name Or An "X".***

ROMANS 14:7-8

***For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.***

- Picture people your age who live for themselves. How do their actions reveal this mindset? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**
- What about someone your age who lives for the Lord and appears to strive to live a life that truly follows Him? What might be the clues in his or her actions, words, and values that he or she lives for God? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**
- What does Paul's last "So then" phrase of verse 8 say about the ownership of our lives? How does this biblical truth impact how you view the concept of exchanging self for Jesus? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**

# HOW DOES THIS EXCHANGE IMPACT ME?

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

***For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***

- How does the phrase "To live is Christ" make you feel? Do you feel the weight of it? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**
- If a stranger was asked to observe your life and describe it in one word, what are the chances they would say, "Christ"? Explain your answer. **ANSWERS WILL VARY**
- What would have to happen in your life in order to move toward a place where someone could see Jesus so strongly reflected in you that they could sum up your life with the word "Christ"? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**

PHILIPPIANS 3:7

***But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.***

- What's Paul saying in this verse? **When we let go and let God take full control of our lives, we will lose certain things, but we'll find that this loss actually equals gain. (More on this in the wrapping-up activity.)**
- What does it say about how Paul views who's in charge of his life? **Paul had it figured out. He knew his life wasn't his own. Paul's life belonged to Jesus.**
- What are some examples of "losses" that you (or other teenagers) might experience because of strongly identifying with Jesus? **ANSWERS WILL VARY**

# WRAPPING UP

## SESSION 2

*The “you” needs to shrink. The “Christ in you” needs to grow. Work with your group and leader to examine what this may look like in your life.*

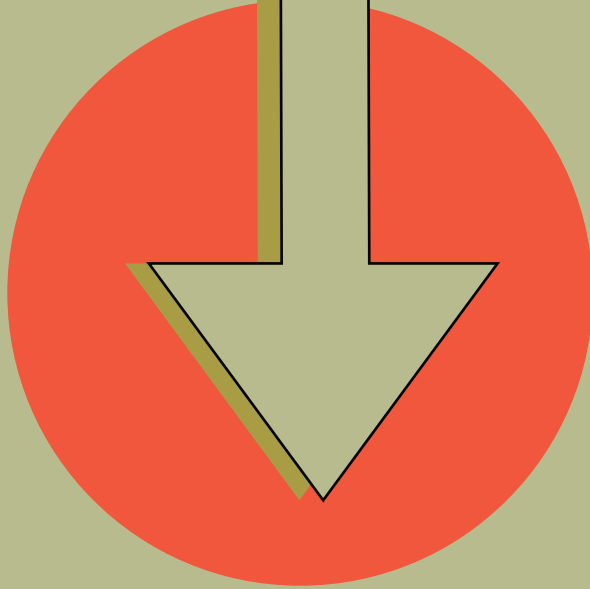


TO LIVE  
IS CHRIST



WHAT WAS LOST  
IS GAIN

**IT'S NOT PUNISHMENT; IT'S DIVINE PRUNING.**



"IF ANYONE WOULD COME AFTER  
ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF AND  
TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND  
**FOLLOW ME.**

FOR WHOEVER WOULD SAVE HIS LIFE  
WILL LOSE IT, BUT WHOEVER LOSES  
HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE WILL FIND IT."

**MATTHEW 16:24-25**

