



Let us define the word LABEL. A label is a word or phrase that is used to describe a person, particularly one that's restrictive in nature. Whether we know it or not, labels are powerful. Whether you like it or not, we all carry labels around in life. For most of us, we've carried around NEGATIVE labels for far too long. Maybe, it's a feeling like failure or the feeling of being inadequate. Possibly, some of you here are thinking: I want to be the dad that God has called me to but I just don't think I can be that person. I want to be the spouse that God has called me to be but I just can't be that person. Maybe, some of you here are struggling with insecurity. I don't know what your label is but we all carry labels.

If you wear a negative label too long, it stops describing your past and it begins determining your future. The longer you wear a label, the more it stops describing your past and the more it begins determining your future. If I feel labeled as a failure, maybe because of what happened in school or what happened at work or what's happened in relationships in my life, if I feel like a FAILURE, I'm afraid to try new things because if I try new things Page 1 of 6 and it doesn't work out, it will only confirm what I've been labeled, which is a failure and I feel even more like a failure. If you've been labeled LOSER, maybe in the relationships in your life, you're not going to ask your spouse to treat you with the respect that you deserve. Why?

Because that's what you already believed in your heart and mind. If you're no longer a virgin, and you will just give yourself to every man that you have relationship with, men will not respect you. Why? Because that's what you already believed in your heart and mind.

HOW TO OVERCOME LABELS?

Choose the Right Set of Friends

Because the faith of those around you matters. Your friends are either PUSHING you CLOSER to Jesus or they're PULLING you AWAY from Jesus. This is why it is crucial to choose the friends you're around with. If you are always with friends who are in love with Jesus, you have no way to go but be closer to Jesus. On the other hand, if you are with friends who are running away from Jesus, you have no way to go but be away from Jesus. Maybe, some of you are thinking, where can we get those kind of friends - friends who would bring us closer to Jesus? We have those people in this church

Receive a New Identity from Jesus

Mark 2:5b - "...Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven (NLT)." Sometimes I read the Bible and I get shocked, "What?" Like it almost seems that Jesus was insensitive. What about the Page 3 of 6 man's brokenness and sickness? What about the fact that he can't have a job? Jesus says, "My child, your sins are forgiven." Then I was reminded of this fact: Jesus heals the SOURCE, not the SYMPTOMS. The doctors look at the symptoms to determine the sickness. Every person needs a NEW IDENTITY.

As you walk to Jesus with all the negative labels, He has one foot in heaven and He has one foot on earth. He's looking out and He's calling out to God on your behalf. Here's what He's saying: "Father, your child has come to see you. Your son, your daughter, they're here. Your child has come to see you." Jesus Christ offered us a NEW IDENTITY through the cross. John 1:12 mentioned, "But to all who believed Him (JESUS) and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God (NLT)."

Our new identity is not written on our shirt. It's written on our soul and it says, "Child of GOD." You see, because the difference between a label and an identity is this: LABEL may describe your PAST, your IDENTITY in CHRIST defines your FUTURE.

Embrace God's Forgiveness

Mark 2:10-12 - "10 So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 11 "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" 12 And the man Page 4 of 6 jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before (NLT)!"

Our past sins are not too big to be forgiven. What the devil meant for evil, God will use for good. God will take your past and use it to change somebody else's future.

God can use your past to change somebody else's future. I don't know what's in your past, but I do know that God can use your past to change somebody else's future. With God, we will surely have a brighter future



- 1.) Have you been labeled before? What is it, share?
- 2.) How did that changed the way you look at yourself and at life and others?
- 3.) How did your faith changed the way you look at yourself?

Pray for each other in your group.