

**NEXT
CHAPTER**

NEXT CHAPTER

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WELCOME TO NEXT CHAPTER!

It's our desire to come alongside you and help you prepare your 2020 high school grads for whatever comes next for them, whether that be workforce, military, college, or whatever else. Next Chapter is a curriculum designed to be taught in any size group in a variety of settings. There are three lessons aimed at giving students some foundational tools that will help them face the coming changes in their lives. This material is a team effort from several Baptist Collegiate Ministry leaders from Oklahoma. Next Chapter contains 3 lessons with video teaching, live interaction through discussion, and small bits of live teaching to be done by you (the leader). You'll find that each lesson has a corresponding PowerPoint presentation that contains videos and other important tools. You will also find a separate file for each video if that works better for your needs. On our website, you will also find student handout sheets for each lesson. The student sheets are designed to help your student track with you as you walk through the curriculum. We're honored that you would consider using Next Chapter with your grads.

If you have questions or need any help please contact us:

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Note to 2020 Grads!

Seniors, this is the best advice I can give you: Connect with people who can help you grow spiritually in the next chapter of your life. If you're going into the military, find those who you are serving with who have a strong faith and encourage each other. If you are going directly into the workforce find a church home where you can grow and serve. If you're going to college, jump in and connect with a community of believers through a local church family and the BCM on your campus. God is ready to use you to make an incredible impact wherever you go, but it's really hard if you try to do it alone. So whatever your next chapter looks like, get connected and hold on because God is about to do something great!

Cris Lowery



LESSON 1 Embracing Your God-Given Identity

Lesson Prep:

- Download PowerPoint or videos
- Secure a TV or screen to view PowerPoint and videos
- Recruit a volunteer to interview for 10 in 5 (can be in person or via video) (see page 5)
- Print student handouts

Lesson objective: To help you know and embrace your God-given identity.

INTRODUCTION

“Look around...as a group we have lots of things in common and lots of differences. Let’s take a look at some words that we might identify with on the screen. When you see one that represents you, shout as loud as you can!”

Scroll through slides 2-42 to allow students to cheer for the words that they identify with.

We’re identified with many of the words in this list because they describe something about us and what we like to do. But these categories can’t define our essence...they are temporary and change and we’re created for more. Today, we want to encourage you to see and EMBRACE YOUR GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY. Once we know who we are (identity) we will know what to do. , “Embracing our God-given identity involves understanding the foundation from which our identity is built and forming our identity.”

Optional activity for small groups: Have students share with the group three words that best describe them. Examples: Fun, energetic, athlete, cowboy, cowgirl, city boy, city girl, musician, student, son, daughter, etc.

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR IDENTITY

To move forward, we need to understand how our assumptions shape the foundation of our identity. We all make assumptions about God's existence and all fall into one of these 4 categories. The foundation of our identity is largely based upon how we view God. Before we can form our identity we have to decide where we get the basis for our identity.

The four categories are: GOD IS. GOD IS NOT. WHO KNOWS? WHO CARES?

GOD IS

The first assumption is that **God is**, that God does exist and is the Creator and Sustainer of everything. God has revealed himself to us by His Creation and through his Word, the Bible. This is the assumption I make. I believe that God is. One of the reasons I believe that God exists is because of the complexity I see in creation. This complexity makes it reasonable for me to believe in a Creator. Having read the Bible many times and studied its reasonable reliability historically, I believe it is God's Word. As God's Word, It helps me answer this question...Why does anything exist at all?

GOD IS NOT

The second assumption is that **God is not**, that there is no God. We assume that some of you make this assumption. Your church is a safe place for you to process these feelings or thoughts. It's important to ask tough questions. This perspective assumes that our existence is a cosmic accident. We've slowly evolved by random chance to get where we are today and that a creator or God had nothing to do with it, because **God is not**.

WHO KNOWS?

The third assumption is that it is impossible to know beyond a reasonable doubt if God exists or not. Some signs look like they point to God, some seem to point the other way. Who knows? Let me encourage you, don't give up the search.

WHO CARES?

The last assumption is it doesn't matter if God is real or not. It has no practical value one way or the other. More and more of this generation (Gen Z) identify themselves as having no religious thoughts or beliefs. According to newly released General Social Survey data analyzed by Ryan P. Burge of Eastern Illinois University, Americans claiming "no religion" — sometimes referred to as "nones" because of how they answer the question "what is your religious tradition?" — now represent about 23.1 percent of the population, up from 21.6 percent in 2016. People claiming evangelicalism, by contrast, now represent 22.5 percent of Americans, a slight dip from 23.9 percent in 2016.

(For the leader: Follow this link for more information about the "nones"):

<https://growingleaders.com/blog/four-truths-spirituality-faith-campus/>

<https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/267920/millennials-religiosity-amidst-rise-nones.aspx>

However people term it, these are four common assumptions people make about God. It's a good thing to evaluate your assumption with the question, "Could it matter?"

Question for private reflection: "What category best describes how you really feel today, God is, God is not, who knows, or who cares?"

Leader: Invite your students for further conversation. Say something like: "If you fall into one of the last three categories I'd love to talk more about that with you. Let's set up a time to talk this week." During our time here each week, we will be operating from the assumption that God is. Not only that He is, but that He has revealed Himself to us through the Bible, and He has given us a unique identity in Him. Today specifically, we will be examining that unique identity that God has given us.

THE FORMATION OF OUR IDENTITY

TRANSITION TO VIDEO

In the next chapter of your life you will have an opportunity to become just about anybody you want. Check out this teaching to help you see how to shape your identity in a positive way.

PLAY VIDEO #1 - Teaching Segment 1

PP Slide #45 (1 minute 36 seconds)

Your identity is given by your creator.

We're going to look at some Scripture together that will help us see our identity from God's perspective. Let's look at Genesis 1:26-28 together. Then you'll take a few minutes to discuss some questions together.

Read: Genesis 1:26-28

DISCUSSION: Let's talk about this together. Get together with 3 or 4 people around you to discuss the following questions.

1. What does this passage tell us about God?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?

Read each question aloud. Allow time for discussion on each question

TRANSITION from discussion to segment 2 of video: Let's come back together. Let's track a little further with our teaching and see that we also have an enemy who seeks to rob us of our God-given identity.

Play Video #2 - Teaching Segment 2

PP Slide # 48 (1 minute 54 seconds)

Your enemy seeks to cause you to question your God-given identity.

One thing you heard in this teaching video is, "we have an enemy who wants to rob us of our God-given identity." Let's take a look at Genesis 3:1-8 together to see what the Bible says about our enemy.

Read: Genesis 3:1-8

DISCUSSION: Get together with your same group and let's continue our discussion about our God-given identity.

1. What does this passage tell us about the enemy?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?

TRANSITION:

Great discussion – I hope you were able to see from these passages that you already have a God-given identity. Let's look at our final segment of video teaching.

Play Video #3 - Teaching Segment 3

PP Slide # 51 (2 minute 12 seconds)

When you know who you are, you know what to do.

Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

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.

DISCUSSION:

- **What does this verse tell us about our God-given identity?**
- **What does this verse compel you to do because you have been given your identity by God?**
- **What are the things that battle for your God-given identity?**

TRANSITION: We hope that you will embrace your God-given identity today and in the next chapter of your life no matter where you are going.

10 in 5 INTERVIEW

10 questions in 5 minutes. This interview is a fun way to help students hear from an adult who is living out their faith. **Before the session, recruit an adult in your church to interview.** You could do this 10 in 5 interview live or on video. This could be your pastor, youth pastor, Sunday school teacher, or any other adult that the students know. Send the questions to the interviewee ahead of time so that they can plan out their answers.

Set a 5 minute time and go for it...

- If you didn't have to sleep, what would you do with the extra time?
- What is something that your friends would consider "so you"?
- What Biblical person would you love to shadow for a day? Why?
- How do you practically seek to live your God-given identity?
- What's a book you've read that everyone should read?
- What's a place you've been that everyone should go?
- What's a big challenge you've faced in your life?
- What would you have done differently as a young adult?
- When did your faith really become your own?
- How did you decide what you wanted to do with your life?

TRANSITION: Alright! Good job! Give _____ a hand! It's important to see Godly people living out their God-given identity.

Conclusion

Your identity is going to be tested often in the next chapter of your life. The best way to prepare for the coming challenges is to nail down what you believe about God, watch out for the attacks of our enemy, and live out your God-given identity in your everyday life.

Prayer: Encourage students to spend some time talking to God about their identity.

- Ask Him to help you embrace the identity that he has given you by living for him.
- Ask Him to help you put people into your life that help you live in your God-given identity.

CONNECTION

Leader: We want to help make connections for your students in their next chapter. It's our desire to connect students with a BCMs (Baptist Collegiate Ministries) across our state and country. We would also like to help make connections for those going in to the military or workforce. Would you please encourage your students to share some basic information? We promise to keep their info safe.

Say: One of the best ways we can think of to encourage and equip you for the next chapter of your life is to let some key people know that you're coming their way. In our experience we noticed that connecting yourself with these key people will help you successfully walk through the next chapter of your life. So, if it's okay, we're going to get some info from you that we'll pass on to some BCM and church leaders. **Scan the QR code on the screen and on the student handout to be linked to a short online form. (PP Slide #55)**



LESSON 2 LIVING OUT YOUR GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE

Lesson Prep:

- Download PowerPoint or videos
- Secure a TV or screen to view Power Point and videos
- Recruit a volunteer to interview for 10 in 5 (can be in person or via video)
- Print student handouts

Learning objective: To help you know and live out your God-given

INTRODUCTION

Lesson Activity

This simple activity will help you introduce the topic of purpose. It will be fun to watch students guess the purpose of each tool.

WHAT IS THIS?

One at a time put each image on the screen and ask student what they think is the purpose of each tool. If they don't know, encourage them to make up a purpose for the tool. For each slide ask: What is this? What is it used for?

These items are: (PP slides 3-7)

- Mouth harp
- Shingle froe – A froe, shake axe or paling knife
- Timber Scribe or Race Knife
- Halligan Bar
- 5-Gallon bucket opener

Say:

“Do you ever feel like one of these items? You know you have a purpose but you are just not sure what that purpose is.”

TRANSITION TO VIDEO: People struggle to know and articulate the purpose of their own lives. We sent our cameraman around an Oklahoma college campus to ask students this question: “What do you think is the purpose of life?” Listen in to see the variety of answers people gave.

Play Video #1 – Man on the Street

PP Slide #9 (1 minute 36 seconds)

As you can see, people have many different opinions on the purpose of life. This is a problem; they cannot all be correct. So let’s take a few minutes to talk about what we heard from these students on campus.

Would you get together with 2-3 people around you? Then we’ll take a few minutes to talk about the responses the people in the video had to what they think the purpose of life is.

DISCUSSION:

- **Which person do you agree with most from the video? Why?**
- **Which person’s answer differed the most from your ideas on the purpose of life?**
- **How would you answer the question, “What do you think the purpose of life is?”**

Our purpose is directly connected with our identity. In the last session, we looked to the Bible to discover our God-given identity so today, here in a few minutes, we will look to the Bible again to give us our God-given purpose.

When we get confused about our identity, we get confused about our purpose. And when we get confused about our purpose, we get confused in our actions.

TRANSITION TO VIDEO: Our identity and purpose drive what we do in life. I want you to meet two college students who lost track of their identity and purpose. Quinn and Emily are two students who grew up believing that God had given them an identity and purpose...

Play Video #2 – Quinn and Emily Story

PP Slide #12 (4 minutes 15 seconds)

Living out your God-given purpose can be helped or hurt by the people you surround yourself with.

Transition out of video:

Thankfully, both girls came back to their identity and purpose. They had to make a tough decision and take purposeful steps to get back to their God-given identity and purpose. Quinn’s last line was powerful and right on, “you truly become who you hang out with.” A big part of helping you pursue your God-given purpose is the people you surround yourself with. Do what you can to surround yourself with people who

follow God and his purpose for their lives. It is vital to surround ourselves with people who are living out their God-given purpose.

DISCUSSION:

- **What do you think Quinn and Emily to compromise their identity and purpose in the first place?**
- **What do you think they could've done differently in order to keep them from falling away?**
- **What can you learn from their mistakes?**
- **What could you learn from how they came back to God and community?**
- **Does someone here have a story like theirs they would like to share?**

God has given you a two-fold purpose.

Yesterday we looked to the Bible to see our God-given identity. Today we will look at the Bible to determine our God-given purpose.

During our teaching time we're going to look at several verses from the Bible that let us know that God himself has determined our purpose. We'll see that he has given us a two-fold purpose. To know him and make him known.

TRANSITION INTO VIDEO: So as we tune into today's teaching, be on the lookout for some keys to determining and living out your purpose now and in the next chapter of your life.

Play Video #3 – Your God-Given Purpose

PP Slide #14 (4 minute 20 seconds)

"So from our teaching that we just heard, what's our purpose? To Know Him and to make Him known. If we will focus on that purpose, the other aspects of God's specific purpose for us will become clear."

In the video he shared that our purpose is lived out in four different ways:

Commitment **Luke 9:23** "Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Communion **Mark 3:14** – "He appointed twelve *that they might be with him* and that he might send them out to preach."

Community **Proverbs 27:17** "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Commission **Matthew 28:19-20** "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to

obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

DISCUSSION:

- **What does it look like to live out your God-given purpose in your everyday life?**
- **What are some things you can put into your life now to ensure that you live out your God-given purpose wherever you go next?**

10 in 5 INTERVIEW

Before the session, recruit an adult in your church to interview. You could do this 10 in 5 interview live or on video. This could be your pastor, youth pastor, Sunday school teacher, or any other adult that the students know. Send the questions to the interviewee ahead of time so that they can plan out their answers.

Let's put 5 minutes on the board! Here we go...

- If you didn't have to sleep, what would you do with the extra time?
- What is something that your friends would consider "so you"?
- What Biblical person would you love to shadow for a day?
- How do you practically live out God's purpose for your life?
- What's a book you've read that everyone should read?
- What's a place you've been that everyone should go?
- What's a big challenge you've faced in your life?
- What would you have done differently as a young adult?
- When did your faith really become your own?
- How did you decide what you wanted to do with your life?

TRANSITION: Alright! Good job! Give _____ a hand!

CONCLUSION

You have a God-given purpose that is given to you in the Bible. Since God is your creator His is your purpose giver. No matter where you go in the next chapter of life, you can live out God's purpose by living by His word. Spend some time talking to God about your purpose.

Prayer: Instruct students to spend some time talking to God about their purpose.

- Ask them to pray for God to clearly make known his purpose for them.
- Ask them to pray for God's protection so that they live out his purpose in the next chapter of their lives.

CONNECTION

Leader: We want to help make connections for your students in their next chapter. It's our desire to connect students with BCMs (Baptist Collegiate Ministries) across our state and country. We would also like to help make connections for those going in to the military or workforce. Would you please encourage your students to share some basic information? We promise to keep their info safe.

Say: One of the best ways we can think of to encourage and equip you for the next chapter of your life is to let some key people know that you're coming their way. In our experience we noticed that connecting yourself with these key people will help you successfully walk through the next chapter of your life. So, if it's okay, we're going to get some info from you that we'll pass on to some BCM and church leaders. **Scan the QR code on the screen and on the student handout to be linked to a short online form.**



LESSON 3 Making Wise Decisions

Lesson Prep:

- Download PowerPoint or videos
- Secure a TV or screen to view PowerPoint and videos
- Print student handout

Lesson objective: To help you learn how to make wise decisions.

INTRODUCTION

In lessons 1 and 2 we were reminded of some basic biblical truths...

We were created by God.

God has given us an identity in Him.

As we embrace our God-given identity, we experience life the way God means for us to live it.

God made us for a purpose which is to know Jesus Christ and make Him known.

In this lesson we are focusing on “Making Wise Decisions” As you venture into the Next Chapter of your life, you will be gaining more control over your life and decisions. You’ll probably make some great decisions and you’ll likely make a few that you’ll regret. You’ll surely experience things you’d never expect. For some, you will decide who to marry, where to live, and your career path. Decisions like these are huge and could set the direction for the rest of your life. You are starting to build the rest of your life, so you need things in your life to ensure that you make the best decisions possible.

DISCUSSION:

- **When you need help making a big decision what do you do? Who do you go to for help?**
- **How did you decide what you wanted to do after graduation?**

Over the next several years you will make decisions that will set the course for your entire life. One of our most powerful allies in decision making is **wisdom**.

So what is wisdom? Wisdom is more than just knowing stuff. It doesn’t just describe situations, but it prescribes what we should do and think with the things we know. It’s like this. If I drive too fast, I’ll get a ticket. I know that. But, it only tells me what is reality not what to do with it. Wisdom says don’t speed.

Wisdom is right application of knowledge. So how do we get this wisdom?

Transition into video:

Jesus taught his people to live differently than their culture dictated. Jesus taught a group of his followers about a vital decision they all needed to make. One of the most foundational decisions you and I can make is to listen to Jesus' teaching and obey what he says to do. Let's check out this vital lesson together...

Play Video# 1 – The Foundation

PP Slide #3 (2 minutes 09 seconds)

Transition from Video: Putting the words of Jesus into practice is one of the wisest things you can ever do.

Wise decisions start with the right foundation. God's Word put into practice is the only right foundation for believers.

Wisdom comes to us in three primary ways; 1) by His Word, 2) through godly advice, and 3) through prayer.

1. The Bible

We serve a God who speaks. Throughout history He has spoken. He spoke the world into existence and He spoke to Moses through a burning bush. He still speaks today, and the Bible corresponds exactly to what God is saying. It literally is His Word. It is where we find the wisdom to make great decisions.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Psalm 110:105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

2. Godly advice

When you are trying to make decisions about your life, find somebody who loves God and His Word and ask them for advice. But if it doesn't match up with the Bible, throw it out! I know I've given bad advice and you probably have too.

Proverbs 13:20 "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise."

Proverbs 19:20 "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future."

3. Prayer

Ask God to lead you with his Spirit. Many people can point to moments when God led them through prayer. But be careful that it lines up with Biblical wisdom. Prayer is both talking to God and listening to God. If you will listen, he will speak through his Holy Spirit.

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should *ask God*, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

Philippines 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, *but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*"⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

John 14:25-26 "All this I have spoken while still with you."²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

When we make decisions according to the Bible our lives are better. So go to the Bible, godly friends, and prayer to find the wisdom to make great decisions that will help you now and the rest of your lives.

Transition into Video:

"It is important for us to look at the heart of the matter because commands, like going an extra mile with a roman soldier, cannot be directly applied today, but the spirit of humility, service, and submitting to authority are still vitally important to the Christian life."

One of the most important decisions you'll make in life is what to do with temptation. Let's check out some teaching from God's word on what to do with temptation.

Play Video # 2 – Dealing with Temptation

PP Slide #5 (5 minute 56 seconds)

Wisdom helps up deal with temptation. The availability of temptation will be multiplied as you gain more freedom in the next chapter of your life.

In the video we learned that temptation is a process that we fight in three ways.

- With our heart, which is what we want.
- With our hands, which is what we do.
- With our mind, which is what we think.

As you move on after graduation, you gain more freedom, and with that freedom comes more temptation to do what is contrary to your identity and purpose. You need people and things in your life that will help you say no to the wrong things and yes to the right things.

DISCUSSION:

- **What are some things we could learn from Adam and Eve's dealing with temptation that can keep us from making the same mistake they made?**
- **What things could you put into place now that will help you say no to temptation later?**

We want to give you ten things people with years of experience working with people your age said were the most important things to do in the first two weeks you leave home. We're going to hear from some college students who have put together this top ten list for you! Listen closely to these super practical tips for you as you move on from high school.

Play Video # 3 – Top Ten

PP Slide #7 (2 minutes 43 seconds)

Hopefully some of those simple tips stood out to you. These are things that really will be helpful to know and do in the Next Chapter of your life.

Conclusion

Students will be gaining more control over their lives which means more control over their decisions. They are moving from a place of little control and much direction to a place of much control and less direction. If they can get wisdom on their side they can avoid some mistakes and pain.

Prayer: Encourage students to spend some time talking to God about their identity.

- Ask Him to help you by giving you wisdom as you move on to life after graduation.
- Ask Him to help you put godly people into the next chapter of your life so they can help you make wise decisions.
- Ask God to help you keep his Word as your foundation so you have the tools to fight temptation.

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