

## LABELS “I am who You say I am”

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*

1 John 3:1

Putting this message together was quite exciting. I hope you enjoy going through it with me.

**Question:** How many relationship or work roles do you have?

**Example:** you can be a son & a father simultaneously, or a secretary and sports-team captain; of course at different times of the day or different days of the week.

So, how many relationship or work roles do you have? How many labels can you think of? Talk about this with your neighbour for a minute and try to keep count.

If you are a woman, some roles or labels may be: daughter, granddaughter, wife, mother, sister, niece, aunt, employee, employer, secretary, musician in a band, cook, nurse, doctor, teacher, etc.

If you are a man, some roles or labels may be: son, grandson, husband, father, brother, nephew, uncle, employee, employer, mechanic, musician in a band, chef, nurse, doctor, teacher, etc.

Today, I would like us to explore some of the roles, labels or names the Bible gives to Christians.

Just as the names of God denote His character and claims, so the labels or names of believers denote their role, their calling in Christ, and what their character should be before God and the watching world.

I have identified 27 labels that the Bible gives to believers, and there are probably more. Being concerned about time, I've chosen to limit this presentation to 20 labels.

A few verses may have more than one label.

Just a hint as you work with me to identify the labels – they are in alphabetical order.

So what is the first label you see in this verse?

**1. 2 Cor 5:20** – *We are therefore Christ's **ambassadors**, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God.*

We are **Ambassadors** to represent God in the world. We need to identify our **audience**, be sensitive to their **culture**, develop a **relationship** with them, and then share our **message**.

**2. 2 Cor 6:14-15 NLT**, *Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a **believer** be a partner with an unbeliever?*

**Heb 11:6 NIV**, *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must **believe** that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* (John 1:11-12)

As **believers**, we need to make sure our belief has firm foundations. This takes time. Time to read and study God's Word, time to fellowship with other believers. I urge you to get involved with a home Bible study group!

**3. John 15:5** *I am the vine; you are the **branches**. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

In this metaphor, Christ is the Vine from whom we, the branches, draw our sustenance and bear fruit for His honour and glory.

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us that this *fruit of the Spirit* is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. If this *fruit* is clearly in our lives, people will be drawn to Christ as we are drawn to fragrant, ripe fruit.

**4. John 1:12** *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children** of God.*

**Matt 5:9** *Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called **children** of God.*

**Galatians 3:26** *So in Christ Jesus you are all **children** of God through faith.*

(Rom 8:14, Phil 2:15; 1 John 3:1,10)

A child is loved by his or her parents. Part of being a child is to learn obedience, and trust. God loves us immeasurably as His children. How exciting to be able to call God “our Father!”

**5. Acts 11:26** *So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called **Christians** first at Antioch.*

**1 Pet 4:14-16** *If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a **Christian**, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.*

The label “Christian” was more than likely meant as an insult by the Gentiles of Antioch. At that time it was common for the Greeks to give satirical nicknames to particular groups. So those loyal to the Roman General Pompey were dubbed “Pompeians,” and the followers of General Sulla were called “Sullanians.” To the Greeks, it was a verbally dismissive gesture. Since this new group of people was characterized by **behaviour and speech centred on Christ**, the Greeks called them “Christians,” or “those of the party of Christ.” But as we can see in Peter’s letter, it is a label that believers embraced.

**6. Eph 2:19** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow **citizens** with God’s people and also members of his household.*

We are **citizens of heaven** living in a strange land, which we are travelling through. “*This world is NOT my home, I’m just a passing through...*”

**7. Matt 28:19** *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, ...*

**Acts 6:7** *So the word of God spread. The number of **disciples** in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. (Mark 8:34, Luke 14:27, John 8:31, John 13:35, John 15:8, Acts 6:1, Acts 9:36, Acts 11:26)*

The Cambridge dictionary: *DISCIPLE: a person who believes in the ideas of a leader, esp. a religious or political one, and tries to live according to those ideas.*

**8. Titus 1:1** *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God’s **elect** and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness— in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,*

**2 Tim 2:10** *Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*

(Matt 24:31, Col 3:12 KJV)

The term “elect” in the Bible refers to those individuals or groups chosen by God for a specific purpose or destiny. Romans 8:29 tells us “*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*”

**9. Luke 12:4** *“I tell you, my **friends**, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.”*

**John 15:14-15** “You are my **friends** if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you **friends**, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

Being a friend of Christ includes making time to fellowship with Him and lovingly doing as He bids. “You are my **friends** if you do what I command”

**10. Rom 8:17** Now if we are children, then we are **heirs—heirs** of God and **co-heirs** with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

**Gal 4:7** So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an **heir**.

(Acts 3:25, Gal 3:29, Eph 3:6, Titus 3:7).

As **heirs** of God and **co-heirs** with Christ, though we suffer in this life as His followers, we will also share in His glory. Christians are not adopted into God’s family because God thinks they will make worthy heirs. God adopts people who are completely unworthy, because He adopts on the basis of His grace.

**11. 2 Tim 2:21** Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be **instruments** for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

What a privilege that God Almighty has invited us to be part of His plans and purpose! God doesn’t need me! He doesn’t need any of us! But He has invited us to be His hands and feet to be agents of change and bless this world!

**12. Matt 5:14-16** You are the **light** of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

**Eph 5:8** For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of **light!**

As lights for the world my role and yours is to reprove sin by godly living, and to represent Christ by our harmony with His **will, with His word**, and **with each other**.

**13. Rom 12:4-5** For just as each of us has one body with many **members**, and these **members** do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each **member** belongs to all the others.

**Eph 5:29** For we are **members** of His body.

(1 Cor 10:17, 12:13, Eph 3:6, 4:25)

Here, the analogy of being called “instruments” is replaced by the analogy of being called “members of Christ’s body”. This Scripture underscores how you and I are His hands, His feet, His mouth to impart love and blessing.

**14. 2 Cor 5:17 (NLT)** This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a **new person**. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

**2 Cor 5:17 (LB)** When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand **new person** inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!

By God’s grace we undergo a metamorphosis. The butterfly no longer resembles the caterpillar! It is no longer defined by its past limitations. It can soar! When it first emerges, it has to sit for a while and just pump its wings. That’s us, as new believers, getting into God’s Word to make sure we can fly as we were meant to do.

**15.1 Cor 1:2 (NKJV)** *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, called to be **saints**, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*

**1 Cor 1:2 (NIV)** *To the church of God in Corinth, to those **sanctified** in Christ Jesus and called to be his **holy people**, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours...*

(Rom 1:7, Acts 26:10)

“Saint” or “holy people” Gk *hagios* - implies something "set apart" therefore *different / distinguished / distinct*.

**Sanctified** 1 Cor 1:2 (Acts 26:17-18) (Gk *hagiasmos*). This is not so much a negative thing, focusing on what a Christian avoids; rather, it is a positive way of life – set apart to live as Christ’s representatives.

**16. Psalm 100:2-3** *Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the **sheep** of his pasture.*

**John 10:11, 14-15** *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the **sheep**. I am the good shepherd; I know my **sheep** and my **sheep** know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the **sheep**.*

There are reasons why God’s people are compared to sheep.

First of all, sheep are one of the few animals that do not have a defence system. Sheep are helpless without a shepherd. The first line of Psalm 23 reflects the wonderful truth that God Himself is our Defender: “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing.*” Without the Lord our Shepherd, we are helpless when our enemy Satan attacks.

Secondly, sheep are prone to wander away from the flock. A sheep’s only chance of survival is with the flock under the care of a competent shepherd. A lion does not attack the flock. It waits until a solitary lamb wanders too far from the shepherd.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO WANDER!

**17. Heb 2:10**, *In bringing many **sons and daughters** to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.*

**2 Cor 6:18**, *Therefore, ‘Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’ And, ‘I will be a Father to you, and you will be my **sons and daughters**, says the Lord Almighty.’*

(Heb 12:8)

We have been adopted into God’s family. God has redeemed those who are in Christ from slavery to the law and to their own sinfulness. In 2 Cor 6:18 Paul is urging believers to separate themselves from any connections to the worship of idols or ongoing participation in sin. We are being urged not to “tarnish” the family name!

**18. 1 Pet 4:10** *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful **stewards** of God’s grace in its various forms.*

1 Cor 4:1 (NKJV) *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and **stewards** of the mysteries of God.* A steward is one entrusted to manage the property of another. Every good thing we have is ours only by God’s grace and intended to be used for God’s purpose. To fail to use God’s gifts to us to serve each other is to fail to be a good steward. Wisely using everything we have to serve each other is part of fulfilling our purpose as God’s set-apart people.

**19. 1 Cor 3:16** *Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s **temple** and that God’s Spirit lives among you?*

**1 Cor 6:19-20** *Do you not know that your bodies are **temples** of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.*

(2 Cor 6:16).

The Holy Spirit lives with us. Scripture admonishes us not to grieve Him. And Christ has promised that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

**20. Malachi 3:17** *Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. “On the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty, “they will be my **treasured possession**. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him.”*

In the NKJV, Malachi 3:17 reads: “*They shall be Mine,*” says the Lord of hosts, “*On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.*”

**God views you and me as precious and priceless!**

**Summary:**

1. **Ambassador**
2. **Believer**
3. **Branch**
4. **Child of God**
5. **Christian**
6. **Citizens of heaven**
7. **Disciple**
8. **Elect**
9. **Friend of Christ**
10. **Heirs with Christ**
11. **Instrument for God’s use**
12. **Light for the world**
13. **Members of Christ’s body**
14. **New person**
15. **Saints / Holy people / Sanctified**
16. **Sheep**
17. **Sons & Daughters**
18. **Steward**
19. **Temple of the Holy Spirit**
20. **Treasured possession**