

# Weekly Study Guide

5/12/24 - Known by Your Story

Read [John 4:1-42](#); [Hebrews 11:32-40](#); [Isaiah 62:2](#); [Revelation 2:17, 3:12 and 12:11](#)

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. —John 4:28-30

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.” —John 4:39-42

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. —Revelations 12:11

## Questions:

1. Can you think of any stories of people in the Bible whose names are unknown? Why do you think they were they left unnamed? Do you feel that these people are less or more important than those whose names you know? Why or why not?
2. Why does it matter if people know our name? What do we call people whose name is well known? What do we call those whose name isn’t well known? How might this impact our relationship with God and others, or how we see ourselves?
3. Why are names important to us? If you didn’t have a name, how might you be known by others? Why do you think God gives us a new name?
4. Share one takeaway from all of this. How can you apply this to your life? Is there anything you need to do in light of this?

**For later:** Take time to prayerfully consider how you view yourself and your identity. What does your name represent to you? Your successes, failures, relationships, connections, accomplishments, etc? Would you benefit from being less self-focused or consumed with individual success? Are there any areas where pride or self-pity are impacting your life? How can you change this?

**Key:**

1. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), many of whom are unnamed. Culture plays a big part here. Eastern civilizations are not as individualistic. Being named could be seen favorably and doesn't necessarily diminish the person. This applies to both men and women. Finally, recall that Jews didn't speak God's name.
2. People are known for their successes and failures. It's a double-edged sword. It could be argued that anonymity is the safer bet. Desire for name recognition and fame often leads to pride. It can negatively influence how we see ourselves.
3. In America, individualism is prized, and our identities are represented by our names that uniquely identify us. When we want to honor or credit someone for an achievement, we display their name publicly on plaques, trophies, in headlines, or in bylines. By letting the world see their names, we praise them as individuals. You can be known by your stories of success or failure. People can be known by their exploits (SEAL Team 6), their tribe (Issachar), their father's name (Bar-Jonah) or lack thereof (Barabbas), etc. God gives us a new name that He has given us. A new name removes us from our past name and identifies us as God's very own.
4. You are not unknown or forgotten. You might feel unnamed, but God knows you. He knows you by name. God uses nameless, faceless people. He uses people with a past, people who have failed, and those who feel forgotten. You are valuable to God. God's mission includes you! You are not being overlooked. God sees you and all you do. Be found faithful and let God use you. Don't think you need to make a name for yourself. Instead, be known by the stories of God's faithfulness in your life; stories that have lasting significance more meaningful than a name.