

# Identity Crisis:

## Becoming a Brand Ambassador.

### WEEK FIVE:

At Disney theme parks, every cast member (which is Disney speak for “*employee*”) understands that their job is to help create “*special moments*” for guests. This includes every single person, regardless of what their tasks are, from the folks who serve in the dining rooms, to the street sweepers, to the princesses themselves. In fact, it’s the people on the front-lines who interact with the guests the most, not those sitting in an office somewhere, who constantly have the ability to make or break a guest’s experience.

At every point, one negative experience could result in someone not coming back. So Disney trains its cast members well, and has built in systems for recognizing and rewarding cast members who help create “*magic*,” empowering them to do whatever they need to help a guest. Disney is known the world over for its customer service and even has an Institute for companies to attend and receive coaching. And the whole thing starts at the smallest level with a single employee, who, no matter what their job is, believes that they are an essential part of the whole.

Christianity is like that, too. Before he died, Jesus said to his followers, “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends.” (John 15:15) He was making sure they knew that when he was gone physically, they would now have a hugely important role to play. They were no longer mere slaves, subservient, without agency, or activity, or power. No, they were now Christ’s friends, connected, and if not on equal footing, then pretty darn close. They had authority in a way they never had before.

They knew Christ’s mission, and they would help him fulfill it.

With authority comes responsibility. It means something to have this kind of level of involvement. It’s like going from a simple checklist, or a series of tasks, or a part-time job, to a full-time job, or even ownership in the company. We have all been made a partner in the firm. And how we conduct ourselves means something. We can truly think of ourselves as brand ambassadors and have tremendous influence and power over how others perceive the brand of Christianity.

How will you wield that influence and power?

Being a Christian is about being bought in, all in. Not just, I like this but not that. Not just I’ll give a bit here, but not there. Christianity is selling out for all that Christ did and taught and is. It’s about being committed in a way that almost doesn’t make sense, but that is also compelling.

The earliest generations of Christians faced insane amounts of persecution. Jail; torture; loss of power, rights, family, loved ones; and even death. And yet so many of the accounts of those who witnessed the early martyrs expressed awe and wonder at their dedication to their faith in the one true God. In fact, every time a Christian was martyred, people were so inspired by their fearlessness in the face of persecution that they decided to join the faith. Even knowing they themselves would likely be persecuted!

When someone is all in, believes in something with every fiber of their being, it attracts and inspires others.

Christianity is about Jesus, the base noun, but as Christians, we are Jesus' hands and feet in this world, and our role is essential to completing the mission of Christ. For some crazy reason, God didn't just create us to sit around and adore our Creator, but puts us to work for the sake of the world. The future hoped for kingdom of God isn't something that's only in the future, it's actually here now. Jesus himself ushered it in, and the Holy Spirit empowers us as Christians to do something about that.

An executive at an international company once said, *"Every organization has a purpose that is bigger than the product it creates. That's because every company produces an experience as well as a product... something that makes the whole more than the sum of its parts."*

The Apostle Paul said something along those lines in a letter he wrote to the Corinthians, *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."* (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

We are the body of Christ! We are all, each of us, individually part of it, and together we are greater than the sum of our parts. We are empowered with the Spirit and have a purpose beyond what we could ever accomplish on our own. Each of us is necessary, each of us is important, each of us has the chance to shape the way the world sees the body of Christ. It matters how we live and how we treat others, it matters how we talk about God, and how we talk to one another. It matters what we do and what we say and who we claim to be.

Being a Christian is getting to represent the best company, product, brand, identity, way of life in the whole world. And every time we get it right, we have the chance to change the world.

So, let's get it right. Let's remember our first love, and do what we have been called and created to do from the beginning. Let's help the image crisis Christianity finds itself in turn around so the work of God in this world will be that much closer to completion.

**Perception is reality, so let's make the perception as great as the reality is.**

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to be someone's friend as opposed to someone's servant?
- Do you feel like you can actually make a difference in how Christianity is perceived? Why or why not?
- How do you see God's kingdom already present in the world? Where is there still work to do?
- How does the "*body of Christ*" imagery help you understand your role? Someone else's?
- What are things you can do this week to represent Christ, and help bring God's work to completion?