

# WHAT'S IN A NAME

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By: Ray Handisides

## INTRODUCTION

We all are a unique individual who God has created and as such play a unique part in God's plan for his creation. Stop for a minute and ponder these questions:

1. **In one sentence describe yourself and who you are?**
2. **What is one great characteristic you have?**
3. **What is one characteristic of yourself you do not like?**
4. **If you could be any other person who would that be and why?**

It is always interesting to stop and look at ourselves and think of what we like and don't like. We should also try to see ourselves through others eyes. Are we a person people like or are we a pain in the neck?

It is interesting to note that in many cultures, particularly ancient cultures, your name describes who you are. It describes your character your being. Consider Esau and Jacob. Esau was the first born of the twins and was covered in red hair and so his name Esau which means hairy one. Jacob we read was the second born and came from the womb grasping onto Esau's heel and was given the name Jacob which is derived from the Hebrew word for heel. God later changed Jacob's name to Israel which means one who wrestles with God. In a number of places in scripture we see people's names being changed by God.

- **If God were to change your name what would it be?**

## LIVING OUR "NAME"

Taking this concept that says we have a name given us by God we must remember we are a unique individual and so have that special place in God's creation. This should determine how we are to live our lives. Being stewards of our lives means it's all about us and how we use the body, mind, talents and everything about us is for God. This idea brings up all sorts of issues if we try not to live the lives we have been given but that of someone else who we see as having an ideal life.

Today we are often too concerned about what others think of us or we look at somebody else and are envious of who they are and what they have.

- **Why do you think we so often worry about what everyone else is doing, saying, or thinking?**
- **The question then is what is normal for us?**
- **Is the normal of the secular world what should be normal for us as Christians?**

If we now consider that our "name" defines who we are and is a reflection of who we are, it brings a whole new concept of how we should live our lives. What do we have to live up to? Our "name" defines our path for life. We each have a unique path, a calling, a life that God has given us; and Jesus invites us to be our true selves and yet

we get sidetracked, we get distracted, we get hung up on how we're different from others and we end up trying to be not the person God intended and wants us to be.

We all have a life we have lived in the past. We come from a family who has a past. We have done things we are not proud of. We have all had achievements in our lives that we are proud of. We all have times in our lives that were exciting. We all have times in our lives that were dull and boring. You are in one of these times now. All of these things, the good and the bad, have shaped us into who we are today. We have to embrace that story that is our story, our history. We don't have to be proud of it but we must claim it as ours as it is a part of us. Remember that Jesus told us to love our neighbor as ourselves. If we cannot claim ourselves and love ourselves how can we love others? We need to recognize our strengths and weaknesses. If we dwell on our weaknesses it is hard for God to use us. Learn what your strengths are and let God use those characteristics. Paul tells us we are all different and have unique role to play in the body of Christ. We need to claim who we are and accept ourselves as we are, warts and all, so that God can use the person he created.

God has written a script for your life and that is the role we must play. Too often we let others; family, people in authority, teachers, pastors and many others, write the script for our lives. If you do this you are action got out as it is not you. Search for the role God has written for you and live it to its fullest.

We need to be saved from all the times we haven't been our true selves. All the times we've tried to be someone else. All the lies we've believed about who God made when God made us. All the times we've asked the wrong questions: 'What about him?' 'What about her?' 'What about them?' Through all this we have missed the voice of Jesus saying, "You, follow me."

As you think of this study think about who God wants you to be. Find how you can live up to your "name." Find how you can be comfortable with the unique person God created. Live life so that you fulfill the unique role that God has just for you in his creation.

## CONFRONTING SCRIPTURE

Read the following Scriptures and consider how they relate to claiming the name God gives us.

### GENESIS 32:22-32

Look at how during the struggle Jacob was asked for his name and at the end of the struggle God gave him a new name, Israel.

- **What was the significance of this name change?**

### PROVERBS 14:30 & JOB 5:2

- How do these verses tell us about how to claim our "name."

### JOHN 21:15-22

- **Peter was originally called Simon and Jesus changed name to Peter. Did Peter live up to his new name?**
- **How does Jesus command to Peter relate to us?**