

Naming Our Children

by Rev. Matthew Trehella

A name is of great importance, therefore, naming our children is of great importance. The Israelites of old knew this importance. They took the choosing of names for their children very seriously. They wanted the name they chose to have special significance to the child.

As Christians, we should have the same desire when naming our children. We should want the names we give our children to give them a sense of purpose in God.

Today, unfortunately, many name their children a certain name because it "sounds nice." Most do not know the meaning of their child's name. Even when they do know the meaning of their child's name, they usually chose it because they thought it was a "cool" meaning. They don't see it as relating to their child for any significant purpose. In America, we often name children almost like one would name a pet.

The reason the naming of their children was so important to the Hebrews was because - a name entails all that you are. It declares your character. And, it relates in some way your purpose in God.

In Philippians 2:9, the Scriptures declare that God has highly exalted Jesus and "given Him a name which is above every name." Why is the name of Jesus above every name? Because Jesus has revealed all that God is. By the life which He lived and by the words which He spoke, Jesus expressed all that God is. The Scriptures are clear on this.

As Hebrews 1:3 declares, Jesus is "the brightness of His (God's) glory, and the express image of His (God's) person." Colossians 1: 15 says, "Jesus is the image of the invisible God."

And the Gospel of John 1:18 states, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him." Jesus has declared to us all that God is. He revealed God's character. This is why God has given Him a name which is above every name.

Jesus was also given a name which related to His purpose in God The name of Jesus means 'Savior.' In Matthew 1:23, the Scripture declares that He was also given another name which related to His purpose. The Scripture reads, "And they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'"

The Naming of Our Children & The Blessing of Our Children

We are convinced that the naming of our children is of great importance, therefore, we give our children names filled with meaning.

When we name our children, we give them names which will express their character as we envision it from God. We also give them names which relate the purpose that we see God would have for their lives. We want our children to have names which will give them a sense of destiny, as revealed to us by God. (This is especially important for us given the fact that our last name - Trehella - means 'home beetle.' Not much nobility, purpose, or sense of destiny in that!).

Not only do we give our children names with meaning, but we also give them a family blessing which is associated with that name. This is a precious time for our family. After each child is born, we gather the family together (whether it be the day of the birth or a few days later) and my husband, Matt, prays for the child, and then pronounces a blessing upon his or her life. We then record our child's name in our Family Bible.

Our Children's Names

We have six children (so far!). Our oldest is our daughter named Sara. Sara means 'princess.' In I Peter 3:5-6, Peter declares Sarah the arch-type of what a woman is to be. We want our daughter to be a godly woman, so we named her Sara. She was given the blessing of being a joy to our lives. (She has!) Her middle name is Ann. We named her after the prophetess in Luke 2:36 who pointed to Jesus. The blessing? As people point to Sara upon noticing her godliness, she will point them to Christ.

We have followed a military motif in the naming of our three sons. We named our oldest son Joshua. We gave him the blessing of being a fighter for God, just as Joshua of old was. His middle name is Seth. The blessing? As Seth brought new hope for Adam and Eve after the death of Abel, so Joshua will bring new hope to our family and to this nation regarding what a man is to be.

Our third child is Jeremiah Stonewall. We named him Jeremiah after the prophet, and gave him the blessing of calling this nation to repentance. We named him Stonewall after the Confederate General, Stonewall Jackson, and we gave him the blessing of a military genius. God has something great for this kid as is evidenced by things which have already happened in his short life!

Our fourth child is Crispian Daniel (people always ask us to repeat his first name when we say it to them). Why Crispian? In 1415 A.D., at the battle of Agincourt, King Henry V of England was met by 20,000 Frenchmen who had come out to do battle against his 4,000 men. His captains encouraged him to depart. Henry fell on his face before God and prayed. After praying, he gave a rousing speech to his men wherein he memorialized St. Crispian's Day because that was the day upon which the battle was fought. Henry's men won, killing over 10,000 French and losing less than 100 of their own. Henry immediately pointed to God as the source of their most awesome accomplishment, and gave thanks to Him.

So we named our son Crispian to carry on King Henry V's memorialization of St. Crispian's Day, and we gave him the blessing of a mighty warrior. He will be his brother Jeremiah's right hand in routing the wicked. We named him Daniel after Daniel in the Bible, and gave him the blessing of a faithful man.

Our fifth child is our daughter (first one in almost 15 years!) Darby Julia. Darby means 'freeman.' We gave her the blessing of being strident for our Lord, yet reasoned. We didn't name her after anyone particular (we liked the meaning!) so we asked that the Lord would let her make a name for herself! We named her Julia after the fact that Stonewall Jackson (can you tell he's one of our family's heroes?) named his daughter Julia, and we gave her the blessing that the blood of a mighty soldier runs through her veins. Oh yeah, and also (as my wife Clara always says) because Julia is a nice name which is found in the Bible.

Our sixth child is Isabel Debash. We named her Isabel after Isabel Brown, a Scottish Covenanter whose husband was martyred right in front of her eyes. He was shot in the head with a pistol. When you read

how she responded and how she lived the remainder of her life afterwards you are moved to tears and abiding respect. We gave Isabel the blessing of having a firm resolve in her devotion to Christ. We named her Debash in commemoration of our church's honey ministry. Debash means 'honey' in Hebrew. And yes, she is our little honey too!

The Role of Fathers

Fathers are to rule their families. This is their duty. In regards to this matter, fathers are to name their children. The angel of the Lord came to Zacharias, not Elizabeth, and told him what to name his son. The angel of the Lord came to Joseph, not Mary, and told him what to name Jesus. That fathers are to name their children is repeatedly declared in Scripture, although there are also times when the mother does so (I Samuel 1:20).

Our prayer is that God will show you exactly what to name each of your children. Proverbs 22:1 states, "A good name is to be more desired than great riches." May you give your children exactly that.