

When We Let the Father Name Us

It was just my second time to be with her.

Her history, all nine years of it, was tainted with stories we'd rather not believe.

Now she was orphaned and alone, and the oppression of her years hung over her, pressing her with a ruthless and heavy hand.

Her pain had forged her identity.

She had no father to name her. So instead, her abrasive history told her who she was.

That day, I'd come to visit her in the children's home where she lived. I looked into empty eyes that both told and hid a story. Eyes that held fear and insecurity and despair and pain.

I pulled out my bag where I'd put pictures, tape and a paper with her name typed on it with big, bold letters.

"So I looked up what your name means, just like I told you I would the last time we were together," I said to her.

Her eyes were suddenly at attention. "What does it mean? *Is it something bad?*" she asked apprehensively.

Her excited curiosity mingled with hesitation. People who hadn't been able to love her well had spoken many names over her through the years. And harsh circumstances had pinned her as an unwanted orphan.

And now, it was hard for her to imagine that a good definition could be ever attached to her.

“Oh no. It means something really good. It’s perfect for you, actually. **Your name means PURE and BEAUTIFUL,**” I said to her.

An almost embarrassed smile spread across her face. “My name means ... *that?*” She couldn’t quite bring herself to say those two words yet.

“Yep. I looked in several different books and searched the Internet. It’s the truth, girl. Your name means *pure* and *beautiful*, and there’s no gettin’ around it.”

For the next 45 minutes, we made a collage of her name, finding pictures of things that were “pure and beautiful” and taping them to a large poster board. She rummaged through magazine clippings, pulling out shots of waterfalls, sunsets, flowers and oceans. She commented on each one as she chose it, saying things like, “Oh that’s *really* beautiful ... we should definitely use that one.”

In the center of her collage, she taped her name and then wrote the words *pure* and *beautiful* next to it.

The initial embarrassment that had crept into her eyes started turning to joy, and a little bit of confidence sneaked in. The names that others (and she) had pinned to her heart in past years were being called into question.

And the door of her heart cracked open, even a little—and *Truth began to speak a new name.*

I have something in common with that girl.

I think maybe we all do.

Lots of thoughts run through my mind every day, so normal to my human mode that I hardly realize I’m really thinking about anything.

Our minds run *constantly* with words and names and daydreams and to-do lists.

And some of those thoughts that pass through our minds are about *us*. Sometimes they're whispers, and sometimes they're declared with large, bold letters. Thoughts like "failure" or "lazy" or "burdensome" or "hopeless" or "unseen" or "too much" or "not enough" lash the heart.

And *devastatingly*, these toxic thoughts sometimes feel normal. And so we drink them in.

I remember days of hanging my head low, walking my college campus, truly believing that my beauty was measured by the numbers that appeared on the scale when I stepped onto it each morning.

I've known too well, too many days of feeling mostly like God was disappointed in me, feeling like He was angry, feeling like I'd failed Him. Again.

As a wife, with a mountain-sized pile of laundry (and there are only two of us in this house) waiting for me to fold it, and out of ideas of what to cook for dinner, and sadly having said those words that I know hurt his heart—sometimes I want to grovel in thoughts of "He deserves so much better."

Truth is, I—we—tend to see our weaknesses as our blaring attributes. And subtly, we let them define us. We wear them like name tags pinned to our hearts while still trying to keep everything looking neat on the outside.

But people, do we *really* know who we are? Where did those names we've attached to ourselves come from?

Are those God's thoughts? Or mine? Or the devil's? Or the world's?

We're in a war, friends. We have an accuser, and sometimes he comes with a disguised voice, a voice that we maybe even think is our own. A voice that sounds so believable.

But we've got to break away from the auto-file our minds thumb

through, the normalcy of believing anything other than *the truth*—**that we are cherished, beautiful and beloved.**

We've got to reach for—and fight for—our true name *in Him*. We've got to fight for our hearts and expose every lie.

And it happens when we take every thought, and every name, **captive**—holding them under the weight of God's Word ... *to see if they can still hold up.*

What are we letting define us? Or maybe better said, *who* are we letting define us?

We've got to ask: **What has the Father named me?**

What do You see, Father? What do You feel when you look at me?

Identify me.

Name me.

His Word is the final Word. And the name He gives us is our *true name.*

And He has called us clean.

He has called us beloved.

He has called us no longer orphans, but His own.

He has called us wanted.

He has called us worth dying for.

He has called us beautiful.

And we have to stare at these truths, have to ingest them, have to pray them over our tattered hearts, have to let them soak into our beings ... so that the truth of His Word, His names for us and His love over us become what define us through and through.

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