



DAY 1 MATTHEW 16:17-18

1

Names hold weight. When new parents plan for the arrival of a baby and stew over names, they are recognizing the weight of a name. They think about how that name feels as they say it, of others in the past that they've known with that name and the influence that person had on their lives. Many look at the meaning and choose one that reflects what they hope and pray for their child. Jesus gave Simon a new name: Peter. Simon means "God has heard" but Peter means "rock." Jesus was making it abundantly clear what he was calling Peter to with a name. As a child of God, Jesus gave you a new name, a new identity. Are you living in that identity? Do you believe that you are now a child of the King?

DAY 2 ACTS 9:26-31

2

I wonder if it seemed like a cruel joke to the New Testament believers when a man, who just days before pursued the death of believers in Jesus, was now claiming to be one of them. Perhaps they thought it was a trick, a way to destroy them from the inside. But then someone they trusted spoke on Paul's (formerly Saul) behalf. Just a few words made all the difference. You never know the difference you could be making when you stand up for someone. Words are just words until they are spoken. You may have wonderfully encouraging things to say about someone, but if they just stay in your head they aren't helping anyone. Be like Barnabas. Be bold and use your words to make a difference in someone's life.

DAY 3 HEBREWS 10:24-25

3

Often, the words our pastor says don't make us feel good. They aren't always meant to. More often they are meant to help us move our faith forward by the grace of God. Sometimes the most challenging words to hear are the ones that call us to go further and press deeper into our Christian faith. Sometimes the most challenging words to say are ones that call those around us to go deeper in their walk with God. As brothers and sisters in Christ, one of our roles is to "spur one another on," challenge each other to go further, to know Christ more and pursue relationship with Him more each day. How can you encourage those around you today?

DAY 1 SAMUEL 1:6-8

4

“You aren’t smart enough, attractive enough, tough enough to...” Fill in the blank. Is there one thing someone said, maybe years ago, that rolls itself over and over in your mind and just tears you down? Words are so powerful. And the ones that tear down tend to be the most powerful. They never seem to leave, and they start to define who we think we are. Hannah started to believe that she just didn’t matter as much to God because of what someone said about her. We often do the same thing. But instead of believing the negative words people have said about us, we need to choose to believe what God has said about us. We are chosen, adopted, loved, friends, children of God. If we allow what God has said about us to seep down into our hearts, maybe we can eventually drown out the other voices that destroy.

DAY COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

5

I’m always amazed by how loved Jesus was by the non-religious crowd. They loved being around him even though he spoke sometimes painful truth into their lives. How did He do that? How could he speak ugly truth into sinners lives and still be loved by them? I believe it was because His words were never merely words, but they were soaked in love. He truly loved all the world and that was felt by everyone. His words were “seasoned with salt” meaning he was always gracious and never let them feel without hope. How are you viewed by those who are unsympathetic to your faith in Jesus? Sometimes all it takes is a genuine love for those people to change the way our words sound in their ears. May we share about Jesus boldly and lovingly.

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