

Donna's Devotional

What's in a Name?

*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches
and loving favor rather than silver and gold. –Proverbs 22:1*

Today's society pays little attention to a person's name. People choose names because of how they sound or because it is the name of some pop star. In the middle ages a person's name indicated his vocation, such as John *the Smith*, Edward *the Baker*, or William *the Tanner*.

In ancient times, a man's name was of the greatest importance. In the Bible names carried meaning, Eve is "*the mother of all living*" and Naomi says, "*Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me*" (Ruth 1: 20). Naomi means "pleasant", Mara means "bitter".

Occasionally in the Bible God gave direct instruction as to what a child should be named. Friends and family wanted to call the baby Zacharias after his father, but the angel of the Lord directed his name to be John (the Baptist). Scripture records God changing a person's name because of some significant change in his or her life. Abram's name was changed to Abraham (Father of a Multitude); Jacob's name was changed to Israel because he had "*power with God and with men*" (Genesis 32:28).

When Peter proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, his name was changed from Simon to Peter. Peter means "a stone". Simon was prone to failure, but Peter represents victory.

If God were giving *you* a name today, what would it be?