

Your New Name

Air Dates: July 25-29, 2022

Day One

Have you considered that you might need a new name? There were several times in the Bible where God changed someone's name. The most familiar name changes are:

- Abram became Abraham
- Sarai became Sarah
- Jacob became Israel
- Simon became Peter
- Saul became Paul

God had a purpose for changing their names. It wasn't that he just didn't like the name they chose; names held a great deal of significance in that culture, and God changed their names because God was changing them. God was giving them new purpose and meaning in life. God was bringing them from one place in life to the place he wanted them to be. God was changing their name to signify that they had been on the wrong road, and now they were going to be on the narrow road—God's road—that leads to life.

I wonder if God wants to change your name. For example:

- **Is your name *Bitter*?**

If so, I can assure you that God wants to change it. In Hebrews 12:15 we read:

See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Bitter roots grow in our hearts when we've been wronged, when our dreams are not coming true, when we've suffered some kind of loss, when our circumstances are difficult—it doesn't take much for bitterness to take root in your heart. And as this verse from Hebrews tells us, when left unchecked, bitterness always grows. You cannot hold onto one little bitter twig, because it won't stay little. It always grows.

And then, anytime you allow any little bitterness to take root in your heart, count on it causing you a great deal of trouble, as sure as night follows day. It will cause physical troubles—actually make you sick. It will make you ugly—truly make you look sour and unattractive. Bitterness causes emotional and mental trouble, too. It starts to take over your mind and your thoughts, and you can easily become obsessed and out of touch with reality because of bitterness.

Funny thing is, when we're bitter, it affects all of our relationships, not just the one we are bitter against. As parents we can transfer that bitter spirit to our children; as managers and employees we can transfer it to our co-workers. It is a poison that affects everyone it touches.

Have you stored up so much hurt and anger that it has turned into bitterness? When your name is bitter, you miss the grace of God. God wants to give you a new name. He wants you to be called **Joyful**, filled with the joy of your salvation and free from the pain of bitterness.

Day Two

Have you ever wanted to change your name? Some people actually do change their names because they just don't like the name they were given. Well, God changed some people's names in the Bible, but he did it to signify a change he was making in their lives. Does God want to change your name?

- **Is your name *Anxious*?**

Are you carrying burdens way too heavy for you? Are you living in fear and worry? You know, Jesus said we are not to carry heavy burdens; we aren't built for heavy burdens. He carries the heavy burdens, as we exchange our heavy ones for his light burden. If your name has been **Anxious** lately, it's time for a name change.

1 Peter 5:7: *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

Philippians 4:6-7: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

God wants to give you a new name—**Peaceful**. He wants you to be confident of the fact that he will never leave you or forsake you, and that you can cast all your care on him, because he cares for you. He wants you to know that peace that passes understanding which is found only in Jesus.

- **Is your name *Discouraged*?**

Are you ready to give up, verging on depression? Has life been full of all kinds of disappointments and discouragements lately? Sometimes it seems like they gang up on you, doesn't it? Well, if your name has been **Discouraged**, God wants to change it to **Delivered**.

Deuteronomy 31:8: *The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

Psalms 32:7: *You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

Psalms 34:4: *I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.*

God wants to change your name from Bitter to Joyful, and also from Anxious to Peaceful, and from Discouraged to Delivered. Will you let him change your name?

Day Three

Sometimes we need a new name. God changed the names of some significant people in the Bible: Abram and Saul and Jacob and Simon, to name a few. He changed their names because he was setting them in a new direction, changing more than their names. He was changing their attitudes, their priorities, their characters. And you know, I think God probably wants to change our names sometimes, too.

We've talked about changing your name from Bitter to Joyful, from Anxious to Peaceful, from Discouraged to Delivered. Here's another name that needs to be changed:

Is your name *Rejected*?

Have people hurt you and disappointed you? So many have experienced significant rejection from parents, from siblings, from mates, from children, from friends, from employers. Sometimes those rejections are blatant, sometimes subtle, but in every case they are painful.

If you've been living with the name of ***Rejected*** lately—or maybe for many years—God really wants you to know that you are ***Accepted***. Your new name is ***Accepted***. When we become new creations in Christ, we are accepted in Christ Jesus, the Beloved, and nothing can ever separate us from Jesus and his love for us.

I think of a woman who experienced subtle rejection from her mother all her life, as her mother almost daily told her that she was an unplanned and unwanted child. She reminded her over and over again that her birth had greatly complicated her mother's life and made her unhappy. It was the kind of rejection that wasn't obvious to others, but it was there all the time. But when she came to know the love of Jesus and realized that she was truly accepted in him, it was life-changing for her. She lived her remaining years basking in the glow that Jesus loved and accepted her, and she's with him now, no doubt still basking in that love

Psalm 66:20: *Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!*

1 Peter 2:4-5: *As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

If you've been living with the name ***Rejected***, God wants to call you ***Accepted***, starting now!

Day Four

Did you ever think that maybe God wants to change your name? God can change our names. He did it for Abraham and Sarah and Paul, to mention a few, and their name change indicated that God was doing a new work in their lives and giving them new purpose. Honestly, I think some of us need a name change. For example,

Is your name *Addicted*?

Usually we think of addictions as limited to alcohol or drugs, but addictions come in many other less-visible ways, too. For example, there are food addictions, television addictions, sexual addictions, shopping addictions, to name a few. And I think there are others that are even more subtle, like being addicted to laziness or to negativity or to self-pity. It's possible to be addicted to a person who is not good for you, when you feel like you can't live without them even though they're doing you harm.

The enemy of your soul is such a thief and liar that he can get you hooked on something that seems innocent, and perhaps in moderation it is harmless, but your addiction to it keeps you in bondage and prevents you from knowing the full potential that God has for your life.

If there is some area of addiction in your life, no matter how small or hidden, God wants to change your name from ***Addicted*** to ***Unshackled***. In Luke 4:18 Jesus said:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free...."

And Paul wrote to the Galatians:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery (Galatians 5:1).

Living with addictions is letting yourself be burdened again by enslavement to that thing or that person. Would you like to be set free from that addiction in your life? Ask God today to change your name to **Unshackled**. You may not be able to break that bondage, but Jesus came to set you free and he can break it.

Day Five

Several years ago I wrote a book entitled *Why Do I Always Feel Guilty?* The reason I wrote that book was because I knew from my own experience and from ministering to women for years that we take on guilt at the drop of a hat! It doesn't take much at all to make us feel guilty.

God wants to change our names from Bitter to Joyful, from Anxious to Peaceful, from Discouraged to Delivered, from Addicted to Unshackled, and guilty is another name God wants to change.

- **Is your name Guilty?**

God wants to give you a wonderful new name: **Forgiven**. David said that his guilt had overwhelmed him like a burden too heavy to bear. But then he acknowledged his sin and God forgave the guilt of his sin. God wants to do that for you.

Colossians 1:13-14: For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Psalm 32:1: Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

And God also wants to take away that false guilt you've been carrying around. It could be that you are allowing yourself to feel guilty about things that either have already been forgiven and forgotten by God, or things for which you are not truly guilty.

For example, if you've confessed your past sins, you are forgiven and you don't need to carry guilt with you any longer. And if you're feeling guilty for things totally beyond your control, that's false guilt that the enemy has dumped on you. God wants you to change your name to Forgiven, and live in the joy that he remembers your sin against you no more.

God knows that old name you've got. He knows you and he knows your name. But here's the best news in all the world: The God who created the heavens and the earth, the only true God, loves you with a love that cannot be quenched or changed. He knows the worst about you and he loves you still. He wants you to know abundant life that is found only in Jesus Christ.

Would you like to claim your new name today? You can do that; whatever it is that has you in bondage, you can leave it behind and move into the life you were meant to live.