

## What is in Your Name?

*Reflection: Exodus 20:3-6, Exodus 20:23, Isaiah 42:8*

As a true follower of Jesus Christ, it is important that you make good judgment about the names you choose to be called, the names you choose for your children, your projects, your businesses and everything you own that needs to be named.

Do you consciously or unconsciously bear a name that promotes other gods/goddesses/deities, or an ungodly act? What is the spiritual state of the person who gave the name you bear? Your name may mean one thing to you, and another thing to the one who gave it to you, especially if you are from Africa, Asia, some parts of South America, Latin America, and the country of Haiti. A name could be a Blessing or a Curse. An ungodly one will hinder you from enjoying the presence of the One and Only True God in your life. In Africa for example, many people still innocently answer to names that promote deities - the god of iron (*Ogun*), the devil himself (*Esu*), the god of lightning (*Sango*), the river goddess (*Oya*), *Osun*, *Oba*, *Ifa*, *Odu*, just to mention a few. Prayerfully rebel against these names and have them changed if you are determined to remain a true follower of Christ. You must have no relationship whatsoever with these deities, beloved. Cut the cord!

I had a name given to me by my maternal grandfather when I was born. For some reason, my mother made it my first name on legal documents. Right from my childhood (and for quite some time), my life was a mess: Things would be beautiful one day, and then turn ugly the next. I just could not figure out what was going on, until I did a little bit of investigation and figured out what was in the name, and other pertinent details that I would rather not share, out of respect for my grandfather. I stopped answering to the name, instantly.

You are who you say you are, and what you answer to. When you answer to a name you are called, you are more or less saying, "Yes, it is so" to a Blessing or a Curse pronounced. Likewise, when you introduce yourself, stating it. You are confirming what others have said you are, to be true. Citing examples: My Christian name (from birth) is *Deborah*, and so I am destined to be a blessing to others, not a curse. I am chosen to speak forth the Word of God, deliver messages from Him, and encourage others. My African name (also from birth), *Olutoyin (Toyin)* means, *The Lord is worthy to be praised*; thus, everything that concerns me must showcase His greatness. I am called by these prophetic names with numerous tongues that have power (Proverbs 18:21), and my destiny is tied to the names.

Some people had their names changed in the Bible, for good reasons: Abram (Abraham), Sarai (Sarah), Jacob (Israel), Simon (Cephas/Peter), to mention a few. With the change came renewed covenants, new beginnings, and new blessings. Although their name-change was not by their own choice, you are at liberty to prayerfully have your name changed as well. It is your prerogative, and not a crime to choose not to be called by certain names (especially those that promote other gods and ungodly acts) now that you are a new creature in Christ.

It costs little to have your name changed in the United States and the United Kingdom, and almost nothing in some parts of the world. If people question your decision to have your name changed, let them know you were created for God's pleasure only, and must live out His purpose for your life (Revelation 4:11). Let God be glorified by your lifestyle, conduct, and the name you are called, beloved. May we be guided.

Shalom!

Deborah O Daniel (Toyin)