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## Behind the Name

Tony Butler, Youth Minister

Every year at graduation time, I get to sit in on multiple graduations. During the course of the graduations, I will hear a couple of thousand names being recognized. However, sitting as a bystander in the audience, I know nothing about most of the people whose names are being called out. Some people have lots of cheers given to them and others have almost none given to them. Every year though, it makes me sit back and wonder about the people whose names are being called and the stories of their lives.

At birth, we are all given a name from our parents. In today's generation, it is about giving your child a name that is unique to him/her. In past generations, it was more about the meaning of the name. In the Bible names were very important. Some were given due to circumstances around the birth, some given names based on life circumstances, and others based around who they esteemed the child to become. Upon God calling many of the people we know and the amazing things they did for Him, He changed their name. Abram became Abraham, Sarai became Sarah, Saul became Paul, etc.

### Who Christ says we are

We are told in John 15:15 that we are no longer slaves but have now been given the ability to be called a friend of God. We have that ability because God wants to walk alongside us, be a part of our lives on a daily basis and be the person we talk to about any and everything. We are not restricted, though, to only being friends of God; we are loved by God and have been given the ability to be called His children (John 1:12, Galatians 3:26). Because we are His friend and even more intimately His children, He has called us justified and redeemed (Romans 3:24).

### What does this mean for us?

With our identity in Christ, why do we then get bogged down in the world and how it labels us? Maybe someone in your life has inadvertently said something to you that you have allowed to control you for many years. You don't have to let that control you any longer. You have been given freedom through Christ (John 8:31-36). Jesus was not setting us free to do whatever we wanted; He was freeing us to do what we ought to do. He was liberating us to walk in relationship with God and to be the kind of people He created us to be.

And this is the freedom that sin had long denied us.

This week, we can be assured that Christ has given us a new identity and a new name in Him! (John 8:31-36)

### Challenge

Take some time to look up the meaning of your name. What does your name mean? What are the meanings of your children's names? Most of the time, even if we weren't given a name for a specific purpose, we still tend to lean towards what the meaning of the name is. Remember, you have been given a new name in Christ and you are no longer bound to the old you but are defined by Christ and who He says you are!