

From the August 4, 2009 Issue

## Don't Call Me out of My Name!

Or, “Dad, she called me out my name!” is a popular and, admittedly, comical way (to me!) that my daughters try to express to me the fact that someone else called them a name other than what their birth certificates say.

You know, words like “Ugly,” “Nut job,” “Big Head,” “Stupid” (and usually stated with sarcasm, venom or sneering laughter). Obviously they do not take kindly to these words, nor to the names that sound way worse and are usually symbolized in articles like this, by symbols such as \$#%#!

I've also noticed that they do not like having their name twisted up too much either. You know, like when your name is Autumn and others call you “Automobile” or “Auto parts,” taking a portion of your name and adding impersonal things to it.

Whereas we can think of this as something innocent, fun, and child's play, I believe that many of us adults would get just as offended if someone did the same to us and introduced us as their friend “Fathead” wherever we went – which is why we don't do that if we're smart! In fact, we DO get offended when others cuss and fuss at us and call us “Fathead”, don't we?

I must admit that there is another, positive, side to this coin. Even though my name is Timothy, it sounds wonderful to hear my wife say “Sugar,” “Sweetie,” “Honey,” and “Babe!” And my children usually don't mind being called out of their name when the words are “Beautiful,” “Cutie,” or “Lovely.” Truth be known, they KNOW you are calling them in their right name. On the flip side of that, there is the sneaky way a used car salesman can use nice words in a fake way to try and flatter you into buying a lemon.

So what is my point in all of this as it relates to the Triune God as revealed in Jesus?

Well, in a comical way, the Father, Son and Spirit have revealed their names to be “Father”, “Son” and “Spirit”, NOT “Poppa”, “Sonny” and “Sarayu”!

Now, before you start cursing and calling me out of my name, or think I am fighting against the popular book named *The Shack*, or am “getting legalistic all over again”, or even think I am providing a dire warning to you because you regularly call the Triune God out of His name, please hear me when I say that my reason is none of these!

William “Paul” Young, author of *The Shack* REALLY is a personal friend and I love his book! I think that, as a work of fiction, *The Shack* is built on the solid Truth of the Triune God Who is in union with all humanity and all of creation! Also, being obedient is not always being legalistic. Jesus obeys His Father, does that make him an “unfun” legalist??? All warnings aren't negative, but can be reminders of the outrageously positive!

For example, in Joshua chapter 1 the Lord says that he is with Joshua and that because of this nearness Joshua could be strong and courageous rather than discouraged and dismayed. He also asks Joshua to be obedient to everything he says, as Moses was, so that Joshua could experience God's nearness without trouble! God then reiterates how near HE is, which is why Joshua could be strengthened and obey in the first place and experience His relationship with God as it really was –

Good and near!!!

My point in this article is that God the Father, Son and Spirit is REAL (more real than you and me!) and has named Himself in a particular way that best describes Him to us in our language! Wow! The One and only Triune God has made Himself accessible to us and has drawn near to us as He really is, in our humanness, in Christ!

This is mind-blowing relationship at its best! The positive point in all of this is that it is honorable and right to call the Triune God “in His name,” not always out of it, and most of us can understand and appreciate the importance of being “called in our right name”. That’s who we are in our distinction, and nothing sounds sweeter (for the most part).

I noticed something in scripture that may help you in thinking a little more clearly along these lines. I looked up all of the scriptures in the New Testament (3 of them) where it is written “Abba” (Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, and Gal 4:6.) “Abba” is an ancient Aramaic term that translates into intimate terms for a human father such as “Poppa,” “Daddy,” or even “Da-Da.”

This is where people like Paul Young are correct in helping us to see and experience the intimate and profound relationship we have with God the Father in Jesus. We are right to emphasize these special words in speaking to the Father and of how intimate the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us. It can be especially important to know and express these words with Jesus as we fight the wretched theology that commonly views the Father as more of a “barely tolerant” child abuser!

However, I also noticed in the scripture that every “Abba” was accompanied by the word “Father,” so that the phrase always reads “Abba, Father” in these verses. I think there is significance and good food for thought in recognizing this. I think the significance is that the Father, Son, and Spirit are each so real, so personal, and so with us as the One God, that they have distinct names. These names aren’t fake or an attempt to copy some human name, but are their real names made accessible to us in our human language.

Though I don’t think the Triune God gets upset in the same way we do when we “call him out of His name” and use only terms like “Poppa” to describe Him, I do think He has a REAL name - “Father” - and likes it when we use it!

The word “Abba” in Strong’s Concordance simply translates “father,” so in one sense “Abba, Father” translates as “Father, Father”. In my way of thinking, the “Abba” part lets us know that the Father is as approachable as any good human father - that he has given himself to us intimately in His Son’s intimacy – and that His Son’s intimacy is bound up with Him in human flesh. The “Father” part that always follows “Abba” speaks of calling him in His Personal and True name.

Finally, it is for this very reason that we at *The Adopted Life* fight for an accurate expression of God the Father, Son, and Spirit by elaborating on Trinity and Adoption through Jesus so much! We are trying, in the grace of God and Jesus’ faithfulness, to call God the Trinity in His name, and not out of it! We realize that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of Adoption (just like your driver’s license describes you but is NOT you!) On the other hand, YOU want to be described accurately on your driver’s license (I’ll pass on the good jokes!), and approached for who you really are, don’t you (remember the “Fathead” comment!)?

The Triune God, too, wants to be known and described accurately! After all, calling Him out of his name (single, separate, satan), hasn't been helpful for the most part, has it?

*~ Timothy Brassell*