

GLIMPSE

Our Real Name

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If you were to live absolutely alone, I mean if nobody else was ever around, things in your living-space would not need to have names. You would not have to explain what that thingamajig was, because you would know it by and for yourself. It reads in *Genesis* that Adam named each thing that God presented to him, but that was because God was the other in Adam's life.

Mark Twain wrote a diary entry in the words of Adam and one for Eve. Adam, Twain wrote, was upset when Eve arrived in his solitary garden, because she started naming things. Adam had to relinquish the control of naming and using things according to what Eve named them to be. He was learning what each of us learns all too slowly. *All relationships cause tension.*

Years ago there was a young lad in our family who found himself in desperate and immediate need of a paint can opener. He searched quickly around and what was available was his mother's sterling silver butter knife. That was the name she gave it. The boy changed its name to a pry bar. He did not change the nature of the instrument, just its utilitarian name. If it hadn't been broken in being misused, the original name could have returned. After the fracturing, the name was changed again to unuseful. The lad's mother almost changed his original name as a consequence.

Many of us, upon purchasing a 'put-it-together-yourself product', would rather figure it out than read the frustrating and slow-going manual. Self-discovering is more exciting and quicker. We do enjoy creating and even creating havoc so as to unmess it up. Naming things still gives us control and as long as we use a thing according to its name and thinginess, we both shall survive. Generally, if we change its name, our control will break the thing and in some cases, its misuse will break us.

I was munching on a perfect chocolate-chip cookie yesterday and found myself inwardly saying to God that I wished I were as grateful all the time as I was during

those brief moments. I was chewing and doing with that cookie exactly as it was given to me to do. Perhaps the second cookie was a misuse of me, and the cookie as well. One of the ways of praying is the enjoyment of what a thing is and employing it according to its name. Everything has God's fingerprints on it and when we read those prints it results in as perfect a prayer as we can render by ourselves.

The tensions caused within all relationships center around whose names for things and other persons will be used. What I call "this" you might call "that". I say that it should be done this way or look like that, and you say something a little different. That tension is not necessarily tenseness, but is an aspect of human relationships which is to be revered and enjoyed. The relationship that God has created with and for us has its tensions as well. They are creative of the timber of that relationship. God names a biological substance a person from its very beginning and it will grow hopefully to see and accept and be grateful for what it simply and magnificently is, a human being. The person has its unique fingerprints and those of God as well. That self-acceptance and grateful realization will ultimately be its basic prayer of praise. As we all have experienced, our relationship with ourself, because it is a relationship, will cause us tensions, because we experience a greed, a lust, for a different and better self-made self. We wish we could have a different name. Sometimes humans replace their God-given name with a different one to resolve that tension within themselves. It never works; it breaks like a misused butter knife.

It is not good for a person to live alone, *Genesis* says, namely because we would not know our real name. We need others to assist in God's creation, identifying who we are. We assist God the same way in the lives of others. It is only a glimpse so praise God by eating a good cookie today!