

# What's In A Name

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"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me". I am sure many of us have heard that saying, and it may even have been told to us as we were growing up. I have often wondered whoever came up with such tosh! Frankly, we know how much we have been hurt by comments said to or about us. Words have a power to do untold damage.

My grandson, 8 years old, was telling me that the class all have nicknames for one another. They seem to be terms of affection and endearment and his friends seems to rather enjoy saying goodbye to one another using their nicknames when I collect him from school. I remember my nickname at school was "giant", not particularly imaginative yet it stuck. I was always the smallest in the class and have never exceeded 5ft3ins even in adulthood! As we got older and studied biology someone suggested that I should be "embryo" as I had not grown. Now that, I thought, was imaginative as my surname is Hembery!

Names and words are of course especially important in the Bible. Some of the major players have their names changed. Simon becomes Peter (Petros) because on the rock Jesus says he will build his church. Saul becomes Paul to demonstrate his new identity in Christ. And the disciples gave nicknames to other too. Joseph, we are told Acts 4:36, was a generous-hearted man who sold some property to release money for the work of the early Christian community. The disciples nicknamed him Barnabas which means "son of encouragement"?

Much later in life I was given another nickname by a lady in our home church. She worked with Wycliff Bible Translators and knew her Bible and languages. She said to me, “You shall be known as Tychicus.” Playing again on my size (titch) she found this bible character, a colleague of Paul. When I looked him up, for example in Colossians 4:7, he is described as “a dear brother, a faithful minister and a fellow servant of the Lord.” I thought, that will do me! My friend was paying me a great compliment in her nickname.

I wonder, what names do you have for folk? What do they call you? Maybe we need to be careful with our words and make sure we are building one another up. Words do have great power.

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*(Photo by [Tim Mossholder](#) on [Unsplash](#))*

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