

Making a name for yourself

When I was newly born, my mother, God rest her soul, named me “Daryl.”

Truth be told, I’ve never really liked that name. I went through my life wishing to be a “Bob” or a “Mike” or a “Bill.” I asked my mother one day why she named me “Daryl.” “I liked the name,” she said. “I read that it meant ‘beloved.’”

Now, even though I’m still not that happy with my name – and especially the spelling, which is used by both men and women, I respect the person who gave it to me. I’ve tried to make it a name that nobody would ever be ashamed of.

Look around you. In every city, every university, every business, there are buildings, libraries, conference rooms, scholarships, hospitals and museums, all bearing the name of some donor, president, chairman or scientist.

These people, most of them long since dead, have left a trace of their existence on the world – their name. Andrew Carnegie, for example, is remembered as much for the libraries he helped fund across the United States, as he is remembered for his years as a U.S. business tycoon.

Most of us will never have the money that a Gates, Buffett, Rockefeller, DuPont, Nobel, or Ford might have had. We may never be able to bestow vast amounts of money to create and fund a foundation that bears our name.

But we can still make our name something to be proud of – and something to remember.

If you think about it, each of these great people whose names grace the great buildings, hospitals, foundations, and universities of our world were once where we are now – none of them started out famous – they became famous through the course they took and the choices they made.

And like they did, we create a legacy for ourselves and our names. We may not create that legacy with money or power, but through our actions. Through the course we choose, the choices we make, and the way we attract the respect of others around us, we leave behind ourselves a legacy that can make a difference – and a name that goes with that legacy.

Many people choose to make their legacy through money and power. In the words found in the New Testament, “they have their reward.”

But in the United States, and other countries around the world, there are men and women who craft their personal legacies through service, dedication, honorable decisions and personal sacrifice.

These men and women may never have their names gracing the front of a marble-clad building. They may never have the experience of having hundreds of people gasp when they walk into the room. But they leave behind themselves a legacy that many will remember – because it is a legacy that made a difference in the lives of other people.

Each of us has a name. What we do with that name defines what our legacy will be. We can cheat, steal, and lie our way to the top – but our name will be dirtied by the path we have chosen.

Whatever path we choose in life, we should make certain our name remains unsoiled. We need to make sure our actions honor our name, our lives, and those who have directed their faith and love toward us.

We can make a name for ourselves – and we can choose whether that name instills trust and love – or hatred and doubt.

We should let our actions be such that our name means “integrity.”

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