

NAMING NAMES

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. (Proverbs 22:1, NIV)

CAMERON TRINGALE, FEATURED IN THIS YEAR’S LINKS PLAYERS MAGAZINE, is doing a pretty good job of making a name for himself this season. A runner-up in last week’s FedExCup playoffs opening event, Tringale will try to add to his season total of \$1,925,303 at the Deutsche Bank Championship. The one thing missing for Tringale? A win. Other than that, the fifth-year veteran has done a pretty nice job of making a name for himself.

Of course, golf isn’t the only avenue to a good name. Plenty of athletes, golfers or not, have performed with excellence when it comes to the demands of their sports, then botched things quite royally when it comes to their behavior on the field and off. Tringale is not one of those. His mid-play demeanor is marked by a cool head, and when you get him away from the game, he speaks humbly and warmly.

Tringale, no matter how you dare to pronounce it, carries a good name (it’s “trin-golly,” by the way).

A *good name* is a funny expression, really. We don’t mean it the same way we do when someone is introduced to us and we respond, “Oh, I like your name.” Rather, having a good name means that you possess an honorable reputation. It’s a duality traced all the way back to early Hebrew, where *shem* could point to one’s reputation or to their literal name. More than that, *shem* drew a connection the Name—that is, the name of God, YHWH. It was—and still normally is among the Jewish community—a name unspoken. Thus, reverence was given to the Name.

With all this in mind, we are able to see a powerful connection between the honor of God and the honor we might seek for ourselves. The latter seems almost wrong, in fact. Should we be seeking honor for ourselves? Yet Solomon’s observation suggests that to be esteemed is a good thing, “better than silver or gold.”

The key question must then be, *for what shall we seek to be esteemed?* The answer never lies in earthly pursuits—in academics, athletics, or business. Rather, we must pursue esteem on the basis of how we reflect the God of all glory. Are we merciful, as he is? forgiving, as he is? righteous, as he is? loving, as he is? Our name is made good when it is linked to his, when people say of us, “Oh, that Cameron, he is a man of God. Oh, that Cami, she is a woman who glorifies the Lord.”

Opening questions What are the hallmarks of someone with a good name? If you were mentoring a young person in building a strong reputation, what is some of the advice you would give?

READING Exodus 20:7, Malachi 1:6-14, Isaiah 26:7-9, Matthew 28:19

Honor for God’s name

What do you think it means to misuse the name of the Lord (take the Lord’s name in vain)? How does Malachi 1 help us understand such dishonor?

The desire of the righteous

What did Isaiah prophesy would be the desire of the heart of the righteous? How do you know when one’s soul yearns for God?

Baptism and the name

Why do you think baptism is to be done in “the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”? What difference does it make in your own thoughts about dedicating your life to God that his name is to be revered?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2014 Links Players International.