

What's Your Last Name?

Ready:

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" – 2 Corinthians 5:20

Set

Walking out of her coach's office, Chelsea felt like nothing could bring her down. She had just been named as a starter for tomorrow night's game. All the hours of practice she had put in, all the brutal workouts she had endured, all the times she had said, "no" to hanging out with her friends would all be worth it in less than 24 hours. As she sat down in her locker and ran her fingers over the coarse stitching of her jersey, her heart swelled with pride as the team name on the front glistened in the dim light.

In sports we're often reminded that the name on the back of our jersey pales in comparison to the name on the front. When we play, we don't just represent ourselves, but our team. Even when athletes receive non-sports related publicity, their actions almost always remain tied to the name on the front of the jersey. In college, my coach used to tell us that our real last name was "[school name] football player." He meant that in newsworthy situations, good or bad, our behavior would not just characterize ourselves, but our school and our team. We had to ask ourselves if our actions dragged our team name through the mud or if we represented our team well.

In the Bible, the apostle Paul calls us "ambassadors" or representatives of Christ. This means our words and our actions, both on and off the field, should represent Jesus. Many of our friends and family may never enter the church or read the Bible. So when we outwardly identify as Christians we embody what they think of when they think of Christ. In other words, our real last name is "follower of Christ." So in turn we have to ask whether our lives tend to drag Christ's name through the mud or if our lives point others toward Christ.

As Chelsea ran out the next night to the spirited roars of the crowd, she had her own name on her back, but she was surrounded by others with the same name on the front. God has given us each our own individual gifts and talents, and he has also surrounded us with other believers who all have the same "real last name" – follower of Jesus Christ.

Go

1. Can you think of a time when you noticed someone else's behavior and they didn't know you were watching?
2. Paul says, "We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'" In which ways can this plea be silenced if we are not living as ambassadors?

3. Do your actions point others to or away from Christ?

Workout

John 18:36; Matthew 5:13-16; Ephesians 5:1

Bible Reference:

John 18:36

Matthew 5:13-16

Ephesians 5:1



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