

# The naming of the animals

in Genesis 2:19-20 **was** / is ...

“Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And **whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name**. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.” (*Genesis 2:19-20*)

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about God as

Creator & Educator

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*\*

an important part

of Adam's education

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*

based on

careful observation

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*

closely linked to

the woman's creation

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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collaboration

between God and man

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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demonstrating

man's dominion (Gen. 1:28)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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in line with

Genesis 1:27-28

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Descriptive



Meditation

like a great homework assignment

\*\*

like and unlike

naming children (21:1-7)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*

negative

in its conclusion (2:20)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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more about

Adam than the animals

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*\*

naming

all living things

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*\*

not done

directly by God himself

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*\*

repetitive but

with interesting variety

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

\*\*\*

serving God

with the mind (mental)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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studying

zoology, biology, & ecology

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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to emphasize

Adam's uniqueness

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

**Directions:** after reading through **Genesis 2:15-25**, consider and discuss the points above about the naming of the animals by Adam. **Do you agree with the various points made? Would you change or add to them in any way? At the end of the study, discuss the most important descriptive phrases, paying special attention to those that have something to do with an aspect of education.** Ask questions like the following. *What kind of homework should we give our children? What about repetition and variety in our teaching? Is freedom in education still helpful today after Adam's fall? What is the main thing to be learned by studying animals?* — © 2022 by Jon F. Mahar, Hakusan City, Japan and Alexander, Maine, U.S.A.

### **Why was the naming of the animals important?**

The naming was more about Adam than about the animals. Through it the great Creator and Educator repeatedly taught the man that he was unique and that there was no animal that was in the image of God as he was. Therefore the naming was closely linked to the creation of the woman who was also in the image of God (Gen. 1:28). The naming of the animals also showed that the man had dominion over them.

### **Did Adam name all living things?**

No, at least not at that time. Although he had dominion over all animals, birds, fish, insects, and even the plants, the purpose of naming the animals was not to promote the study of zoology, biology, and ecology. Rather, the main point was to show the man that he was unique.

### **Why didn't God name the animals himself?**

If the Lord had done it himself, it would have been faster, but it would not have been nearly as educational as having the man do it based on personal observation. Delegating the naming to the man was like giving Adam a great homework assignment. It was also like a long series of unspoken questions. How would you name this animal? How about that one? God thus encouraged the man to observe carefully and think rather than memorize names that God had given. Moreover, as the man named each animal, he was demonstrating his dominion over it in line with Genesis 1:27-28.

### **Did the man do the naming all by himself?**

In a way, he did since God never overruled a name that Adam chose. However, God brought the animals to the man, rather than having Adam go look for them. Moreover, God had given the man the abilities that he needed in order to do the task. So there was a degree of collaboration, just as there is today as well, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart and mind.

### **What are the applications?**

There are many possible applications for education. For instance, the naming shows that a degree of freedom is helpful, though since the fall of man more restrictions are needed. The passage also shows that repetition is good if there is also some variety. (The naming task was repeated again and again, but each animal was different.)

The main lesson in the naming, however, was to show that man was and is different from the animals. So the main application is for each of us to live as one created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27-28) rather than like an animal.

### **How should the worksheets for this and other studies be used?**

The directions are at the bottom of each worksheet. 1.) First, read the passage and if possible some related literature or websites conserving the animal(s) being studied. 2.) Go through the points on the worksheet considering and discussing whether each point is valid or not. (Most points are correct, but some are only partly so.) 3.) Think about and discuss which descriptive points on the worksheet are most important. 4.) Make some personal applications of the study. Usually some helpful points or questions to help with this are included at the end.

Points like those made above on the second page of this study are not to be read until **after** the steps listed above are followed. Doing so would be like reading the final chapter in a novel without first reading any of the other chapters.