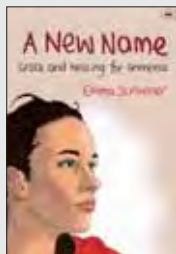


A New Name

Emma Scrivener

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A *New Name* is the gripping, harrowing, inspiring story of Emma Scrivener's



personal experience with anorexia. It is also, wonderfully, a breathtakingly honest and insightful account of her struggle to know God and to know herself in relation to him.

Anorexia is the mental health disorder most likely to kill those who suffer from it. Emma, who first developed the illness in her teens, describes herself as one of life's 'good' girls – a keeper of rules and a craver of acceptance. In short, and brilliantly put, 'an approval seeking missile'. When the magically safe world of her childhood began to collapse around her she took responsibility for tidying things up. Her anorexia was never about 'feeling fat' or wanting to fulfil a physical ideal, but about control. Emma was a perfectionist, and this drove her to behaviours that nearly ruined her.

Interestingly, at around the same time as her anorexia started, Emma became a Christian. Like most perfectionists, she had more than aptly comprehended the guilt and shame of her sin. She says though, that while her brand of Christianity 'paid lip service to [Jesus'] work on my behalf... in practice it was up to me'. She understood herself to be saved by faith, but became a self-sanctifying machine. Years later, in the midst of a new marriage and successful ministry she had a devastating relapse. As Emma was on the brink of death, Jesus broke

into a life that despite her best attempts was wildly out of control.

It would be easy (but unwise) to think *A New Name* a bit 'niche' – about a small minority of troubled young women (and men) who 'have issues'. Ironically, this book is simply about a girl who is hungry. In fact, she is starving – for approval, acceptance, recognition, love, value, intimacy, identity. In short, I'd be pretty surprised if it wasn't as much about you, me and our obsessive, destructive idolatries, as it is about Emma and hers.

Healthcare often attracts a certain personality type, and perhaps this is particularly true of Christians. We want to heal and to care excellently. This is no bad thing. But the danger is that we are consumed by the title of 'doctor' or 'nurse' so that our desire to do and to be good becomes not only unhealthy, but sinful. Emma speaks profoundly, personally and poetically of the power of the good news to give us all what we crave and need in the person of Jesus Christ.

'I'm convinced,' she says, 'that we've all been given a true name, one that tells us who and what we are. It's not the name we build for ourselves, nor is it conferred by others. It's a name that's given to us by the Lord. When we accept it – when we accept him – the hiding, the searching and the striving can finally stop. We can rest. In him we can find our true purpose, meaning and identity.'

Emma will be speaking at the CMF Student Conference in February 2014. She blogs at www.emmascrivener.net ■