

The Wonder of His Name

*And those who know Your name will put their trust in You,
For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.
Psalm 9:10*

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How It Works:

Each week, we will be digging into the Word of God to discover what it says about the various names of God. However, the goal is not to simply acquire more knowledge. Instead, we want to take the truths we learn and the revelations we receive, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in understanding how they apply practically to our lives here and now. I encourage you to start each study session with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal truths to you.

Your homework each week will be to study some specific names of God. The study is divided into four sections which are described below:

1. Observe It - In this section, you will be reading specific Scriptures regarding the particular name of God and making observations about what you read. This is not the place for interpreting Scripture or pulling out applications (this will come later!). Instead, you are simply reading and recording what you find. Often, we can miss incredible truths written clearly on the page in our rush to get to the application. So, don't hurry through this part!
2. Experience It - While studying the names of God, you will discover that many of these names were given by men and women of the Bible after they had experienced God in a specific way. When the truth that we know in our head about God collides with our experience of Him, it changes everything! In this section, you will be looking at how the characters in the Bible experienced God as well as the ways that you personally have experienced Him.
3. Express It - This section will focus on specific application for your life. What does this name of God mean for you? How can you apply the truths to your life? And be specific! Don't just give generic "church" answers that sound good on the page but don't actually impact how YOU trust God, obey Him, and interact with others. I am also going to challenge you beyond application of what the name means for you to how you can express it. In Genesis 1:27, we read that God created man in His image. As such, we have been created to reflect His image to the world around us. In fact, in II Corinthians 3:18 we read that *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."* Each name of God reveals a different aspect of His character and glory, and as you study them I encourage you to ask the Lord how you can reflect that in your own life. Obviously we will never perfectly reflect our Savior, but we should be continually moving closer and closer to His likeness.
4. Pray It - This is the final step for each name, and I encourage you not to skip over it! Take time to allow God to direct you and strengthen you and minister to you. Remember that prayer is simply a conversation, it is you talking to God and then giving Him the space and opportunity to speak to you.

Homework - Week 1

My middle child has a very curious mind, which lends itself to lots of questions. When those questions are about God, who He is, and how He works, I sometimes find myself struggling to come up with an answer that will satisfy his curiosity. The truth is that we all have questions about God. The majesty and splendor of who He is lies beyond our comprehension, and we will never this side of heaven understand everything there is to know about God. Yet, I don't think that means we stop seeking and asking that He would reveal more of Himself to us. Because it is that revelation that draws us closer to Him, and it is in that closeness that we reflect His glory to the world around us. So, I hope you will awaken some childlike curiosity in your heart as we begin this study, and come ready to dive into the various names of God and what they mean for you today.

In this study, we are going to focus specifically on names of God found in the Old Testament. Some of them are names that God uses to identify Himself, and others are names that man gives God after a particular encounter with Him. Each name provides a unique glimpse into the character of God, and brings revelation to how He functions and operates.

Look up the following verses and record the benefits that come from knowing God's name.

Psalms 5:11

Psalms 9:10

Proverbs 18:10

Daniel 11:32b

We also find throughout Scripture countless references to calling on the name of God. Read the verses below and indicate the results of calling on God's name.

Lamentations 3:55-57

Zechariah 13:9

Romans 10:13

When we call on the name of God, we are not simply using his official title to reference Him. Instead, we are calling on the very essence of who He is and invoking His character, attributes, power, and presence into our situation. God doesn't need the reminder of who He is, but I venture to say that we do! So, I challenge you to start using these specific names in the weeks ahead, and see if it doesn't strengthen your faith and draw you even closer to God.

Elohim

Strong Creator, Powerful God

Observe It

The first name of God recorded in the Bible is found in the very first verse (Genesis 1:1). Read this verse and record below what it tells you about God. Simply observe and state the facts (who/what/when/why/where/how).

In this verse, God uses the name Elohim which means “Strong Creator God”. This name refers to a God who is eternal and transcendent (not bound to the limitations of this earth). He is a sovereign God who has the ability to create something from nothing.

Experience It

God didn't need anything to create the entire universe in Genesis 1. As Elohim, all He needed was Himself. So, why do we often expect Him to work according to our human logic and reasoning? He doesn't need any raw materials to work in our lives, and there is nothing we can bring Him or provide in our own strength that will get the job done. Are you facing a situation that seems hopeless with no way out? Do you feel like there is nothing left for God to work with? The good news is that you serve a God who is more than able to create something beautiful out of nothing! His name is Elohim.

How have you experienced God as the Strong Creator in your life? Have you seen Him bring something good out of a situation that seemed hopeless? Be specific.

Express It

In Ken Hemphill's book *The Names of God*, he says: *“The understanding that God is Elohim, the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, gives us confidence to face life's difficulties. As we place our trust in Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, we know that He who created us can sustain us. This wonderful truth, when fully comprehended, helps you overcome fear and anxiety in everyday living.”*

What implications does the truth of God as Elohim (strong Creator God) have for your life today? How specifically can you apply it?

Pray It

Spend some time praying about what you learned in your study of Elohim. Ask God to increase your understanding and experience of this part of His character.

Yahweh (Jehovah) *Self-Existing One / Self-Revealing One*

In Isaiah 42:8, God says “*I am Yahweh, that is My name...*”. It is generally agreed by scholars that the proper name of the one true God is Yahweh or Jehovah. The two names are often used interchangeably, since Jehovah is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew name Yahweh (or YWHW). It is the most common name for God found in the Old Testament and is used more than 6,800 times.

Observe It

Have you ever noticed when reading your Bible, that sometimes the word Lord is in all capital letters (LORD) while other times it just has the first letter capitalized (Lord)? There is a reason for this! Whenever you see “LORD,” this stands for Jehovah or Yahweh, while “Lord” refers to “Adonai” (we will study this name next). So, pay attention while reading this week and look for those times you see LORD vs Lord.

The first mention we find of the name Jehovah is in Genesis 2:4. Read this verse and record your observations about the passage (Who/What/When/Where/Why/How).

The name Jehovah comes from the Hebrew verb “to be” which is tied to the idea of life (“to live”). It points to the truth that God is self-existent and that life is found in Him. This means that He is the only thing that exists that wasn’t caused by something else. Nothing existed before Him and nothing will exist after Him. He alone is God!

While we see Jehovah repeated over 100 times in Genesis, it is not until Exodus that God gives a more complete revelation of the name. Read Exodus 3:1-15 and record your observations about who Jehovah is (see verses 13-15).

Throughout Scripture, we see the relational aspect of Jehovah. In Exodus 3, God refers to Himself as “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”, a reminder to the people of the relationship that God had with their forefathers. Read the following verses and observe the common phrase used for Jehovah (LORD).

Exodus 6:7 / Leviticus 18:4 / Joshua 8:7

He is not just the LORD God, but He is the LORD our God! What comfort there is in knowing that He is a personal God that desires relationship with us.

Read Exodus 6:2-8 and record what it tells you about Yahweh.

The name Jehovah is connected to God's covenants and promises that He makes with His people, and represents a covenant making and covenant keeping God. He remembers the promises He has made, and He is faithful to fulfill them!

We also see the name Jehovah used consistently in passages regarding revelation. Time and time again, it is Jehovah who communicates with man and reveals Himself to His creation. Yet another confirmation that our God is not only alive and active, but He longs to communicate and reveal Himself to us!

Read the following verses and record some of the additional attributes given for Jehovah.

Lev. 11:44

Psalm 11:7

Isaiah 43:10-11

Malachi 3:6

Experience It

In Exodus 3, we see God refer to Himself as I AM, and in John 8 we see Jesus also refer to Himself as I AM (see John 8:24, 28, 58). The original word used here is present tense, which signifies continuous activity. It's not just about what He has done in the past and what He promises to do in the future, but we can also be assured that He is active and moving right now in our world and in our lives. Whatever your present need is, He is the "I AM" provision for that need. If we would truly grasp and believe that truth, it would be a game changer!

Have you experienced God actively working in your life recently as I AM? What was the need and how did He meet it? Explain.

How have you experienced Jehovah as your personal God? What does that look like for you?

Express It

What implications does the truth of God as Jehovah have for your life today? How specifically can you apply it? Do you need a new and fresh revelation of Him in your life?

Pray It

Spend some time praying about what you learned in your study of Jehovah. Ask God to increase your understanding and experience of Him as the relational and intimate God who keeps His promises.

Adonai *The Lord and Master*

Translated most often as “Lord” in our Bibles, Adonai is the name of God that refers to Him as our Lord and Master. It occurs more than 400 times in the Bible and identifies God as the owner of creation.

Observe It

The first mention of the name Adonai is in Genesis 15. Read Genesis 15:1-8 and notice the two mentions of Adonai (“Lord”) in verses 2 and 8. Record your observations about the passage (who/what/when/where/why/how).

The New Testament continues the theme of God as our master and us as His servants. Read the passages below and record what they say about this relationship.

Luke 6:46

John 12:26

Galatians 1:10

Experience It

The relationship of master and servant in the Old Testament looked different than what we tend to think when we hear those words today. In Biblical times, a purchased servant belonged to his master and was like a member of the family with rights to the master’s protection, help, and direction. A master not only provided for the servant’s basic needs, but the master also provided all the resources needed for the servant to carry out his duties and assignments.

What has been your experience of God as your Lord and Master? Has He been a loving and faithful Master? Do you find it easy to obey and submit to His Lordship? Explain.

Have you found that God always supplies the resources you need to complete the assignments He has given you? Give one or two examples.

The reference to God as Master and Lord has dual meaning. It acknowledges God’s ownership and possession of His creation (you and me), but it also requires submission from those who call Him Lord. While it can be easy to recognize His Lordship with our lips, it is the call to submit our plans, dreams, and entire lives to Him that so often causes us to pause.

Have you experienced a time when it was hard to submit an area of your life to God? If so, what kept you from submitting? If you finally did submit, what was the result?

Is there a specific area/circumstance in your life that you need to surrender to Adonai, your Master? Explain.

Express It

What are one or two personal applications you can make in your life based on the Scriptures you have read about Adonai? How is the Holy Spirit asking you to respond? Be specific.

Pray It

Spend some time praying about what you learned in your study of Adonai. Ask God to increase your understanding and experience of Him as Lord and Master, and pray that you would be a servant quick to submit and obey your Master's commands.