

The Strength in His Names

God's names reveal His nature and point us to our inheritance.

Did you know that God has many names? As a matter of fact, He has hundreds. And they are all representative of His awesome character.

1. El-Shaddai: The God Who is Sufficient for the Needs of His People.
2. Jehovah-Shalom: The God of Peace.
3. Jehovah-Rapha: The God Who Heals.
4. Jehovah-M'Kaddesh: The God Who Sanctifies.
5. Jehovah-Jireh: The God Who Provides.

In just these five names, extraordinary characteristics are revealed. For the believer, great power can be gained by knowing, studying and even verbalizing the names of God. Meditating on them can open the door to peace, comfort, provision and healing.

As the children of God, His names are our heritage, our authority and our hope. They are our very life essence—a part of God's glory we need desperately. His names, and the fullness that comes with them, must be seared into our very being.

If Christians truly believed in God's names, and the acts and glory that accompany them, the church would quickly be revitalized. Healings would occur in massive numbers. Prophetic voices would spring up loudly and boldly. God's names are that powerful!

What's in a Name? One day, one of Jesus' disciples made a request, "'Lord, teach us to pray'" (Luke 11:1, NKJV). Jesus did, in a passage that has become one of the most recited in Scripture—the Lord's Prayer (see Matt. 6:9-13).

The first line of the Lord's Prayer serves not only as the

groundwork for the entire passage but is also the very foundation of His blessing in our lives. Jesus began by saying, “‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name’” (emphasis added).

He was teaching us that we need to pause and revere God’s names in our hearts. We need to meditate on the holiness and purity of His names. We need to treat them with such honor that they become embedded in our lifestyles. Jesus knew that if we hallowed God’s names in this way, people would see the Spirit of the living God resting upon our lives.

It is truly remarkable that the eternally self-sustaining Creator would desire to become part of the very world He made. He took on names so that He could be known and loved by His creation.

Many of us today do not place much significance in a name. Millions of children are named every year, with little consideration given to the historic and spiritual meaning of their names. We’ve read Proverbs all our lives, but we don’t give a second thought to nuggets of wisdom such as, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches” (Prov. 22:1).

Yet that simple proverb gives us a valuable glimpse into what Solomon and the ancient Israelites thought about the worth of a name. In the Bible, a name often provided an important clue to the nature of a person or place. The ancient Hebrew understanding of a person’s name was linked to the concept of character.

Quite simply, one’s name was one’s reputation. During Old Testament times, to honor a name, to hallow it, was equivalent to showing respect for the person and all that he or she represented.

In addition, the name of a child was often descriptive of that child. Children were named with the hope that they would aspire to the significance of what their names meant.

Jesus carried on this tradition when He renamed His friend Simon (see Matt. 16:17–18). He took the name Peter from petros, the Greek word for “rock,” and gave it to His friend as a prophetic word of Simon’s call and future in the kingdom of God.

This wasn’t the first time God had changed the name of one of His friends. He changed Abram’s name to Abraham in Genesis 17:5 and Jacob’s name to Israel in Genesis 32:28. God views a name as an exact replication of that person’s character, either what it is now or what it will be in the future.

Our Divine Birthright In the Israelite context, one could confer one’s own name upon another person, place or thing. When this was done, the latter came under the person’s influence and protection. Consequently, in God’s making known His names, He was giving humankind the opportunity to receive the protection, blessing and covering that His names provide.

What is the significance of all this? Two things: It is an invitation for relationship, and it is an invitation to ask for protection and blessing.

By speaking God’s names, the Israelites understood that awesome and awful power would be released against God’s enemies, that miracles would occur, and that He would appear with His terrifying, glorious presence. God’s names were like no others—names deserving the utmost honor, reverence and respect. His names, above all others, deserved to be hallowed.

Although He wants us to treat Him with a holy fear, God doesn’t want us to be afraid of His name. In fact, He wants us to desperately call out His names so that they can become a shield of protection and an open storehouse of blessing for us.

God wants to give us His names. He calls us His children, and all children bear the names of their parents. To be called His child is a sign of great endearment and love.

God yearns to put His names on us, but He will do so only with those who have learned rightly to hallow and revere them.

Inseparable and Unchanging God's names, acts and glory are all inseparable. His names describe who He is throughout the ages. They describe what He has done and will do in the future. For example, God, who was once Jehovah-Rapha is not now ex-Jehovah-Rapha. He is still Jehovah-Rapha, the God Who Heals.

God didn't lose His power to heal when the last apostle died. He didn't lose His power to heal when the Bible was canonized. He was, He is, and He will be continually Jehovah-Rapha. Every fiber of His being is healing.

Likewise, every fiber of God's being is prophecy. Every fiber of His being is peace. Every fiber of His being is love. Every fiber of His being is light. Every fiber of His being is justice.

Every fiber of His being is graciousness. Every fiber of His being is contained in the fullest expression of every aspect of His name. Thus, God's acts and His names are inseparable.

Furthermore, the acts of God—healing, deliverance, peace, provision, love—are manifestations of His glory. But in a literal sense, they are also His glory. His name, His acts and His glory are inseparable.

Why is this important? When we pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name," we are not simply hallowing a singular name for God. In this passage, the Greek word for "name" is plural. It means the composite combination of every possible name of God. Therefore, to hallow God's name means that we don't separate His name from His acts or His glory.

God is not the God who used to do what His names depict. No! He is the God who still does all that His names encompass.

When we have difficulty embracing God's names, we have failed

to believe and respond to all of God. We're preventing ourselves from experiencing the fullness of who He really is and the miraculous, life-changing power of His glory.

The definition of "hallow" is to revere, respect, value, cherish and honor. When Jesus taught us to pray by saying, "'Hallowed be Your name,'" He was implying that we need to recognize the full attributes of God. If we call Him the God of healing but don't believe He actually heals today, we devalue God—the complete opposite of hallowing His name.

We strip Him of His glory by saying that His attributes no longer exist today. For example, some say that God no longer reveals the future. So they take this aspect of His name and place it to the side.

Every Christian, at some point in his or her life, has deleted or distorted pieces of God's incredible glory, casting them aside like an old, worn-out cloak. And the church is weaker for it. To fully know God, we must know His names, His character and His attributes.

Know His Names If we want to walk in the blessings of God's names, we must learn to walk in the authority that His names give us—authority that must be laid hold of or it will be lost. Calling upon the name of the Lord involves taking our knowledge of who He is and applying it to our lives.

Those who bear the names of God become proactive in their language and with the gaze of their eyes. They become intentional with what they allow out of their mouths and where they allow their eyes to look.

As we gain a greater knowledge of who God is, then we must apply this knowledge by relying on His truth in the face of trials. We carry those names into every situation, risking everything because of His great promises and character. His names become so indelibly stamped on us that we become more like Him in every word and deed.

This is the requirement: to cherish and desire His names more than anything or anyone else. Once we are convinced of the power and anointing contained in His names, we must then begin to act upon those things.

The first step is simple—we must learn and meditate on His names. Ponder them. Love them. Absorb them. Incorporate them into our lives. Worship God for them.

God wants to give us the power of His names. He is calling us to be a people marked by His names, to become willing vessels who have removed unconsecrated things from our lives and unholy affections from our hearts. More than anything else, God wants us to be His—all His, and this will begin to happen only as we learn about and meditate on His magnificent and wondrous names.

Read a companion devotional.

John Paul Jackson is the founder of Streams Ministries International.