

The Holy Name of God (II)

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“[I]f My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”
(2 Chronicles 7:14)

Knowledge of God's Will [God's Word]	Knowledge of God [God's Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
God's name holds many meanings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God knows us by name.2. God heals our hearts, and He is our banner.3. God is faithful, and He sanctifies those who seek Him.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn to take delight in and live out God's character.2. Rely on God's faithfulness by calling out to Him.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Importance of Studying God's Character
- B. The Meanings of God's Names

Life Application

1. Delight in the Ways of the Lord
2. Living Out God's Character
3. Calling Out to God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: The more deeply we understand God's nature and character, the better we can reveal God's character to others.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Last week, we discussed the importance of names. Do you know what your name means? Would you like to share the story of how you received your name? Does your name say anything about your parents' hopes for you? *[Invite students to share.]* Even if your name didn't initially have any deep meaning, over time, our names become a vital part of ourselves in different ways.

1. Our names are a mark of our identity.

For example, when we apply for an identification card, such as a student ID or driver's license, we are identified by our name. We may even pick up nicknames or other names which we associate with different aspects of our personal identity.

2. People associate our name with their memories and experiences of us.

This is how we distinguish different people with the same names. For example, if your name is George, when your friends think of you, "George," they likely aren't thinking of "George Washington," the first president of the United States. On the other hand, if people are thinking about "George Washington," they won't be thinking of you. They're probably thinking of "America," "president," or perhaps "money," since George Washington is on the United States one-dollar bill. We associate people with certain experiences and identify them accordingly, even when they share the same name as another person.

This association can be both a positive and a negative thing. There is an English proverb that goes, "first impressions are the most lasting." Whether consciously or unconsciously, people tend to judge others based on their very first meeting. This often occurs when someone first "meets" with God for the first time. People sometimes have a negative impression of God and shun Him, not because God ever treated them badly, but because their initial experience with finding God, or with those associated with God, left a poor impression on them.

Others, however, have come to know and love God deeply, to the point where they would lay down their lives for Him. Many early Christians died as martyrs under persecution for the Lord. They were willing to do so because they truly came to know God. The memories and experiences that they associated with God's name touched them deeply and drew out their deepest love for Him from within their hearts.

A. The Importance of Studying God's Character

We quickly forget the names of strangers and passing acquaintances. Even if someone reminds you of their name, it is likely that you barely remember much else about them. But what if someone were to mention the name of someone close to you, such as a family member or a friend? In this case, it is easy to recall not just their name but also their characteristics, such as their hobbies, quirks, or a recent memory that we have with them. But can we also claim the same of God?

As Christians, we have named God our heavenly Father, and He has named us His sons and daughters. But simply declaring Him our Father is not enough. Let's examine two reasons it is important for us to study God's character.

1. God knows us by name

Moses and God had an incredibly special relationship. The Bible records that Moses spoke to

God face to face, just as a man speaks with his friend (Ex 33:11). As a sign of how close they were, God declared to Moses, "I know you by name" (Ex 33:17). Can you imagine having such a close relationship with God?

The Bible teaches us that God knows us "by name," too (Jn 10:3). He knows all about us, from our individual quirks to every moment of our future (Ps 139:16). He can even number the hairs on our head (Mt 10:30; Lk 12:7) and knows the innermost thoughts of our hearts (Ps 19:12). This is because God truly knows us by name. He knows who we are even when we fail to understand Him.

Although God knows us "by name," the Bible also says that His sheep follow Him, "for they know his voice" (Jn 10:4). God wants us to know Him as much as He knows us. He wants us to have a good relationship with Him. And just as with our friends and family, we develop a relationship with Him by learning His character, His heart, and His love for us. Do we know God's voice? Can we claim to know God by name?

2. Reflect the glory of His name

Last week, we learned two names of God: *YHWH*, and *El Elyon*. These names, "I AM WHO I AM" and "God Most High," are a sign of God's almighty nature. There is none mightier or more sovereign than our God. Just as a king's glory is revealed by his subjects, God's glory is revealed through His people. Paul wrote, "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 by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18).

We need to mirror the glory of God's name in our daily lives. When we do so, we prove to ourselves, to God, and to those around us, that He rules over us and that we are subjects of His everlasting kingdom. "His name shall be on [our] foreheads" (Rev 22:4). But it is impossible to mirror a name that we do not know. Therefore, we must first study God's character.

B. The Meanings of God's Names

Earlier, we mentioned how names are a part of our identity. The same is true of God. His many names reveal different aspects of His identity, or who He truly is. By studying these names, we can better understand God's character. Today, we are going to continue studying the names of God.

1. *YHWH Rapha*: The Lord Who Heals (Ex 15:23–26)

When the Israelites arrived at Marah, they found the water to be bitter and undrinkable. As a result, they once again complained against God and Moses. Moses pleaded with God, and God showed him a tree. When he threw the tree in the water, the waters were made sweet. The Lord then declared to the Israelites that He is *YHWH Rapha*, the LORD who heals.

God heals us in many ways. In a place and time where we have easy access to medical care, we tend to rely on science and technology for our sicknesses and illnesses. This isn't necessarily wrong, but we should not forget that we need to rely on God, too. Whatever physical ailments we experience, whether an everyday cold, an injury, or severe illness, we must remember that our God is the Lord who heals. (*Ask students to share any experiences of when God healed them or their families.*)

In his description of the Messiah, Isaiah wrote, "And by His stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:5). The

healing that Jesus has offered to us is far more valuable than any physical healing. He has offered us life after death. Dissatisfaction, frustration, and hatred often cause bitterness in a person's heart. But when we receive Christ into our hearts, this bitterness transforms into a wellspring of life like the waters of Marah. He will give us a life of fulfillment and happiness, because when we seek out Christ, He becomes our treasure (Mt 6:19–21). Our hearts become filled with joy in His truth and with hope in eternal life.

2. *YHWH Nissi: The Lord Is My Banner* (Ex 17:8–16)

During a battle with the Amalekites, when Moses lifted his hands, Israel prevailed, but when he let down his hands, the Amalekites prevailed. So, Aaron and Hur supported his hands, and the Israelites defeated the Amalekites. Moses then built an altar and called its name *YHWH Nissi*, "The-LORD-IS-My-Banner."

In the past, the banner was an important and necessary presence in a battle. A banner not only told the armies which way to go and where to rally, but the sight of a banner being raised in the midst of a fight would also inspire hope, confidence, and inspiration. Today, Ephesians 6:12 clearly states that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly realm. We are constantly fighting for our faith in our hearts.

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we will encounter numerous battles in our journey to the heavenly kingdom, and a single failure in the testing of our faith can lead to serious consequences. It is easy for us to lose the fight against sin and fall away from the right path. But we are not fighting this spiritual battle alone. The Lord is the banner under which we fight for. He is our hope and confidence, and the one who gives us direction and inspiration in our struggles. He will never forsake us when we call upon Him, and He will give us the power and strength to overcome Satan. He is our hope for victory in our journey of faith.

3. *El Emunah: God of Faithfulness* (Deut 7:9; Deut 32:4)

We learned last week that our God is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer 33:16). In alignment with this characteristic is His faithfulness. While relaying His commands to the Israelites, teaching them the covenant that His people must uphold, the Lord called Himself, "the faithful God." Moses later uses the same root word to describe God: *El emunah*, or "God of truth."

The Lord has promised His faithfulness, and we know we can rely on this, because His faithfulness is backed by His omnipotence. And as a righteous and holy God, He cannot lie. He has promised His protection, His strength, and eternal life. And we will receive it, as long as we in turn are faithful to Him. But because we are bound by the flesh and all of its desires, maintaining our faith in God is a constant struggle for us. It is always easier to submit to sin.

God wants us to be as faithful to Him as He is to us, no matter how impossible it may seem. By identifying ourselves as God's children, we declare our loyalty to Christ. But are our hearts truly God's? Or do we secretly idolize the things of the world, and worship greed, lust, or other worldly pleasures? No matter what we do for the church, if our hearts are not with God, then we are no longer His children. To be faithful, we must continue with the principles that we have promised to uphold. We must be faithful to God's commands. Then, in the end, God will judge those who are truly His servants, and those who are not. "For God is not unjust to forget your

work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name” (Heb 6:10).

4. YHWH Mekoddishkem: The Lord Who Sanctifies (Ex 31:13; Lev 20:8)

While conveying His commands to the Israelites, God declared, “I am the LORD who sanctifies you” (Ex 31:13). Hundreds of years later, Paul wrote: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3). God wants us to be holy. But He also knows that it is impossible for us to achieve on our own. We who are born into sin can never achieve the holiness required for eternal life. So, He has given to us the path to holiness in His word: the Bible. As Jesus said, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (Jn 17:17).

The reason God wants us to be holy is because He is holy. We are His children, and He loves us dearly. But if we are not sanctified, we will never be able to dwell with Him in His heavenly kingdom (Heb 12:14). As such, the truth of the Bible is for our sake. As long as we follow it, the Lord will make us “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). The foundation for our sanctification lies in our separation from the world, no longer dwelling in darkness, but in the light that is our hope of eternal life.

It is not an easy thing to remain separate from the world. John wrote, “For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 Jn 2:16). These do not always take an obvious shape in our lives, but they are always present in some form. What are some examples in our daily lives? (*Let students answer. Examples: Idolizing celebrities, desires for specific possessions, obsessing over our looks, lying to avoid responsibilities or to avoid embarrassment.*) It is always human nature to “fit in,” to follow the ways of the world so that we aren’t excluded or shunned. But God wants His children to do exactly the opposite. He wants us to be sanctified.

Check for Understanding

- 1. Why is it so important that we study God’s character?** God knows us by name and wants us to know Him as much as He knows us. Just as a king’s glory is revealed by his subjects, we need to mirror the glory of God’s name in our daily lives. However, it is impossible to mirror a name that we do not know.
- 2. What different meanings of God’s name did we learn today? Briefly explain each.**
 - a. *The Lord Who Heals:* God is able to heal us both physically and spiritually. He heals the bitterness in our hearts and gives us a life of fulfillment and happiness when we seek out Christ.
 - b. *The Lord Is My Banner:* The Lord is the banner under which we fight for. He is our hope and confidence, and the one who gives us direction and inspiration in our struggles.
 - c. *God of Faithfulness:* As a righteous and holy God, He cannot lie. We know that we can rely on His faithfulness, because His faithfulness is backed by His omnipotence.
 - d. *The Lord Who Sanctifies:* God wants us to be holy because He is holy. It is always human nature to “fit in,” to follow the ways of the world so that we aren’t excluded or shunned. But God wants His children to be sanctified.

Life Application

1. Delight in the Ways of the Lord

When we learn the meanings of His names and the roles He has promised to undertake for us, we begin to take delight in God. As a result, our relationship with Him deepens, and we start to feel joy in learning

about Him, serving Him, and relying on Him. But how do we take delight in His character? Let's first turn to Psalm 119:9–16. What are the steps that the psalmist takes to finally delighting in God's word? (*Steps: Cleanse, sought, hidden, declared, rejoiced, and meditate.*) Have you noticed that all of these steps require active participation on our part?

a. Seek Him out

God is Spirit and not easily found, which may make our relationship with Him frustrating and unsatisfying, even for those with the Holy Spirit. God often hides Himself from us, sometimes because of our iniquities (Isa 59:2), because He is testing us (2 Chr 32:31), or because He is trying to strengthen us (2 Cor 12:7–9). But He also said that “you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer 29:13). We cannot simply sit back and wait for God to come to us. We need to put in the time, dedication, and effort into cleansing ourselves and seeking Him out. Then, we will take delight in God's character, and “will not forget [His] word” (Ps 119:16).

b. Remove the idols from our hearts

Let's turn to 2 Chronicles 17:3–6. Jehoshaphat was the first king to walk in the ways of the Lord after David. Like the psalm we read earlier, he “sought the God of his father,” “walked in His commandments,” and “took delight in the ways of the LORD.” Most importantly, he “removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.” To take delight in God's character means to actively remove the idols from our hearts and turn our full attention to God. What are some ways we forget His character and fail to prioritize God in our daily lives? Try completing the following prayers in your notebooks, as a way to remind yourselves of God's character.

- “Dear God, You are the creator of the universe. Today I want to praise You for...”
- “Dear God, today, I want to depend on You because...”
- “Dear God, I love You because You are...”

2. Living Out God's Character

We learned today that our God is the Lord who heals the sin of our heart. He is faithful to His promises, and He will grant us eternal life by sanctifying us. But we have to hold Him as the banner in our hearts and remain faithful in return. To do so, we need to live out His character in our lives.

Our looks, behavior, and habits are affected by the environment we grow up in. Everything from our home, family, friends, and school affect and influence our character. In the same way, we need to pick up the spiritual habits of one who is God's family. We need to reflect His glory in our lives as evidence that we belong to His household. So, what spiritual habits of God's do we need to reflect? What characteristics will show others that we are from His household?

The answer is in the names that we learned earlier, but especially in the fourth one from today's lesson, “the LORD who sanctifies.” Let's turn to Isaiah 43:1. “But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; You *are* Mine.’ ” We need to depart from evil (2 Tim 2:19) because God has called us by name, the same way He called Moses. If we practice evil and live a sinful lifestyle, we destroy our own dignity and cannot glorify God (Prov 16:17; 19:16).

3. Calling Out to God

Let's read Psalm 116:1–4:

I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live. The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!"

There are many examples of people who "call on the name of God" in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for "call" means to ask for His help, and it is usually associated with a special, critical need. What happens when we call on the Lord?

The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

(Ps 116:6–9)

The Lord will answer when we call on Him because He is the Lord of faithfulness. It doesn't matter how big or small the problem is. When we trust in Him and call on His name, He will preserve us with His great power, and we will "walk before the LORD in the land of the living." So, when and how do we call on the name of God?

- a. When in distress, call on the name of God. For example, when you are anxious, call on God and tell Him you need the peace of God.
- b. Turn your heart and mind to the name of God. Tell Him how you feel and what you need: "Dear God, You are the God of peace..."
- c. Spend time in prayer, and let the Holy Spirit fully fill you so that you can experience God.
- d. The result will be strength, peace, rest, joy, and more. He will provide for our needs.

The God we serve is infinitely greater than our troubles, sorrows, and circumstances. He can and will handle them as long as we yield and surrender to Him. That is the great power of calling on the name of God. "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Ps 145:18).

Memory Verse

"[I]f My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Meaning

God has made a clear direction for those who have been called by and to His name. As His children, we must humble ourselves through repentance, seek His face, and turn away from evil. When we do these three things, God has promised three things: He will always hear our calls, forgive our sins, and heal us. By calling on His holy name with faith, God has promised to be faithful to us. He will sanctify us so that we become His high priests, separate from the world, and His holy nation, a reflection of His glory on earth.

Conclusion

God has many characteristics beyond our understanding, but we know that the Lord is faithful to us and has promised to sanctify those who seek Him out. We may be weak, but He will offer us healing and serve as our banner on our journey of faith. As long as we continuously seek Him and learn to delight in

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His character, the Lord will always answer us when we call on Him, because we are His precious children, and He knows each of us by name.

Lesson 8 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What three things must we do in exchange for God's hearing, forgiveness, and healing?
Humble ourselves, seek His face, and turn away from evil.
2. What are the two reasons it is important for us to study God's character?
God knows us by name. Like Moses, we also need to develop a close relationship with Him. We also need to reflect the glory of His name as His people, just as a king's glory is revealed by his subjects.
3. Pick two of God's names and explain them in as much detail as you can.
 - a. *The Lord Who Heals (Ex 15:23–26): God heals the bitterness in our hearts, transforming it into a wellspring of life like the waters of Marah (Isa 53:5).*
 - b. *The Lord Is My Banner (Ex 17:8–16): The Lord is our banner, our hope and confidence, and the one who gives us direction and inspiration. He is our hope for victory in our journey of faith.*
 - c. *God of Faithfulness (Deut 7:9; Deut 32:4): God wants us to be as faithful to Him as He is to us. To do so, we must continue with the principles that we have promised to uphold (Heb 6:10).*
 - d. *The Lord Who Sanctifies (Ex 31:13; Lev 20:8): God loves us dearly, but if we are not sanctified, we will never dwell with Him. So, He has sanctified us by His truth (Jn 17:17), and to remain sanctified, we must remain separate from the world as God's children (1 Jn 2:16).*
4. "I will _____ on Your _____, and _____ Your ways. I will _____ myself in Your statutes; I will not _____ Your _____. (Psalm 119:15–16)
meditate, precepts, contemplate, delight, forget, word
5. Have you ever prioritized other things over God? How can you change this in the future?