

What's in a Name?

From little hamlets to large homes throughout the world, people ask the same questions, “Does God know me?” “Does God love me?” “Can God ever forgive me?” Underneath these questions lies an even more basic issue. What is God really like . . . who is He?

Do you know what your name means literally? Does it convey something about you? In biblical times the Hebrew name of a person often conveyed a significant message. A name may represent something specific, such as a physical characteristic or an incident at birth or anticipated future accomplishments. In the Bible, much is revealed about God through His various names. However, unless you are reading from the actual Hebrew text, some of God's attributes as revealed in His names are unfortunately buried in the translation. That is why it is valuable to unearth these hidden treasures.

El Elyon

“God Most High” (Genesis 14:18-20)

El Roi

“The God Who Sees” (Genesis 16:13)

El Shaddai

“God Almighty”¹ (Genesis 17:1)

El Olam

“God Everlasting” (Genesis 21:33)

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.”
(Proverbs 18:10)

Q: “I often feel that God is distant. How do I overcome my feelings of anger toward Him?”

When you do not have a sense of God's presence, He is present nonetheless. In those times you will need to walk by faith and choose to know that He is there because God's Word says that He is there. You will need to literally override or ignore your feelings. God is God, and your feelings are simply your feelings. Remind yourself of His character traits and praise Him for them. In this way you will be acknowledging His presence and His promise to never leave you. Plan a time to walk and talk with Him, praising Him for who He is and for all He has done for you. Thank Him for the promise of His presence in your life.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

Q: “Aren't Christians arrogant in believing that Jesus is the only way to God? Isn't that being narrow-minded?”

Truth is narrow. Jesus, who is God, claimed that He is the only way to God. Christians merely repeat the truth that Jesus proclaimed about Himself. We may not like to hear the truth, but it is true just the same.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”
(John 14:6)

Natural Attributes That Characterize Him Inwardly²

- **Omniscient**
All-knowing (Psalm 139:1–4)
- **Omnipotent**
All-powerful (Jeremiah 32:27)
- **Omnipresent**
Present everywhere (Jeremiah 23:23–24)
- **Eternal**
Not bound by time (Deuteronomy 32:40)
- **Immutable**
Unchanging (Malachi 3:6)
- **Incomprehensible**
Unfathomable and mysterious (Romans 11:33)
- **Self-existent**
Life in Himself (John 5:26)
- **Self-sufficient**
God’s ability within Himself to act (Romans 11:36)
- **Infinite**
Boundless (Psalm 139:7–12)
- **Transcendent**
Above all (Isaiah 55:9)
- **Sovereign**
Supreme ruler (Daniel 4:35)

“Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”
(Hebrews 11:6)

Key Verse to Memorize

“Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.”
(Deuteronomy 4:39)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

John chapter 14

Moral Attributes That Relate to His Creation Outwardly³

- **Holy**
Pure, set apart from sin (1 Peter 1:15)
- **Righteous**
Absolute good (Psalm 119:137)
- **Just**
Fair (Psalm 89:14)
- **Merciful**
Compassionate (Psalm 116:5)
- **Long-suffering**
Patient (2 Peter 3:9)
- **Wise**
Perfect in choices (Psalm 104:24)
- **Good**
Pure in motive (Romans 2:4)
- **Wrathful**
Hatred for sin (Romans 1:18)
- **Truthful**
Pure in word (Titus 1:2)
- **Faithful**
True to promises (2 Timothy 2:13)
- **Jealous**
Unwilling to share what is rightfully His (Exodus 34:14)
- **Loving**
Seeking another’s best, doing the most positive, selfless, and redemptive thing possible for another (John 3:16)

“I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”
(Jeremiah 9:24)

Three Eternal and Coequal Persons

Father

- Selector (Ephesians 1:4)
- Sovereign Architect (Daniel 4:17)
- Causer (John 6:44)
- Initiator (John 3:16)
- Healer/Rapha (Jeremiah 17:14)

Son

- Savior (Luke 2:11)
- Servant (Philippians 2:7)
- Creator (Colossians 1:16)
- Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25)
- Redeemer (Ephesians 1:7)

Holy Spirit

- Sealer (Ephesians 1:13)
- Sanctifier (1 Peter 1:2)
- Counselor (John 14:26)
- Instructor (John 16:13)
- Regenerator (John 3:6)

Prayer . . . Thank You God, That You—

- C**are for me with compassion (Psalm 111:4)
- O**ffer strength when I am weak (Philippians 4:13)
- M**eet all my needs (Philippians 4:19)
- F**orget my sins and mistakes (Hebrews 8:12)
- O**ffer hope for the future (Jeremiah 29:11)
- R**eassure me of Your love (Jeremiah 31:3)
- T**urn my pain into joy (Psalm 30:5)

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1. Nathan Stone, *Names of God in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1944), 30–42.
2. For this section see A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God: Their Meaning in the Christian Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 14–64, 71–83, 115–20; R. C. Sproul, *The Character of God: Discovering the God Who Is* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine, 1995), 21–68, 83–100, 119–34; J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 75–81.
3. For this section see Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 65–70, 84–114; Sproul, *The Character of God*, 101–18, 135–60; Packer, *Knowing God*, 109–75.



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P.O. Box 7, Dallas, TX 75221

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