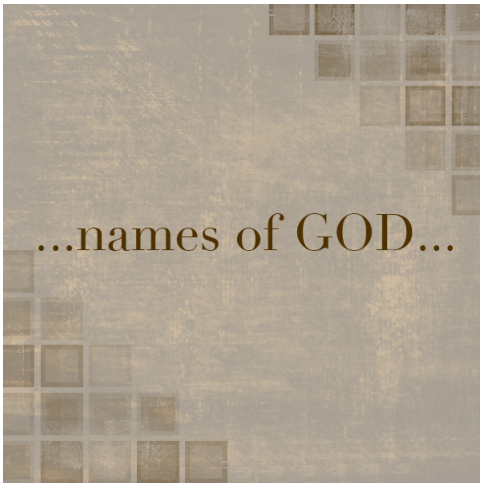




## Names of God – Introduction

Bob and I were at a community meeting the other day and I noticed that one couple was following him around from group to group. I wondered why this was the case until I heard Bob introduce them to another individual. As soon as I heard their names, their actions made sense. I had heard Bob talk about these people many times but had never met them myself. When I realized who they were, I understood the context of their relationship with him and remembered things he had said about their personalities and characteristics.



It is interesting to think about the power of a name; names define us, and carry strong associations. If you've gone through the process of naming a child, you'll know what I mean. As Bob and I discussed various options for our three children we were surprised by how much we were repulsed by or drawn to names that reminded of us of people we had known. Some names were immediately crossed off the list because of their negative

connotations; others were instantly considered because they represented a person with character traits that we admired and appreciated.

In Biblical times, people were purposefully named and sometimes renamed to reflect their situation or character. Abram meant “exalted father” but in Genesis 17, God changed his name to Abraham (“father of many”) to reflect the promise that He would make Abraham into a mighty nation. At the same time God renamed Abraham's wife Sarai (which means “princess”), to Sarah, “mother of nations”. Their son was named Isaac which means “laughter” because Sarah had laughed at the possibility that God would allow her conceive a son in her old age. The apostle Paul was known as both Saul (his Hebrew name) & Paul (his Greek name). As he launched into full time ministry to the Gentiles in Acts 13, he became known exclusively as Paul – perhaps to reflect the fact that his life was devoted to reaching people in the surrounding nations.

Names were important to His people, and they were equally important to God Himself. As God builds a relationship with the nation of Israel, He introduces Himself to them by name. In different stages of their journey and their understanding of who He is, God reveals one of His names and these names give them insight into His character and nature. They tell His people how He will relate to them, how He will lead them, what He will demand from them and what He will expect. If we want to know our God more intimately and trust Him more fully, we need to know these names. We need to understand how He defines Himself or we may be led astray by our own ideas of who He is.

With all this in mind, my plan for the next few weeks of devotionals is to introduce and explore some of God's names together. I trust that this exercise will be full of blessing, encouragement and challenge and will impact our worship and our obedience.

*“the name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and is safe.” Proverbs 18:10*

*“trust in the name of the **LORD** and rely on [your] God” Isaiah 50:10*

*“Some boast in chariots, and some in horses; but we will boast in the name of the **LORD our God**”  
Psalms 20:7*

*We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler’s snare; the snare has been broken, and we have  
escaped. **Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.** Psalms 124:7-8*

If you want to join me in reflecting on the value of His name this week, visit [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), and type “name of the Lord” into the search bar. Read through the verses that come up and list all the benefits of knowing His name. If you want to study this topic in greater detail, consider purchasing LORD, I want to Know You – a 42 day devotional on the names of God written by Kay Arthur.

*Blessings on you as you seek to know Him better,*

*Kristal Toews  
Director of Women's Ministry*