

NO OTHER NAME

A SERIES ON THE NAMES OF GOD

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Written and contributed by Generation Congregation, the youth group of Taytay First Church of the Nazarene.

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SDMI Philippines-Micronesia Field

Lesson 1

DO YOU KNOW ELOHIM?

“For since the creation of the world God’s (Elohim) invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

– Romans 1:20

WELCOME

Ask each of the members to recite the Bible verse they have memorized during the week.

WORSHIP

We have a big God who works in our lives uniquely. Ask the group who is God to them personally (e.g. *Father, Savior, Redeemer*). Let them share their experience how they come up with their answers. Then lead the group in prayer.

WORD

HOOK: Is there a product or artwork that have once caught your attention, which also made you ask who made them (e.g. *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh, *Apple* products by Steve Jobs)?

When we see the beautiful sky at night or when we are at a mountain top, do we get amazed by God's awesome power? The Creator of heaven and earth continues to speak to us through His creation. He displays this marvelous sunrise every morning to remind us of His mercy. He shows us His faithfulness through the changing of seasons. No word is enough on its own to describe this awesome God. He is known by many names. Today, we will get to know God as *Elohim*.

1. God Introduces Himself as Elohim

“In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of Elohim was hovering over the waters. And Elohim said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. Elohim saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. Elohim called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night’” (Genesis 1:1-5)

Elohim is the first name God revealed in the Bible. This must be important because God is referred to as *Elohim* more than 2,500 times in the Bible. The name *Elohim* emphasizes God's power and might. *Elohim* is the infinite, all-powerful God who shows by His works that He is the creator, sustainer, and supreme judge of the world. *Elohim* reveals Himself as the “Strong One” who created the world. He thus rules over all creation and everything is subject to Him.

As one of His creations, we should take confidence that we are in good hands. We have a strong God who meticulously puts everything into place. Our God is great and mighty! His power is on display every day and night in the universe He has made.

2. God Invites Us to Experience Elohim

“For since the creation of the world God’s (Elohim) invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20)

God is our Creator and Father. To know that we have a strong and awesome God is not enough. We should respond to His invitation to experience him. How should we respond to Elohim?

a. Be in Awe

The prophet Jeremiah wrote: *“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17)*. God is saying look *“I’m not created. I am the Creator!”* When we look up at the stars, we don’t just get amazed by creation; we look up to the Creator! Therefore, we must appreciate His greatness and give Him the due credit.

b. Be in Reverence

God said to the Israelites: *“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone*

guiltless who misuses his name” (Exodus 20:7). Once we recognize *Elohim*, our response becomes respect. Knowing our great God and experiencing His awesomeness day by day leads us to worship. And respect means becoming mindful of the things that displeases Him and trying our best not to grieve Him.

c. Get in a Relationship with Him

James 2:19 says, “*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*” The apostle clearly declared that even the demons know and believe God. So we should not just settle on being a “believer.” Let us become true followers and be in a serious relationship with Him. Only when our knowledge of *Elohim* becomes personal that we move towards what the Bible calls saving faith.

Life with God may be hard but life without Him is impossible! If we think our life is falling apart, we should remember that we have a strong God who is able. He can turn our mess into a message and He’s the only one who can restore and recreate us! God has been holding the universe together since the beginning (Colossians 1:16-17). He’s not letting go of us as well. Trust in Him.

LOOK: What are the things or situations that still cause you to doubt God’s power? Are there things in your life that seem hopeless?

TOOK: How do you plan to experience more of our Strong God? What specific actions are you going to do?

WORKS

We all have something that we've been praying for that remains unanswered until today. This circumstance might have caused us to doubt God's power one way or another. Lift them all up to God in prayer as a group.

(This lesson is based on Rev. Jordan Escusa's sermon at Generation Congregation service on 5 August 2018).

Lesson 2

HE IS ADONAI

*“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.”*

– Psalm 24:12

WELCOME

Ask the members of the group: “What does it mean to have Jesus as our Lord?”

WORSHIP

Read together Psalm 8 below then lead the group in prayer.

¹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.

² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your
enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:
⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.
⁹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

WORD

HOOK: Think of a situation wherein you disobeyed authority.
What caused you to act as such?

For different reasons, we all have defied authority one way or another. But no matter how much we justify our action, disobedience is still disobedience. And today, we will talk about the highest authority that we must not defy. For the second installment of our Awesome God series, we will know God as *Adonai*.

1. Exclusive Owner of All Things

*“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world,
and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1)*

Adonai primarily speaks of ownership and mastery. The Hebrew *Adonai* is translated as *Kyrios* in Greek, which means “lord.” The word, therefore, describes God as the Divine owner of all that exists. We are God’s property. In relation to the Lord, we are subjects who need to learn to obey and submit to His will.

However, as we mature and become independent, we’ve developed an attitude of “This is my life!” as an excuse to do whatever we want. But acknowledging that everything in this world is the Lord’s – especially our very lives, calls us to let go of our control and surrender everything to Him. Every breath we take is a miracle and we owe it all to Him.

Most of us can relate how hard it is to submit to the authorities God has given us. We always want to take control; to be the one in authority. That is why, we must first learn to submit to our Sovereign Lord by humbly accepting that everything we have are His. Once we have worked on our submission to the Lord, everything else follows.

2. Our Generous Provider

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

*“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield,
your very great reward.”*

*But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord (*Adonai*), what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own*

flesh and blood will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be” (Genesis 15:1-5).

Abraham was the first to refer to God as Adonai. This was when he asked God to give him a son even in his old age. This indicates that the Lord has the power to do the impossible. He can provide what we ask for, and to do it abundantly! Our Adonai is a generous God who blessed His children. The psalmist wrote, *“He bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless” (Psalm 84:11).*

Adonai rules over His creation with fairness. He is not a tyrant master who takes advantage of His servants. We should not fear what might happen to us when we give our total submission to Him. The Lord searches the hearts of His servants and sees the truth within. We cannot fake our submission to Him. He does not need our lip service and empty sacrifices. He desires honest, genuine and true worship that comes from a reverent heart. As Jesus Himself said, *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:21-23).*

3. God Who Transforms

“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Acknowledging Jesus Christ as our Master and submitting to Him as His slave changes everything! It is true that God loves us for who we are and accepts us as we are when we come to Him but it is impossible to remain the same when we genuinely encounter Him. As we surrender every aspect of our lives and submit to Him, His desire becomes our desire and what displeases Him start to displease us too. We are becoming more and more like Him as we walk in total obedience to Him.

Jesus is described as being “Savior” 35 times in the Bible but as “Lord” over 7,000 times. Adonai is either Lord of all or not at all in our lives. The Lordship of Christ refers to our total submission to Him.

We must live as if He is the rightful owner of your life; we are His servants and not the other way around. We can't live for Him on earth partially and expect to live with Him in heaven fully. We should be fully, whole-heartedly and totally committed to our Lord.

LOOK: What area(s) of your life are you struggling to give God full control? What is stopping you from totally submitting to God?

TOOK: Submitting to God is not a one-time big-time event, it is a continuous process. From your answer in the question (*LOOK*), what specific actions are you going to take to overcome this struggle?

WORKS

Find yourself an accountability partner within the group. Commit to encourage and remind one another throughout the week regarding your action plan. Lift each other in prayer. Wrap up this session in prayer.

(This lesson is based on Rev. Jordan Escusa's sermon at Generation Congregation service on 19 August 2018).

Lesson 3

GOD WHO NURTURES

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless”

– Genesis 17:1

WELCOME AND WORSHIP

Ask the members of the group who nurtured them to be where they are now (e.g. parents, guardians, mentors, etc.). Ask also how they knew they were being nurtured.

After the sharing time, listen to the song *His Eyes Are on the Sparrow*. It is a great that speaks about God’s presence in our lives as He continuously provide for us and nurture us.

WORD

One of the most interesting things about God in the Bible is that He has many names. These names reveal a specific aspect of who He is. First, there are names given by people to God. These names are not mere descriptions; they are very personal. These names of God usually are given during crucial moments. For example, the name *Jehovah Jireh* was first mentioned when Isaac was spared from being the sacrifice at Mt Moriah (Gen 22:14).

Secondly, God is also fond of giving Himself a name every time He does something major. When He delivered the Israelites, He gave Himself the name *I am who I am* (Exo 3:14). To the Israelites at Mt Sinai, he started the giving of the law with the statement: “I am the Lord your God” (Exo 20:1).

In starting the covenant with Abraham, He also said, “I am ***El Shaddai***” (Gen 17:1). What is the importance of this name? Why was it the name that God chose to reveal to Abraham when He was about to seal His covenant with him in the rite of circumcision?

BOOK: Read Genesis 17:1-10.

Before we can understand what *El Shaddai* means, we need to go back and understand the whole story of Abraham.

1. Abraham’s Ups and Downs

Abraham’s life was a series of ups and downs. The following will reveal that his life was a roller coaster ride, going down the path of darkness to the path of blessings, and then the cycle continues.

a. Genesis 11:27-32, Darkness

This is a story of frustration and death. Terah (Abraham’s father) left Ur to go to Canaan but ended in Haran, where they settled and where he ultimately died (Gen 11:31). This is the only story since Genesis 1 where God is not mentioned.

b. Genesis 12:1-7, Blessings

God called Abraham and He promised blessings upon him and his family.

c. Genesis 12:10-20, Darkness

Abraham and his wife Sarah stayed in Canaan for a while. But when there was a famine in the land, “Abraham went down to Egypt to live there for a while” (Gen 12:10). Here, Sarah posed as Abraham’s sister, and she became Pharaoh’s concubine.

d. Genesis 13:1-8, Darkness

Lot and Abraham separate. The former chose the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar because it was well-watered. Abraham lived in Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain just outside of Sodom (13:12). Lot chose Sodom, whose people were wicked (13:13), inviting trouble to himself.

e. Genesis 14:1-16, Blessings

Abraham rescues Lot and his family from captivity.

f. Genesis 15:1-21, Blessings

Abraham begins to be impatient about God’s promises for a son, so he asks God when will he receive the fulfilment of the promise. God affirms his promises to Abraham.

g. Genesis 16:1-16, Darkness

Abraham and Sarah are still impatient, so Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham to give him a child. Hagar and Ishmael are mistreated by Sarah, and they fled to the desert.

The life of Abraham, from the time he was called from Haran up to the confirmation of the covenant through circumcision, was not a walk in the park. There were ups and downs. He experienced famine. He lost his wife to another man. He had a quarrel with and got separated from his nephew Lot. He almost lost Lot and his other relatives to war. Doubting God's promises, he had a son with his wife's maid. This was not the life of blessing that he expected to experience.

2. God Almighty

In Genesis 17, when Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to him, and for the first time, God referred to Himself as *El Shaddai* (Gen 17:1).

The usual English translation is "God Almighty." This comes from the fact that *Shaddai* can be translated to come from the Akkadian word *shadu*, which means "mountain." The emphasis of *El Shaddai*, therefore, is God's strength and dependability as an All-powerful protector and champion. God is a warrior who is able to defeat all our enemies. When we are attacked from side to side, we can rely on God as our Shield and Fortress. Nothing can shake us if we are with God.

Abraham experienced God as the Almighty especially when he defeated several kings in Genesis 14 in order to rescue Lot and his family. Abraham was not a war strategist, but he defeated

his experienced enemies anyway. The words of Yahweh to Abraham immediately after the great rescue is illuminating: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your Shield, your very great reward” (Genesis 15:1).

3. The Breasted God

There is another translation of *El Shaddai*. Instead of translating *Shaddai* from *shadu*, we translate *Shaddai* from *shad*, which means “breast.” *El Shaddai*, therefore, is not God Almighty, but God Who Has Breasts or the Breasted God.

The emphasis of *El Shaddai* as the God Who Has Breasts is that of continuous nurture. Abraham is a child, although he is already 99 years old in Genesis 17, and he is in need of God’s sustaining care. In the sight of God, Abraham is not an independent adult who can walk through life on his own; rather, he is an infant who will always need to depend on God. God was not presenting Himself to Abraham as a strong fortress; He is revealing Himself to Abraham as a faithful God. He is like a mother who nurtures his children despite their disobedience and fickleness. Looking at the life of Abraham, he really messed up many times. He did not live a perfect life.

Like Abraham, we may have received promises from Him, and we think God owes us a good life. We find out that even though we are with God and in God, we experience storms in life. Circumstances come in our lives and we fail miserably to pass the test of faith and obedience. The good news is that He does not come telling us that he is an Almighty God who is able to snuff us out of existence. When we are down in our own mess,

he does not show up to remind us how awful is it what we have done, and that He has the power and authority to strike us. No, he comes telling us that He is someone who is faithful amidst all our silliness. He comes telling us that we are still His children. He comes telling us that our failures may grieve Him, but is nevertheless still there.

LOOK: What does it mean for God to nurture us in our daily lives? In what ways is God nurturing us?

TOOK: Because God is faithful and because He is a God of grace and mercy, how can we imitate Him in our personal lives?

WORKS

He is a God of compassion and second chances. He is a God of new beginnings. He is a God of forgiveness. Let us follow Him by being compassionate to others, giving them second chances even when they have already failed us. Who are the persons in need of forgiveness from us?

(This lesson is based on Dr. Dick Eugenio's sermon at Generation Congregation service on 12 August 2018).

Lesson 4

MOST POWERFUL NAME EVER!

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

– Acts 4:12

WELCOME

Jesus had many names other than Lord Jesus Christ. Be the first to shout the answer to the clues.

Clue #1 – The first and last letter of the Greek alphabet. The beginning and the end. *Answer: Alpha and Omega*

Clue #2 – A book is made up of a thousand _____. The one who wins the argument gets the last _____. *Answer: The Word*

Clue #3 – A person who helps you by listening and giving advice. Sometimes works at a school. Can solve marriage problems. *Answer: Counselor*

Clue #4 – Sounds like a famous woman in the Old Testament. . . and like a dental subject . . . not false. *Answer: The Truth*

WORSHIP

Ask the members who share how did they experience God's grace at work in their lives throughout the week. Lead them in prayer.

The group may also sing Hillsong's *What a Beautiful Name*.

WORD

HOOK: Have you ever used someone's name to get past through an unwanted situation (e.g. checkpoints, failed subjects, government transactions, etc.)?

We have learned about *Elohim* the strong eternal Creator, *El Shaddai* the nurturing God, and *Adonai* the sovereign owner and Lord. But in the New Testament in which the full revelation about God is given, ONE NAME stands out. This name is JESUS – the Name above all names!

1. Chosen by the Father

“God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9)

The name Jesus was not given to our Lord by Mary and Joseph. It was a name handpicked by God (Matt 1:21). This alone makes it a Name that stands out as special. The name “Jesus” is one that was divinely given through the angelic message of Gabriel

to Mary: *“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus”* (Luke 1:31). It was prophesied, *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”* (Isaiah 9:6).

Knowing that God has meticulously chosen this Name for his begotten Son should lead us to reverence and to avoid at all cost to put Christ’s name in vain.

2. Points and Gives Access to the Father

“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but through me” (John 14:6)

When the Father sent Jesus to come into the world, He was sending a message to humanity. It was a message that said, *“I have not forgotten, nor forsaken you. I love you and I give you my Son who will reveal me to you.”*

a. Pray and Ask in His Name

We are given the promise that if we pray in the name of Jesus, God will listen to us: *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son”* (John 14:13). In Jesus’ name, we can approach God boldly. Through Jesus, we can ask the Father anything. We can tell Him our cares, our needs, our desires, or just about anything that happens to us during the day. Isn’t it wonderful to have a God who makes Himself accessible to mere mortals like us?

b. Healing for the Sick

Peter said to the lame at Gate Beautiful, *“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk”* (Acts 3:6). In Jesus’ name, there is healing for the wounded, for the broken hearted, for the weary, for the emotionally drained. Are we suffering from physical illness? Are we spiritually dry? Are we emotionally stressed? There is something about the Name of Jesus that gives comfort. There is power in His name that heals deeper within.

b. Miracles

“By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see” (Acts 3:16). In the book of Acts, we read about the disciples performing different miracles in the Name of Jesus. They were ordinary people, but were able to do great things. Of course, the name of Jesus is not magic. Chanting it does not give one special powers. The power in the name is the person behind the name.

3. In Whom Salvation is Found

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)

Out of all the names He could have chosen, God chose “Jesus” for a reason. The name signifies that the very name of God is

present in the person of His Son, made human for our salvation. He is the definitive redemption from our sins. Jesus is the divine name that brings salvation. In Greek, it is *Iēsous*; in Aramaic, *Yesu*. Both are derived from the Hebrew *Yeshua*, which means “God saves!”

Alan Keyes wrote, “Every time you call yourself a Christian, you invoke the name of God, and that if you then walk a walk that does not reflect the presence of Christ in your life, cast a vote that does not reflect the presence of Christ in your life, then you are taking the name of the Lord your God in vain.”

LOOK: What are there moments in your life that you think you have put the name of Jesus in vain?

TOOK: How will you proclaim Jesus’ name through your life from now on?

WORKS

As homework throughout the week, encourage each member to choose to listen or sing songs that are related to the name of Jesus. This will hopefully saturate their minds with Jesus, and enable them to speak about Him to everyone.

(This lesson is based on Rev. Jordan Escusa’s sermon at Generation Congregation service on 28 August 2018).