MAIN POINT

The names of God are of great importance because they give us insight into who he is and what he has done.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What words come to mind when you hear the names, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Michael Jordan?

When considering God’s name(s), what adjectives come to mind?

Names have great meaning in our hearts and minds, stirring up specific thoughts and emotions. Names are words we define not simply based on strict translations of their meanings, but also based on their connotations, as we see with Mark Zuckerberg and Michael Jordan. Names tell us something about the people to whom they belong. Names call to mind someone’s character, accomplishments, etc. If ever there was a name that held great meaning, a name that might tell us something truly important, surely it’s God’s.

WATCH THE SESSION 1 VIDEO FEATURING TONY EVANS.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 8:1-4.

Based on the tone and wording of the first two verses of this Psalm, how do you think David viewed his relationship with God?

According to David, where is the glory of the Lord?

The term “LORD” in verse 1 refers to the divine name Yahweh, “I am who I am,” that God told Moses in Exodus 3:14. What does this term imply about the nature of God?
God is the ultimate being. He has no beginning because He has always been and always will be God. He depends on nothing in order to exist, while everything in creation depends on Him for its existence. This name implies that He is above all things—He is wiser and more beautiful and wonderful than everything everywhere. All creation exists to praise Him.

How is God’s majesty revealed in creation?

How might holding a newborn in your arms move you to worship God?

What is peculiar about the picture of infants triumphing over God’s enemies?

Why does God use infants to triumph over His enemies? What does this prove or accomplish?

God’s majesty is highlighted in verse 2 in that God not only stoops to care and provide for infants, but that He makes them the means of His triumphs. God could conquer His enemies in any number of dramatic and powerful ways, but He instead chooses to overcome them through the praises of children and nursing babies. This is an incredibly important theme in the Bible—God triumphs not through grand displays of power but through profound and mysterious displays of humility.

What is David really asking in verses 3-4? Take a moment and rephrase his question.

What motivated David to ask “of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them?”

Can you relate to what David is feeling? When was a time when you felt small or insignificant in the presence of God and his creation?

As Tony Evans notes, God’s name is holy, meaning He is set apart. He is unlike anyone or anything else in all creation. David glimpsed this holiness when He looked to the heavens and wondered aloud why God would even think about humankind. In the first two verses we read that the glory of the Lord is in the heavens, but David also noted that God’s majesty fills the earth. God’s glory fills the skies and stretches across the universe in all directions, but His majesty isn’t so far away that we can’t savor the glory and power of His name here on earth. Although we may sometimes feel small, we can enjoy the majesty of God because He is a personal God. We can know Him and be known by Him. As David noted, he is the Lord, our Lord.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 1:1.

What does this one verse tell us about God?
What does this verse tell us about creation?
What attributes of God come to mind when you think of God as Creator?
What elements of creation remind you of God’s character the most? Where can you see the fingerprints of God within nature?

God created both heaven and earth. As Tony Evans points out for us, the original word used for God in this verse is “Elohim.” Here, in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, God shakes our hands and introduces Himself as Elohim. As Tony Evans explains, the word means “strong one.” Our God is the Strong One, the Creator God. When you’re up against a wall, the Strong One who made heaven and earth is at your side. Remember that no matter the opposition, our God uses infants and toddlers to shame His enemies. The Strong One makes weak things strong.

APPLICATION
Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Why is it important to know the names of the Lord?
How might your perspective on your place in the universe begin to change if you focused more on the names of the Lord?
Considering that God the Creator is Elohim, the Strong One, how might this change the way you face opposition?

PRAYER
Thank God for filling heaven and earth with His glory and majesty. Ask Him to reveal more of Himself to you as you learn His many holy names.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 8:1-4

8:1. This hymn of praise is more specifically identified as a creation hymn (along with 19:1-6; 33; and 104) in its focus on earth and the heavens, terms describing the whole of creation (Gen 1:1; Ex 20:11; Neh 9:6). “Majesty,” a synonym for “honor” or “glory,” and “name,” representing the person and not just the designation, are parallel. They demonstrate that God and His glory fill all
of creation. This language distinguishes God from His creation (He is transcendent) but also shows that He is present (He is immanent) within it.

8:2. Even the feeblest of humanity, with their sometimes-inarticulate speech (mouths), function as firm testimonies (a stronghold) of God's glory and silence the enemy and the avenger. According to Jesus, “children” and their simple faith are the best representatives of God's kingdom (Mt 18:4). Paul also made a similar argument when he described God's use of weakness and foolishness to “shame the wise” of this world (1Co 1:26-29).

8:3-4. The vastness of creation is contrasted with the smallness and insignificance of man. This is in the form of a question: How is it that God would remember and look after (both words mean “pay attention to and care for”) people? This is perplexing in light of the difference between the size and scope of the cosmos and the relative puniness of humanity. The terms “man” and “son of man” are parallel and are used to describe humankind as a collective whole (146:3; Num 23:19; Isa 51:12).

**GENESIS 1:1**

1:1 The opening statement about creation in Genesis 1:1 is not only a heading or summary of everything that is unfolded in the subsequent verses but also a declaration of God's first actions by which He called the universe into existence. The verse's sheer simplicity yields a dramatic impact. The when, who, and what of creation are identified in Genesis 1:1.

God established for absolutely everything a beginning of its succeeding existence. This concept is reflective of the biblical writer's attempt to communicate the wealth of knowledge regarding the origin of the world that had been worked out and taught among God's people. The reference to God in Genesis 1:1 is an effort to make a general statement about God's creative work. The biblical writer provided the opportunity to integrate faith and natural science in such a way as to make it possible to talk about God and his activity in the known world. Regarding the universe, the heavens and the earth, there could have been only one beginning, with God being its source.

The actions identified in Genesis 1:1 have no comparison in man's experience. Only God can "create." Two ideas stem from God's creative ability. First, God created without effort. God simply spoke, and the elements of the universe came into being. Second, God created the materials of the universe from nothing, creation ex nihilo.