**God Is Government - Tony Evans Teaching - God's Names(5)**

Today I want to introduce you to another compound name for our God, El Shaddai, the Almighty Sufficient One. This is the name that God would use 48 times in the Old Testament in order to express His ability to be sufficient, El Shaddai. We're introduced to the name for the first time in Genesis chapter 17, again with Abraham.

Actually Abram before he has been given another name. Now when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am El Shaddai, God Almighty. God introduces to Abram another name.

He introduces it in the context of a covenant, verse 2. I will establish my covenant between me and you. A covenant is an agreement that God makes with us. It is a formal, official arrangement that He makes with us.

A covenant is not something casual. When you talk about the marriage covenant and a man and woman getting married, that means they have entered into a legal relationship. So a covenant is an official, legal attachment, agreement, and plan that God makes.

Everyone here today who has trusted Jesus Christ is part of what the Bible calls the New Covenant. Jesus said around communion when He talked about it in 1 Corinthians 11, He said this is the new covenant of my blood. In other words, we have an agreement.

We have an arrangement. We have a relationship that is legal. In other words, it's obligatory.

It's not just something we're talking about casually. This is a formal agreement. So El Shaddai, the Almighty Sufficient One, is introduced to us in terms of agreements.

Very important. God has an agreement with you because of our relationship with Him. We're introduced to this agreement almost 25 years earlier in chapter 12.

God establishes the essence of the agreement. Now, verse 1 of chapter 12 of Genesis says, The Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, said to Abram, Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you. And I will make you a great nation.

I will bless you. I will make your name great and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. So Abram went forth as the Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, had spoken to him and Lot went with him. Now Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haram.

So God first talks to him about the agreement when he's 75. So when he was 75 years old, God says, I've got a plan for you. So if you're here and you're getting old and you wonder whether God can still do anything with you, just want you to know, oh Abe, it's 75.

When he gives the word, I've got a plan. And my plan is a plan of blessing. Let me tell you something about covenants.

Covenants always involve blessing. Very important. Covenants always involve blessings.

Again, let's make sure we're defining a blessing correctly. A blessing is God's favor to you that it might be expressed through you. A blessing is never only what God does to me.

That's half a blessing. A blessing has to go full circle. It's what he does to me in order that it might flow through me.

Which means if he cannot flow it through you, he's not interested in bringing it to you. Everybody wants a blessing without having its full definition. He told Abraham, I'm going to bless you and you're going to be a blessing.

So don't talk about wanting to be blessed without saying, and how do you want my blessing to me to be a blessing through me? But once you add the second part, you're in a better position to receive the first part. He says, I'm going to bless you at 75 and I'm going to make you great. And from you, a people are going to come.

And this covenant is going to be so powerful that whoever blesses you will be blessed. And whoever curses you will be cursed. That's how strong this thing is.

He enters into this promise, we call it the promise here in chapter 12. There is a problem however, verse 3 of chapter 15. And Abraham said, since you have given no offspring to me, one born in my house, that's my heir.

The question is, how can this promise happen that from me is going to come this great people and this great multitude when you have not blessed me with a child? I don't have a child. Chapter 16, verse 1. Now Sarah, Abraham's wife, had born him no children. And she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.

She got tired of waiting on God. In chapter 17, Abraham is 99 years old. In chapter 12, he's 75 years old.

So we're closing in on 25 years of waiting on God. God has made this promise, but it's not happening. We are childless.

So maybe, Sarah decides, God wants us to help him out. So she concocts a plan for Abraham to sleep with Hagar so that through that human concocted method, through this man-made assistance program, since God is obviously moving a little slow since virtually 25 years have passed, that maybe God needs some help to get this thing right. He's a little slow and evidently confused because I can't get pregnant.

So she concocts a plan for them to have a child, and that child's name was Ishmael, the father of the Arabs. And these two boys have been fighting ever since. So here is our problem.

Our problem is there is a promise that fundamentally would become a covenant. There's a 25 year gap between when the promise is made and when fulfillment arrives. They get tired in between because God is taking so long.

El Shaddai comes in that context. Abraham is old, he's tired, and he's weary. There is no offspring.

And so it looks like God had abandoned his promise. There are those of us here today who believe and who feel God has taken too long. He's taken too long to find me a maid.

He's taken too long to change my work situation. He's taken too long to fix my home. He's taken too long to change my child.

He's taken too long to give me this breakthrough. He is taking too long. We've all felt that.

We've all felt that God is moving at a snail's pace if he's moving at all. But when Abraham is 99 years old, the Lord appears to him and gives him his name. I am El Shaddai.

I am God Almighty. El is the singular form of Elohim. Elohim is Genesis 1.1. In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

That is the all-powerful God. I am El, singular form. Shaddai.

Shaddai comes from a prefix, S-H-A-D, which means breast. That's the prefix for Shaddai. There are references to this in the book of Isaiah, for example.

Let me just read a couple of passages to you so you can get the context of the use of this word and concept. Isaiah chapter 60, for example. In Isaiah chapter 60, verse 15.

15, whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation. You will also suck the milk of nations and suck the breast of kings. Then you will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

In Isaiah chapter 66, he says this word. Verse 10, be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her. Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her.

That you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breast. That you may suck and be delighted with her bountiful bosom. He uses the word Shaddai, which refers to a woman's breast, for the purposement of supplying nourishment.

When a woman holds up a baby and breastfeeds, she is supplying what the baby needs for life. In an infant stage, she is supplying what the baby needs for life. That's the word Shaddai.

It's from the root, to supply the nourishment that is needed for life. What is Abraham's problem? What is Sarah's problem? They can't produce life. She's barren.

They have no children. How can God's promise, which is ultimately His covenant, be fulfilled when there is not the capacity or the sufficiency or the ability to make life or nourish life? They are insufficient for what the covenant requires. Because the covenant said, I'm going to make of you a great nation.

We don't have the sufficiency to do that because of the barrenness of our situation. Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever felt your inability to produce what you think God has promised? How in the world, here's how you would put it, or I would put it, how are you going to work this out? How is He going to work this out when there is no capacity to do that? He says, I'm going to work it out by my name. My name is El Shaddai.

That is, the one that has the power to be sufficient for the situation at hand, namely, my promises and my covenant. What they were to discover was a major principle that you and I need to learn, and it's a tough lesson, and we've all probably been through it one time or another. And that is, God does not want your help.

Meaning, He does not want you to go outside of His plan to help Him out. Doesn't mean you're not supposed to do anything. When He told him to leave where he was, he left.

Hebrews 11 says, He left not knowing where he was going. All he knew was God told him to leave, so he left without the details. But because God was taking so long, they thought that God needed help.

Ishmael is called in the book of Galatians, a child of the flesh. He's called a child of the flesh because it was human methodology to help facilitate a divine plan. Their motivation was good.

They were motivated to fulfill God's covenant. But they went to the secular arena to fulfill it. They went outside of God to help God out.

When you and I go outside of God to help God out, not only do we not help God out because Ishmael was not the one who God wanted, but we delay the blessing. We get in the way of the program. We hinder the progress.

God comes on the scene after they meddled in his business and said, I am El Shaddai. But wait a minute, God, we have a problem. The capacity to produce what the promise has declared, we do not have.

Here it is, the capacity. Anybody have any capacity problems? To produce what the promise has given, what the covenant has declared, what the blessing is supposed to be, we do not possess. Okay, but what's his name? El Shaddai.

So let's go back to El. Again, we're introduced to El in Genesis 1.1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Hebrews 11.3 says that God created out of things which do not appear.

In other words, when he made heaven and earth, there were no raw materials to work with. There was nothing visible that you could see, because there was nothing that existed in this realm. God lives in a whole other realm, that's why you can't figure him out, because in his natural habitat, it's not this.

So that's why God is the unfigurable God, because in his natural habitat, it's not the habitat we live in. There was no time, no space, and no matter. None of that existed, so that means God didn't exist in this realm.

So he had nothing in this realm to work with. Yet, without having any raw material, any visible way of creating anything, since he had no raw material to work with, he created the heavens and the earth ex nihilo. That means out of nothing.

In other words, without raw material, he made it happen. The reason why you need to know about El, is that means you don't have to see how he's going to do it. Because God doesn't need your raw materials to get it done with.

As El Shaddai, he has the power to work in the invisible without something being seen to bring about the visible. He says, Abraham, evidently, you need to know my name. My power is sufficient to supply the need that you can't see where it can come from.

And some of us need to know his name is El Shaddai. Because we can't see how he's going to fix this. We can't see how he's going to make this better.

We can't see, given our situation, how he's going to turn this around. We can't see how it makes sense. That's because we have forgotten his name.

Or haven't known it. He reveals his name, El Shaddai. I have the supply.

The mother has the milk. It is amazing how that thing works. For a mother.

That God has so constructed a woman that the milk naturally flows and as long as the baby is feeding, the milk continues to come. If she wants to stop the milk, she has to stop the feeding. Because God has built it for it to keep on coming.

God has constructed the female so that the supply is enough until the baby is ready to be weaned and moved on to handle things on their own. God has built a woman so that there is sufficient supply for each baby. You keep on having babies, you keep on having milk.

Because he constructed you as females to be able to supply. Now if he made you and equipped you with that which can supply a child, what makes us think he is insufficient? He is sufficient for a mama to take care of her babies. But he is insufficient to take care of his kids.

That doesn't make sense. His name is El Shaddai. The one who is sufficient without your illegitimate help.

So what many of us are actually doing is canceling or delaying God's help by our going to illegitimate avenues to fix what we think he can't fix or is taking too long to correct. I am El Shaddai. I am strong enough.

And sensitive enough to care as a mother satisfies the need of her child on her breast. I know this is a bad situation. I know you're old.

I know she's barren. I know, I know, I got this. I got this.

I know you don't know how I'm going to work this out. I know if you look logically, what I promise you doesn't make sense. I understand that.

But I have a name. And my name is El Shaddai. I don't need raw materials.

I don't need you to understand how I'm going to do this. El Shaddai makes himself known in the context of the impossible. In the context of things not making sense because El Shaddai says in verse 2, I will establish my covenant.

It's my covenant. And everybody here is under the covenant. The new covenant.

This is the old covenant that he's making relative to Israel. He makes a new covenant with the church. A new agreement.

I can't answer you how he's going to deal specifically with his arrangement with you. I know one thing. Look at what Abraham does when he hears this.

What Abraham does, Abraham falls on his face in verse 3 and God talked to him. He falls on his face after hearing God's name. Because what he was trying to do and what God was trying to do wasn't the same thing.

That's why he tells them walk before me and be blameless. You just do your part. I got mine.

I've got my part. I have my part. You walk before me.

That is live your life in light of my presence. You live consciously in my presence. You walk before me and be blameless.

That does not mean be perfect. Nobody can be perfect. But what it means, walk before me wholeheartedly.

Don't be half stepping. Don't be churchified. Don't be smote Sunday morning only.

No, no, no, no, no. I want you to live your life in light of my presence. That's your job.

Don't go outside of me to help me out. Paul says to New Testament Christians in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 verses 17 and 18 these words. He says, therefore come out from their midst and be separate says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you and you shall be sons and daughters to me says the Lord Almighty. He says, don't let the world tell you how to do this.

Or if you're going to let the world tell you how to do it, then let them fix it. Don't go to your girlfriends, your guy friends, to the media, to the secular world. That's not bringing in my perspective to get them to help you do what I want to do for you.

Because you messing it up and slowing it down. I am El Shaddai. I am the one who supplies.

I just want you to walk and is to live in light of my presence. I want you to function in light of the fact I'm there. Don't even try to figure it out.

All you're going to get is Excedrin PM headache. Don't try to figure it out because I may not be using raw materials you can see. So if you're trying to figure it out and I'm not using raw materials you can see, that means all you're going to do is be frustrated, irritated, exacerbated, you know, you're just going to lose sleep.

Because I'm not going to use something you can see. My name is El Shaddai. I just want you to walk, live in light of my presence.

Nobody's perfect, but this ought to be normative for you, not an exception. To save money, we put in a lot of our hallways and a lot of our rooms motion detector lights. Which means when you walk in the room the light comes on.

Or when you walk in the hall the light comes on. When you leave the room or leave the hall the lights go off. We're trying to save electricity.

There is power in the room. El. There is power in the room and the power in the room is sufficient to illuminate it.

Shaddai. So we've got power, El. We've got sufficiency, it's more than enough light.

But the power and the light don't converge until somebody walks in it. See if you're not walking in it, the power, El, that is sufficient, Shaddai, is unavailable. Not because it's not there, it's just you're not walking in the right vicinity.

See if you're not walking in his presence, then you're going to feel like things are dark. It's not because he doesn't have the power and the power is not sufficient, it's just you're walking on the wrong side of the street. And the lights are not designed to come on.

The Bible calls it walking in darkness. Because you're walking in a place where God is not moving. You're walking in a realm where he's not operating.

You're walking outside of where he's doing his thing. He's doing his thing inside his covenant and inside his presence. So Abraham, 99 years old, falls to his face.

When he is, you are to walk completely before me. What they did was what we do, all of us have done. He took a detour.

You know, a detour can take you way out of the way. Now, if you find yourself on a detour, you didn't go on left, you should have gone right. You need to work back to the main road here.

Because the longer you stay on the detour, the more lost you're going to get and the more time you lose. So if you don't want to lose any more time and you don't want to be lost any longer, he says you are to walk, operate, and live in my presence. He does something.

Abraham falls on his face. God says, as for me, verse 4, my covenant is with you. And you will be the father of a multitude of nations.

Let me tell you about God's covenant with you. It's always bigger than you. Why? Because he wants you to be a blessing, not just be blessed.

So that always makes it bigger than you. Because it never only includes you, although you are a beneficiary of it. Notice what he does.

Notice what he does. He says in verse 5, no longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham. I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

He not only changes his name, he changes Sarah's name in verse 15. God said to Abraham, as for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her.

Then I will bless her. She shall be a mother of nations. Notice what he did.

He changed their name to fit his promise. You see, some of us walking around here with the wrong name. Why is a name important? Why is a name important? In the Bible, names were important because names had meaning.

Names were not just names. People gave names to things for what those things meant or represented to them. So parents in the Bible didn't name people because they disliked the way that sounds.

They named people because it had a rhyme or reason to the nomenclature. So naming had purpose. So when God wanted to bring you clarity about his purpose, he would change your name.

For example, Jacob means trickster, and that is what he was. But when he wrestled with the angel, God changed his name. He says, you're no longer Jacob, you're Israel.

He changed his name to the spiritual reality of his purpose. But why is that important? Because your name tells you who you are. Because it gets spoken more than anything else.

People calling you by your name all day. You know Tony this, Tony Evans that. They call you by your name so you're hearing.

Well why does he change their name? Because every time their name was called, they wanted to be reminded, God wanted them to be reminded of what God had said. So every time somebody called him Abraham, he could go around and say, I'm the father of multitude. Every time she had Sarah, I'm the mother of many nations.

She would hear all day long, this is who you are. You're somebody new now that God has placed his covenant on you. And since everybody who's a Christian and a believer in Jesus Christ is underneath God's covenant, everybody here has a new name.

Everybody here is to be defined by your Christian faith. That is your name. That you belong to Jesus Christ now.

That is your orientation. That is your reminder. You're a son or daughter of the king.

You have royal blood flowing through your veins. That is who you are. Now that may not be how you feel.

That may not be how you were raised. But I'm not talking about how you feel and how you were raised. I'm talking about who the king says you are.

He gives them a name commensurate with the covenant. But how is this name going to become real? Because I am El Shaddai. I am El Shaddai.

Verse 8, I love verse 8 because it's so relevant to today. I will give you and your descendants after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan for everlasting possession, and I will be their God. Okay.

That land is called Israel. Okay. The promised land, Israel.

You know how long these people been trying to get rid of Israel? Israel is the smallest thing over there. You look on the map and you look at the size of Israel compared to all those other nations surrounding it. And it's the tiniest thing over there.

They've been trying to drive them into the sea, the Mediterranean, forever. And every time they try, they lose. They got more people, more land, more property.

And every time they, you know why? Because God made a covenant. And even though you the smallest, even though you don't have the largest population, I made a promise and I'm El Shaddai. Because God made a promise and he's keeping his promise and will keep it till the end.

That's why people have not been able to get rid of this people that's hated by all the nations around. And yet they have been unstoppable. Because of their rejection of Jesus Christ, they have not received full blessing.

But God has still been true to his covenant. Because he's El Shaddai. Abraham is now 99 years old.

99 years old. He would be 100 when Isaac is born. He's waited 25 years for God to come through.

He's messed up along the way. But God is still faithful. Some of you have been waiting a long time.

And you're tired and you're weary. And you have messed up along the way. You've got the Ishmael syndrome.

Because you're trying to help God out and man it's just worse than it was before. But I love chapter 17 because it says God came back to him. Yes, you've waited a long time.

Yes, you've made mistakes along the way. But you're still here. 99 years old and I still have a covenant with you.

And I'm El Shaddai. I am the supplier and I am sufficient. All the times in the Bible God speaks of his sufficiency.

He says I've got sufficient grace in 2 Corinthians 9 verse 8. Now to him who's able to make all grace, all supply available to you. How do you know when it's really a God's supply? You know it in two ways. You know it because it was beyond your capacity.

Because she barren, she doesn't have capacity. It's beyond your capacity. That's one way you know.

Let me tell you another way you know. Leftovers. He leaves you leftovers.

It's more than enough. It's more than enough. Now to him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all you can ask or think according to the power that is working in you.

He is more than enough. Leftovers. Leftovers strength, leftover ability, leftover resource, leftovers.

Beyond your capacity. Jesus took two fish and five barley loaves and took a boy's lunch and prayed over it. He asked the disciples how we gonna feed all these people and what did they say? There's not enough.

He said there's not enough money. They said there's not enough McDonald's. There's not enough Burger Kings.

Not enough Kentucky Fried Chickens. There's not enough. He said send them home, send them home.

It's not enough. All we got is a little boy with some lunch. And Jesus said bring it to me.

I know it's not enough. I know it's not enough. I know you don't know how you gonna make it if you put me first.

I know you don't know how you gonna make it if you tithe. I know you don't know how to make it if you walk with me. I know you don't know how to make it.

I know it's not enough but bring it to me. See, the question is not how much, it's where you take it. Bring it to me.

The Bible says he bowed his head and he blessed it. It's what he said he did with the fish. He gave thanks and blessed it.

See, a lot of us, what we're doing is we got unblessed stuff. We got stuff, but it hasn't been blessed because God hasn't been put in his position. So unblessed stuff.

See, it's better to have blessed 90% than an unblessed 100%. So he blessed it, and when he blessed it, the Bible says, Moby Dick is laying on the beach. He says he fed 5,000 men, not counting women and children.

So that's 20,000 people got fed with two fish and five barley loaves. 20,000 people got fed with two fish and five barley loaves, but the beautiful thing of the story is, and there were 12 baskets left over. There were leftovers.

Psalm 91 verses 1 and 2, God uses four names in those two verses. He uses four of his names in those two verses, and it simply says, he that dwelleth in the place of the most high is covered by Shaddai. It's covered by Shaddai.

He throws four words. The issue is where you're hanging out. He that hangs out in the place of the most high.

If that's not your hangout, then you're not where he's doing his thing. You out there with your folk hanging out in your spot, and you wonder why you can't find God. That's not where he's hanging out.

He says Shaddai has his own hangout, walking or living in his presence. Jesus put it this way, apart from me, you can do nothing, John 15, 5. Go out there, do your thing, and when you get tired, when you discover your stuff isn't working, then you'll discover without me, it's not going to work. It's not going to last because it's got to be attached to my covenant relationship.

It's a covenant. It's a covenant. It's an agreement, and I operate within the agreement.

When we make agreements with God and don't operate then, then you can't pray and ask for a blessing because you're outside of the agreement. A man can't say, bless my marriage, but he's operating outside of what God has called a husband to do. A woman can't say, bless my marriage, and you're operating outside of what God calls you to do.

A single can't say, bless me with a mate, and you're operating outside of God wants you to do because you've got to be dwelling in the tent of the most high under the covering of Shaddai. You know when they're drunk drivers, you get a little tipsy, well not you, but some people get a little tipsy, and they tell you, hand the keys to somebody else. Hand the keys to somebody else.

A lot of us are drunk living. God is saying, hand me the keys. I know how to take you where you need to go, but you've got to hand me the keys.

You've got to let me call the shots. You've got to let me run the show. El Shaddai, he's powerful enough to be your sufficiency because of the covenant in spite of what you can't see.

In spite of what you can't see. I know you can't see it now. I know it looks like God has forsaken you, and I know that we have messed up and made mistakes, but the beautiful thing is, even though he messed up along the way, and even though he lost some time, he's 99 and God still came back, said I am El Shaddai.

A man one day went fishing. When he went fishing, he caught these huge fish, I mean huge, and he threw them back in the water. Then he would catch these little teeny fish and keep them.

He threw the big fish back and kept the little fish. God was with him, said, I don't get it. You got these big fish, you're throwing them back, you get these little teeny fish, and you keep them.

He said, why? He said, because my frying pan is only 10 inches. If all you're looking at is the size of what you can see, you're going to be throwing back the stuff God wants to do and just settling for the little you can do yourself. But if you're tired of eating little fish, and you want God to do something exceedingly, abundantly above what you can ask for, don't look at the size of your pan, because it will always be too small for what God can do.

Look at the size of your God, and last time I checked, he had a name, and his name is El Shaddai.