**God Is Government - Tony Evans Teaching - God's Names**

Let me call your attention to Psalm chapter 8, the 8th Psalm. Let me read these nine verses just by way of introduction. The psalmist says, O Lord our Lord, or to put it in the names of God, O Jehovah our Adonai, how majestic is your name in all the earth, who has displayed your splendor above the heavens.

From the mouth of infants and nursing babes you have established strength, because of your adversaries to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. When I consider your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained. What is man that you take thought of him, the Son of Man that you care for him.

Yet you have made him a little lower than God, and you crown him with glory and majesty. You make him to rule over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beast of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the sea.

O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. I am sure you would concur with me that names are important. Names provide for us a point of identification.

While today often names, particularly the naming of children, is done much more frivolously than in times past. We give a name because we like the name or we like the sound of the name. We don't as often deal with the meaning of the name.

And yet so many things that are named have their substance in what the name means. If I say to you Philadelphia, you know it as the city of brotherly love. That is by definition, not by function.

If I said to you Jerusalem, city of peace. Again, the name is not indicative of the environment since it is regularly embroiled in war. But names carry significance to them.

Anybody who knows you, I can assure you, if they know you, know your name. Because your name is a gateway to who you are. When a guy rolls up on a young lady who he does not know, seeking to get his Mac on, one of his first questions is, tell me your name.

Now he's not after a name. The name is merely a gateway to seeking a relationship. To be sure, if she is unwilling to give you her name, at least at that point in time, she is unwilling to enter into a relationship.

Because if she does not even want you to know the nomenclature by which she is identified, then she doesn't want you all up in there. So names have substance and significance. When a woman is finally interested in a man and he says, will you marry me? She then agrees to change her name.

And the reason she agrees to change her name is because what she has heard or seen over whatever period of time gives her the idea for her there is a better future. That to change her name from her existing name is to her benefit. Great lesson in that, ladies, is if you have to change your name and you know in advance you're going to be worse off, keep your name.

One of the great identification marks related to names are nicknames. Because nicknames are often used to identify characteristics. If somebody has a nickname, Slim, that probably means he's not fat.

If his nickname is Chubby, that probably means he's not skinny. Folks with nickname Red usually means red hair or red tone. And names are so potent there's something we won't use.

They matter so much that we don't want people calling us out of our name. We will get upset and offended if people call us out of our name. Because that becomes a matter of disrespect and dishonor.

I'm simply suggesting that names matter. And when you come to know a name, it becomes more intriguing when you find out what's behind the name that you've come to know. If I said to you Bill Gates, you're going to naturally and immediately think of wealth, and business success, and entrepreneurial intrigue.

Because that name represents something. Now you can have the name and not have a success. You could be so enthralled with Bill Gates that you name your child Bill and put Gates as his middle name.

In other words, you can bear the name without the thing that represents the name you bear. You can be poor as all get out, but go around saying my name is Bill Gates. In other words, you can have the nomenclature without the substance.

You can be enthralled with Serena Williams because you're gonna think tennis. You say I'm gonna name my daughter Serena. She can't play ping-pong.

You can have the name without the substance. But names matter. We have juniors because we want to maintain a name.

Names matter. So we ought not be surprised that in the Bible the concept of naming goes from Genesis to Revelation. We've already said by way of introduction over 80 names for God or compound relationships thereof are in Scripture.

And the reason why God wants to give you all these names is so that you can get a different perspective on who he is. And the reason why you need these different perspectives is one name doesn't fully contain it. All that he is, simply to say God, does not fully say all that he is in terms of the nuances that make up that overarching term that we say when we say God.

And so what God does is he wants you to know him relationally through his multiplicity of names. Depending on what the relationship is, my name varies because husband, father, uncle, pastor, professor, whatever that relationship is, the nomenclature may adjust to that relationship. God's name is critical to our understanding of his multidimensional nature.

God wants us to come face to face with his significance and substance and so Moses wanted to know God's name. He says when I go over to Pharaoh they're going to want to know who sent me, who are you? And then God unveiled one of the great names, I Am That I Am. Our goal through this series is to introduce you again to God for the first time by his name.

But the goal is not merely for you to be able to pronounce his name. The goal is to understand the nature behind the name because the name has meaning to the attribute or characteristic of God that you need to become familiar with. In other words, his name shows up, I use the word zitzenleben, his name shows up in the situations of life.

And to be able to know which name relates to this kind of situation lets you insight into the nature of the God that you want to address the situation that you are facing. The Bible regularly talks about calling on that name. When David faced Goliath, he was in a situation that was overwhelming.

Nine foot six inch worth of giant and David is a little ruddy shrimp of a young man. And Goliath comes out to David and says, am I a dog that you bring sticks, slingshot, you bring a little stick to fight me? Do I look like kibbles and bits to you? I am going to feed you to the birds. That's what he tells little David.

David's answer in first Samuel 17 is instructive because David says, well you come to me with sword and spear in hand, but I come to you in the name of the Lord God. There was something about that name that David knew that overrode the huge situation that he faced. But now if you don't know that name, see it's hard to use a name you don't know.

Then when you're facing Goliath, you don't know what to reach for. God's name is like a key that unlocks the treasure to the inquiring mind. I love Proverbs 18 verse 10 which says, the name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous run into it and are saved.

The name of the Lord, just the name. He says it's a strong tower, it's a fortified place. Psalm 111 verse 9 says awesome is his name.

What I'm trying to tell you is God has a name for any situation you're in. Whatever you're facing, there's a name for it. That is, there is an attribute or a characteristic of God that is commensurate with that name.

And when you discover that name, when you discover the power, the potency, the privilege, the productivity of that name. See names that work for you, you don't soon forget. Not if the name works.

In fact, many of the things that you have been able to achieve, you've achieved because you knew somebody's name. You know, you knew somebody you could call up to help you out with that situation and because you knew the name, you knew the person and because the person had the power to pull off the assistance that you needed, because you knew the name, you could call on the name because they had the nature and they had the position. David says in Psalm 8, he says how majestic is your name.

He doesn't say I just know your name. He says your name is excellent. Majestic means full of splendor.

It's magnificent. It's magnificent. Please notice that David says in verse 2, from the mouths of infants and nursing babes, you've established strength.

In other words, God doesn't tell everybody his name. He says the people who are going to know his name, and by know we mean experience his name, not just be able to recite it. He says the people who will know his name are babes and infants.

In other words, God restricts the use of his name to people who are not dependent. See what characterizes a baby is dependency. They need mom and daddy to feed, clothe, provide.

They need mom and daddy. So they are children, they are dependent. He says you disclose this awesome, excellent, splendorous name to babies and infants.

Jesus prayed this prayer when he was praying in Matthew 11. He says, I thank you father that you have not revealed yourself to the proud, to the intellectually astute, to the PhDs, but you have revealed yourself to babes. So if you come to this series already knowing it all, if you come to this series already having it together, if you come to this series already successful in your own right due to your own human achievements, you may leave being able to pronounce his name, but you won't leave knowing his name, because to know his name is to experience his nature and that's only given to babies.

So that must be a humbling, if you will, on all of our parts if we really want to know his name, that is know the nature of the God whose name we will discover in a whole variety of ways through our time together. But you've got to be an infant now, you've got to be a baby, you've got to be dependent, and so do I. We say it regularly in the Lord's Prayer, don't we? Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

The word hallowed is from a word where we get the word holy or sanctified, and sanctification or holy means to be set apart. Our Father who art in heaven, let me set apart your name. Our Father who art in heaven, let me let me place as unique your name.

In other words, I'm not gonna mix your name up with everybody else's name. I'm not gonna just lump you in. I'm not gonna just throw your name out there because your name is to be hallowed.

In my house I have a name. At Oakland Bible, I have a name. But in Austin, I don't have a name.

And at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, I don't have a name. I got a name where I live, and I got a name here where I pastor. So my name is limited to the scope of my influence.

As influence grows, your name gets bigger. More people know about it, more people pronounce it, you know. In other words, the name is as recognized as your influence goes.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed, set apart as one-of-a-kind, unique is your name. All of us in our homes have everyday dishes. This is what you eat your breakfast on, your lunch on, your dinner on.

These are everyday dishes. But everybody, or most everybody, has a dining room, and those are the don't-touch dishes. Am I right? Tell the truth.

You can't be rolling up in there, you know, frying eggs and putting on those dishes, because that's not for that. Those dishes, those dishes, see the everyday dishes are behind some wooden cabinet, okay? It may have a sliver of glass in it, but and if you break those dishes, you may not like it, but it's easily replaceable. But now, those kids can't be going up talking about, I'm going to use those dining room dishes, because those have been set apart.

You've hallowed those dishes. You've set them apart in another room, behind a special case, to be used for guests or special occasions, because you've hallowed the dining room dishes. That is, you have set them apart as unique.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. In other words, don't use his name regular. And the reason you can't use his name regular is he's not regular.

He's not regular because he's hallowed. Well, where does his influence come from? Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. I'm going to hallow your name because you're daddy from above.

You're in heaven. Well, there's only one God who operates from heaven, so he owns the whole dining room. That is, he is set apart as unique.

Let me give you the flip side of this. The flip side of this is when God says, thou shalt not use the name of thy God in vain. That's the opposite to hallowing his name, is to use it in vain.

The word in vain means empty, without meaning, without substance, or with detriment. It has to do with using God's name in a way that's not consistent with God's person. In other words, it is taking the value out of his name.

You see, everybody uses God's name, but it's often stripped of God's meaning. So you can use the name without hallowing the name that you use. You can even make fun of the name, joke about the name.

You can even forge the name. When you forge, you have the unauthorized use of a name. You don't want somebody using your name without your permission.

Or using your name in a way that's hurtful, or in a way that would be embarrassing. God says, I want you to know my name because I want you to hallow my name, and I don't want you to use my name in vain because how majestic is thy name. And nobody is to escape from it.

How majestic is thy name in all the earth. So in all four corners of the globe, God wants to make sure his name is not emptied of its meaning. And guess how he's going to do that.

God's going to do that by telling you who he is and not letting you tell him who you want him to be. That's why he told Moses, I am who I am. I am not who you tell me I am.

Anybody have anybody in life whose folks tried to define you? They know more about you than you know about you, so they're telling you who you are. There are a lot of views out there about God today. Everybody is using his name, but not everybody is being consistent with his nature.

Therefore, the use of the name is in vain. That's why when you put your hands on a Bible in a court, and they want you to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and if you lie, you perjure yourself because what you have done is in the name of God, you've used vanity. What God is saying, Satan used God's name in vain.

He came to even have God said. So he brought God's name up, he used God's name, but he used God's name to deceive. But he used God's name.

He said God. In fact, you'll discover as we go through this, as a name, he dropped off. He used part of God's name, left off another part of God's name, because he wanted to use God's name for his purposes.

And I hope you notice you got a lot of devils in your life who use God's name just because folk use God, come to church and have a Bible. You can use God's name in vain. How majestic is thy name in all the earth? He goes through these verses and he talks about what I consider verse three, your heavens, the work of your fingers.

That's a whole sermon within itself. Let me just mention this here. He says, I know how great your name is.

When I look up. When I see the heavens, you don't have any idea how big the universe is. You have any idea about the trillions of stars and the hundreds and thousands of galaxies and all of that.

And he says, I am odd. How excellent is your name in all the earth? But that's not what gets me. What gets me is his next phrase.

He says, the reason I am odd is when I consider your heavens, verse three, the work of your fingers. Now the Bible talks about the anatomy of God. It talks about God's arms, eyes, ears.

It uses what we call anthropomorphic language. Anthropomorphic language is human language given to God so that we can relate to it. Since God is invisible, he uses man's frame to explain God.

He says, when you created the heavens, you only needed your fingers. To pick up something with your hand is a full grip. If I said I'd pick up something with my fingers, I didn't use all my hand, the full force of my hand.

I can just pick it up with my fingers. When God created all the galaxies, all he needed was fingers to pull it off. He didn't need hand, he didn't need arm, shoulder, he didn't need all that.

It was finger work for him. Finger work. He says, when I consider that you did all of this with just finger touch.

He says, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. God wants us to know the name, bear the name, and share the name. Hopefully when we've come through this process, you will not be ashamed to be identified with this God.

Because you will have discovered not merely the nomenclature, not merely how to pronounce a Greek word or a Hebrew word. But you'll understand the meaning and how it relates to your day to day life. And you will be able to say, how excellent is thy name.

And you won't say it because somebody told you to say it. You'll say it because you experienced the name. How will you know that you've experienced the name? Because the names do not come out of nowhere.

They do not just come out of space, they come out of circumstances. In other words, they come out of God's involvement in history. David says, the bigger God grew, the smaller I got.

Because he raised the question, what is man, verse 4, that you take thought of him? That the bigger God becomes, see the reason why we're so big is because God's so small. The reason why we have the propensity to think more of ourselves than we ought to think. The only reason you and I can become prideful is because we have forgotten who he is.

So what we do is we build idols and we visit them every morning in the mirror. David, understanding his smallness in the light of who God is says, what is man, you are thoughtful of him and the son of man that you care for him. You've made us a little lower than God, but you've given us glory and majesty.

But while you are reduced in your size, you are increased in your significance. Because when you understand you in relationship to this God, then you understand your significance under him, not independent of him. He closes verse 9, he says, O Lord, our Lord, O Jehovah, our Adonai, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Why does he do this? He envelops this thing, he closes this thing out as he begins it. You get the sense that David is awed by the thought of God's name. He's overwhelmed.

Fundamentally, David was a king of Israel, but fundamentally David is a worshipper. So many of the songs were written by David and so many of them involve worship. When you discover God's name, worship won't be hard.

Worship won't be hard. The higher something is valued, the easier it is to adore it, to recognize it, celebrate it. Our goal is not simply more biblical knowledge.

Our goal is not simply more exegetical skill. Our goal is not so that you can quote and pass a test. Nothing wrong with any of those things, but our goal is to invoke in all of us a new awe of God.

Because when the awe of God grows, the worship of God is tethered to it. When people have to be pushed to worship, you gotta push them to worship. You know, why don't you go to church? Why don't you stay awake at church if you go? Why don't you pay attention? Why don't you open your Bible? Why don't you sing? And you push or pull or drag or kick or scream.

That's because they don't know his name. Now, usually when something goes wrong in life, and God is the only one who fixes it, you don't have to push him or pull him. Because there's a crisis.

But David says, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. All of us perhaps, or most of us perhaps at some time have sought somebody's autograph who was believed to be significant. Athlete, a movie star, an entertainer.

People will stand in line. Because they say, oh, that's so and so. They will pronounce their name.

But that name represents whatever the achievement is in their lives. And so they will get in line for a signature. For a signature.

Because there's a star. And I want to have memorabilia that at least I was in their presence. And I got them to sign their name.

The people will stand in line for an hour or more to get a signature of someone who's fading. They got a name today that will mean little tomorrow. In fact, you can't even find the piece of paper the name was written on.

It's football season. Everybody knows the name. Cowboys.

Folks will show up next week. Next week for cowboy worship. It's a three-hour church service.

That's a three-hour service. Ain't nobody going to be talking about church went too long. Ooh, it's getting nasty, man.

Nobody going to come up. In fact, if it's a five game and it goes overtime, nobody leaving. Because service went longer than planned.

And nobody's going to leave because of a name. And their relationship to the name. And they're going to decide that the team is worthy of my uninterrupted adoration.

I'm going to cheer and I'm going to celebrate because that's my team. And even if you're not at the stadium, you're going to be in your home church. Three hours.

And everybody else is going to have to adjust. Bring my food in the den. Because you got to, y'all go there, do that somewhere else.

Because you got to adjust because I'm in church now and the altar. You know what? Value. You know why worship is so hard? We don't know his name.

David knew his name though. He says, oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. I love how the psalmist says it in closing in Psalm 34.

He says, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the Lord.

The humble will hear of it and rejoice. Oh, magnify the Lord with me. And let us exalt his name together.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me. Now you know what magnification is? Magnification is to make something bigger. Magnification is to make something bigger.

Now you can't make God bigger. He already encompasses the whole earth. You can't make him bigger.

But if you take a magnifying glass, if you got a little reading problem and you have to have glasses to help magnify the words or you put a magnifying glass, you look through it in order to make it bigger. Now you actually don't make it bigger. You make it appear bigger.

When you're reading the words and you have to put on your reading glasses because the print is too small and the print all of a sudden gets bigger. It's not because you made what was on the paper bigger. You made it look bigger to you.

You just made it look bigger to you because the print is the size of the print. Whatever the size of the print is, that's the size of the print. But when you magnify it, you take what was hard to read, make it easier to read because you made it appear bigger.

God may seem small to you right now. He may be a little g right now. He may be, you know, it may be small letters right now.

It may be lower case right now. But as we discover his name, as we put on the glasses to understand what the name means and what the nature refers to and how it fits and how it deals with the situation in life, the G should get a little bigger. The zero should get a little bigger.

The D should get a little bigger. And all of a sudden, it should get magnified. It should get bigger than you started with.

Right now, you may look at God at this level, but as I study and prepare every week, I'm going to invite you to magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. Cause I'm going to come and tell you what I saw, tell you what the glass has revealed to me. And then I'm going to invite you to magnify the Lord with me so that we worship him together.

He said, let's magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together so that God becomes big at OCBF so that he's not just a term and a word, but we put on our glasses and we magnified Elohim and Yahweh and Adonai and Elyon and El Shaddai and we magnified Jehovah Jireh and we magnified Jehovah Ra and his name just kept getting bigger. And bigger and bigger, not cause we made it bigger. It's just cause we put the magnifying glass on it and God just kept getting bigger.

And guess what happened? The bigger God gets, the more worship he gets cause you will discover there is nobody like my God. Nobody like my sovereign. Nobody like my king.

He get bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger that you have to say, I can't take no more. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.