

In Jesus Steps

Disciples for Life

Unit 2: Christian Leadership

How to positively influence the attitudes and actions of others for Jesus Christ.

Lesson 9 The Name

Day One

Family Honor

We learned in Lesson 8, *Filled with the Holy Spirit* that the Spirit of the living God is the good Revealer. He uncovers truth for us. He gives us wisdom by making the things of God known to us. He takes the spiritually blind and opens their eyes to what was hidden. We cannot have revelation without the Revealer. Recall from the lesson that the word “revelation” means something has been made known that had been previously concealed (secret, hidden).

The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of our Lord Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, we could not be in relationship with God. You and I are given the Holy Spirit for the purpose of knowing, loving, worshiping, and obeying God. The Holy Spirit also resides within us, so we are able to help others know, love, worship, and obey God.

The Holy Spirit’s *name* tells us some things about His godly nature. He is holy. Being holy, the Spirit is sacred and set apart. He is pure and perfect and inspires awe and reverence. We cannot see the Holy Spirit because He is a supernatural and divine Being. His presence is sometimes described as the wind, mysterious and powerful (John 3:8).

Definition: The noun *name* is a word or phrase by which someone or something is known and distinguished from other people or things. It is what someone or something is called; it can also designate a good reputation or a bad one.

When we meet someone new, we naturally want to know their name. Parents expecting a baby will consider and search for the perfect name for their little one. Names are important in society and usually tell us something about the individual. For example, with most names, we are able to discern the gender (male or female) without ever laying eyes on them.

The opposite of name is nameless. It is an adjective that can mean having or bearing *no* name, unknown by name; obscure, not designated by name; anonymous or defying description; inexpressible. It is difficult to get to know someone if we do not have a name to match the face. Plus, calling someone, “Hey you!” is just not conducive to close friendships.

For a variety of reasons, some folks have nicknames. They can be either a shortened version of one’s given name, or a descriptive name of a certain attribute or personality trait. In other words, nicknames can further describe or tell something about the person.

1. If you have ever had a nickname, share it, how it come about, and who still uses it?

Names are important today and they were important in biblical times. Just as parents today name children with positive thoughts of their future so did parents of old. In fact, names in ancient times indicated the person's character, nature, and essence (spirit). If you knew a person's name, you would have some idea as to their personal characteristics.

Not everyone is satisfied with their name. Our youngest daughter was not. We adopted her when she was 9 years old and at 10 she wanted to change her first name. Having read books that said not to change an adoptive child's name, I tried to dissuade (talk out of) her, but she was adamant (unyielding). It is quite interesting when you consider the name that she chose. Now she was not a believer at the time she chose her new name, but it is obvious God was leading her according to His plans. She chose the name Christine which means follower of Christ. As I write these words, she is a missionary in East Asia serving Christ just as her name indicates.

God changed Abraham, Sarah, and Jacob's names (Genesis 17:5, 15, 32:28) and Christ changed Peter's name (Matthew 16:17–18). The new names indicated a change in their own character and future towards a fuller and more encompassing relationship and service to God. As a Christian leader, you will be going through changes in your character and abilities as well as helping others embrace the changes in their lives (1 Peter 2:2–3; Hebrews 5:12–14). Some changes may be difficult and may not seem desirable, but know God is always working for our good. These changes are helping us live up to our Christian name.

Definition: The word *Christian* appears only in Acts 11:26, 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16. It originally meant adherents or followers of Christ because their behavior, activity, and speech were like His. Pagans used the name *Christian* in a derogatory or derisive manner.

Read 1 Peter 4:16 and answer questions 2–4:

However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 1 Peter 4:16 (Bear in this context means to carry or be marked by.)

2. As a believer, what name does one bear?

3. What name do *you* bear?

4. If you suffer because you are a Christian, what should you do?

Read Galatians 5:22–25 and answer questions 5–6:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:22–25

5. What are some personal characteristics of those who belong to Christ and carry this name (v. 22–23)?

6. Choose one of the above characteristics, known as the fruit of the Spirit, and share how this trait has developed since you have been a Christian?

Families want to protect their surname (last name). They want the community to respect them and their name. If a family were wealthy, politically active, or highly religious, the older members would be even more vigilant (watchful) about other family members, especially the younger ones, to ensure their reputation would be preserved.

Names can even be protected by copyright. Think of famous Hollywood stars who have died. Their families are able to reap financial rewards by selling the use of their name and image for advertising and marketing purposes. If the star had a blemished (flawed) past or was not liked very much, the value of the name could be diminished (lessened).

Christian is our shared family surname. As Christian leaders we should be diligent to live up to the high standards of our name as well as making sure younger Christians understand the responsibility of bearing this tremendous name. When we act dishonorably, we cast doubt and suspicion on Christ and His followers.

7. Read Psalm 23:3b and fill in the blank. God guides me along the right paths for His _____ sake.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Psalm 23:3b

Our allegiance and responsibility to God's name is significant. He guides you and me in paths of righteousness for the sake of, on account of His name. God aims to keep us on the right path to protect His character and reputation. He will strengthen us and help us walk an upright and moral life. God desires that we are holy as He is holy. God is in charge of guarding His reputation and the reputation of His family. He knows best how to preserve the honor and praise of His name (Isaiah 48:9–11).

Just as a person's name was descriptive of his character in ancient times, so too the names of God illustrate His character. In this sense, God's identity is attached to His names. Throughout the Bible, God and His names are used interchangeably.

Read Ezekiel 20:9 and fill in the blanks for question 8:

But for the sake of my name, I brought them out of Egypt. I did it to keep my name from being profaned in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites. Ezekiel 20:9

8. God says, “But for the sake of my _____, I brought them out of _____. I did it to keep my _____ from being _____ in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight _____ had _____ myself to the Israelites.”

God does not want His name to be treated irreverently or without respect (profaned). God had revealed Himself to the Israelites and other nations as a God of purpose, power, and truth. Even when the Israelites went after false gods and betrayed Him, He did what was necessary to keep His promises and show Himself faithful. God would move to correct their dreadful behavior so the world would know the truth about His name and character.

Our LORD moves in various ways to protect His name and reputation. He may allow wars, famine, and other kinds of hardships to bring people back in line with the truth. He may also draw human hearts with peace, plenty, and blessings. God will use whatever is appropriate to protect His name and in so doing bring us back from rebellion and sin.

Definition: *Foreshadowing* is a literary device giving an indication of what is coming later in a story. God uses this device through biblical writers to help us develop expectations about future events, especially concerning the Messiah. The Bible has stories, events, and people that *foreshadow* Christ in both His first and second coming.

The Israelites were delivered out of the Egyptians’ hands even though they had rebelled against the LORD and would not listen to Him (Ezekiel 20:8–9). God’s deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt foreshadows Jesus and His deliverance of sinners from Satan. The Israelites did not have anything that would ingratiate (curry favor) themselves with God and neither do we. God acts out of the character and purity of His holy name.

God promised a Savior to deliver humanity from Satan and sin. And true to God’s word, the Messiah was born for this remarkable deliverance. God continues to work through those called by His name in order to bring honor to His family.

God’s working through us is called grace. We do not deserve to have God working through us. It is a gift. God gives us grace for the sake of His name to walk in righteousness and uphold His honor as well as the honor of His family. If you are in Christ, you are in God’s family.

9. Can you share a time when God extended grace to you in a difficult situation in which you were about to fail His name?

10. What did you learn through the difficult situation you shared in question 9?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #9–10 with your discipleship team.

God's grace does not mean that we do not have to do anything. When grace is offered we have to receive it and cooperate in whatever way the Spirit counsels or leads us. Jesus is our model and example of how to cooperate with God.

Read Ephesians 5:1–2 and answer questions 11–12:

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1–2

11. Whose example are we to follow (v. 1)?

12. How did our model, Jesus Christ, live a life of love (v. 2)?

Action Steps

13. *Prayerfully* consider how you might live a life of love *today* or *tomorrow* just as Christ Jesus did. Make notes as needed.

14. From your prayer above in #13, share how the Holy Spirit led you and the results, noting how your actions honored God's name.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your Action Step 14 with your discipleship team.

Remember God is merciful. In His mercy, He is especially attentive to the prayers of those who love His name. Those of us in God's forever family do love His name. It is good to recall Psalm 119:132 when in need and remind God to: *Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name.*

—End Day One—

Day Two

Righteous is His Name

Historically, Christians have not always lived up to the high standards that our name demands. Even today, it may be difficult to discern (tell the difference) Christians from non-Christians. There are non-believers, atheists, and even cult adherents or followers who have certain moral standards and pleasing personalities.

Our handbook for knowing how to successfully bear our new family name is the Bible. Scripture teaches us what is expected of a follower of Jesus Christ and how we should act or react in various situations. Not only does the Bible tell us what we should do, it informs us of God's grace and the Holy Spirit's enabling power in our lives so we can live up to the high standards that the name Christian demands.

15. As a leader that others will look to and emulate or imitate, what can *you* do to elevate the name Christian to a higher and holier standard?

Definition: The Hebrew word, *YHWH* (יהוה), is translated LORD in most English Bible translations. This is the divine name God gave to Moses when He commissioned him to free His people from Pharaoh (Exodus 3:10–15). *YHWH* is found more than 6,000 times in the Old Testament. “The written Hebrew language did not include vowels, only the consonants were used; thus, readers supplied the vowels as they read.”¹ *Yahweh* (Yah weh) is the same Hebrew name, *YHWH*, with vowels added and is translated LORD in Psalm 99:1–2 below.

Read Psalm 99:1–3 and answer questions 16–17:

The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. ²Great is the LORD in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations. ³Let them praise your great and awesome name—he is holy. Psalm 99:1–3

16. Who is to praise LORD's great and awesome name (v. 1, 3)?

17. How do *you* praise the LORD and His great and awesome name?

All the nations are to praise the LORD and his great and awesome name. The phrase “all the nations” means everyone. None is excluded from praising *the Name*. This means praise for all of God and all of His majestic names in Scripture. Our handbook for knowing how to successfully carry our new family name and bring praise to the LORD is the Bible.

¹Trent Butler, “Holman Bible Dictionary,” (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN., 1991), 1429.

To reiterate, God's name in the Bible is synonymous (equivalent in meaning) with God himself. God and His names are used interchangeably for our benefit. This is one of the ways God has chosen to reveal His personal identity to us. It is also one reason the Jews would not even speak or write the name YHWH for fear of misusing it, just as they would be afraid of offending God Himself. This is still true for religious Jews today.

Read Philippians 2:9–11 and answer questions 18–21:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:9–11

18. What is the name that will cause every knee to bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth at the judgment seat (v. 10)? (Cf. Romans 14:9–11)

19. Do you bow down to Jesus as Lord of *your* life? Yes No Sometimes (Underline One)

20. Explain your answer to question 19 about whether or not *you* bow down to Jesus as Lord:

21. If you are having difficulty in bowing and serving the Lord in any area of your life, pray and pray together with your discipleship team for Jesus' help.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers 18–21 and pray with your discipleship team.

By focusing on God's names in Scripture, we can learn much about Him and His holy nature. However, one of God's characteristics is His incomprehensibility. This means that we will never completely comprehend or know God while on earth; He is beyond our understanding. Heaven may be a different matter in many respects, but one thing will not change—God's vast superiority and supremacy over His creatures. Therefore, He will always be incomprehensible to some extent.

In God's goodness and grace, He has revealed a tremendous amount about Himself throughout the Bible. With the Spirit's help, this Holy Book will keep you and me learning and growing in our relationship with the Lord for the rest of our lives. What a joyful, lifetime quest—knowing God! As a Christian leader, you will also have the opportunity of helping others mature in their relationship with our infinite Creator.

God's names or attributes can be divided into two parts: the attributes He shares with us and those He does not. For example, God is merciful, and we can share in this characteristic by being merciful to others. However, God is omnipresent (present everywhere), but we can only exist in one place and one time zone. God does not share His omnipresence with us or any others in heaven or on earth.

As powerful as the angels are, including the fallen ones, they are not omnipresent. Satan may be able to cover a lot of territory but not at the same time. He is no match for God. Although there is a battle of good and evil going on, our good God is vastly superior to any evil that Satan dares to throw at us. It is not an equal battle of good versus evil because God is vastly superior.

Satan is a created being who will always have to answer to Almighty God (2 Peter 2:4; Job 1:12; 2:6; Matthew 10:8; James 4:7). Simply, God has no equal and therefore no opposite. God has given Satan free will (ability to choose; make decisions) within a certain framework, just as He has given us free will. Both Satan's freedom and ours can have a negative effect on our world.

God is sovereign and supreme. Satan does not even have supreme power over his evil actions but must wage his dastardly deeds within allotted borders (Job 1:12). Neither Satan nor his demons have any power or control over a believer. When believers do get caught up in diabolic schemes, it is usually because we are not relying on God. Remember 1 John 4:4: *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.* Keep this verse in mind whenever you feel attacked, persecuted, or vulnerable.

We will look at two of God's names that He passes on or shares with us and one name that God does not pass on or share with us. Remember that God's "Being" encompasses all of His names or attributes at the same time. When God is righteous and punishes those who are disobedient, He is still loving and good.

The LORD Our Righteousness (Transliterated² *Yahweh Tsidkenu* in Hebrew)

22. Read Psalm 48:10. Praise for God and His name reaches the ends of the earth because His right hand is filled with:

Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. Psalm 48:10

Definitions: The Hebrew word that we translate *righteousness* is tse²deq (צֶדֶק). It means that which is *right*, just, and normal. It also is defined as *rightness*, justness, and of correct weights and measures. *Right* means that someone or something is correct, proper, morally good and appropriate. *Just* means that someone is fair, impartial, morally correct, and reasonable.

Psalm 48:10 declares that God is praised in all nations because of His righteousness. Let us consider the word righteousness and how we would determine what is correct, just, and morally good. In order to figure out the rightness of someone or some action we must set up a standard. A standard is a value or object by which something may be measured, judged, or tested.

23. If you or your neighbor were to set the standard of what is right and correct, do you think there would be some bias (prejudice) in that standard? Yes No (Underline One)

² Transliterate means to represent (letters or words) in the corresponding characters of another alphabet.

24. Do you think either you or your neighbor might be tempted to adjust or alter that standard according to changing feelings or situations? Yes No (Underline One)

You may have heard, “What is right for you may not be right for me.” In our world righteousness is based on individual tastes and preferences. In that case, people do not care if what is right for them, and their subsequent actions hurt others or not. For example, “I want a new car; I deserve it. Since I don’t have enough money to buy the car I want, I will just figure out a way to embezzle (steal) from the company where I work and use the money to purchase the car I desire. Then won’t I be proud to drive it.” Pride can certainly motivate the heart to sin. It not only causes people to want material things, but power and fame as well.

However, if folks care just a smidgen (a bit) about others, they may say something like, “It doesn’t matter what I do, as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone. What people don’t know can’t hurt them. I can lie, visit a prostitute, be a prostitute, view sexual or violent materials, cheat, have sex outside of marriage, or not pay taxes. It is my life and as long as I don’t harm anyone else, it is okay.”

25. As a Christian leader, how would you respond to a new Christian who said, “It doesn’t matter what I do, it isn’t hurting anyone?”

26. As a Christian leader, how would you respond to professed Christians living together in a sexual relationship before marriage?

27. What is wrong with an arbitrary (subjective, random) standard of righteousness?

It would be difficult, if not impossible to follow a rule of conduct that was applied by chance or whim. It would be a guessing game as to how one should act and respond each day. In the same way, what turmoil and chaos would result if each person made rules according to their own preferences or circumstances.

God is our standard of righteousness. He always does what is correct and morally good. He is just and upright in all His ways. God does not change (Malachi 3:6) so the standard of righteousness is fixed and secure. You do not have to wake up each morning and wonder what will be morally appropriate. Righteousness is set in God Himself and revealed throughout His Word.

Regarding sex, it is a God-given gift for a wedded man and woman (Mark 10:6–9; 1 Corinthians 7:2) and their marriage bed is to be kept pure (Hebrews 13:4). Adultery is wrong and even looking on another lustfully breaks God’s standard of righteousness (Matthew 5:27–28). Sexual immorality, including premarital sex (fornication), is considered wicked in God’s eyes (1

Corinthians 6:9–10; 12–20). Homosexuality is wrong and not right (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:18–32).

All of these sins that miss God's standard can be forgiven and overcome in the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 5:16–18). God wants to help us control our bodies and live a righteous life (1 Thessalonians 4:3–6). Learn to control your mind because it can lead to evil thoughts and sexual immorality (Matthew 15:19–20). The Holy Spirit empowers and enables victory (Romans 8:9, 13–14; 2 Peter 1:3).

Read Psalm 7:17 and answer questions 28–29:

I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High. Psalm 7:17

- 28.** Do you thank the LORD because of His righteousness? Yes No (Underline One)
- 29.** Explain your answer to question 28 about thanking the LORD because of His righteousness.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers 28–29 and pray with your discipleship team.

God, in His righteousness, is the sovereign (supreme) administrator of justice. David, in Psalm 7:17, is secure in his God. He knows the righteous LORD can save him from his enemies. The LORD is the righteous Deliverer. Nothing, not any being, place, or thing can withstand His righteous rule. He has the absolute power to enforce His judgments, punishing or rewarding accordingly.

30. What if God were righteous but *not* all powerful?

31. What if God were all powerful but *not* righteous?

If God were righteous and not all powerful, He could not enforce His laws. His people would have no protection from their enemies, nor be assured of eternal life. In addition, without an omnipotent (all powerful) God, the devil, demons, and evil men might never be called to account for their loathsome deeds.

If the LORD were powerful and not righteous, people would not have much peace. We would never be sure of His will or desire for our lives. We would have no way to gauge (determine) our actions or even purpose. You and I would live in constant fear, never knowing what God wanted from us or how to please Him.

32. Read Jeremiah 23:5–6. Who is the righteous Branch, the King, and Righteous Savior? (Cf. Acts 7:52)

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior.” Jeremiah 23:5–6

The LORD Our Righteous Savior

Although Jeremiah was speaking about the Israelite’s freedom from the Babylonians, he is also prophesying about the Messiah, Jesus Our Righteous Savior. God the Father and God the Son share this name, The LORD Our Righteous Savior (Isaiah 45:21c).

When we speak of God’s righteousness we are also speaking of God’s justice. As we learned, the word translated for righteousness in biblical Hebrew is *tsedek* (צֶדֶק), and its definition includes justice. When we speak of God being righteous, we are also saying God is just. He gives the right consideration to everyone’s claims and treats them accordingly. He is a fair judge.

Justice demands that wrongdoing and crimes must be punished. A righteous judge does not allow criminal behavior to go unchecked. Mercy, on the other hand, calls for refraining from punishment, and forgiving others. Mercy, as we studied in *Unit One: Who Is God?, Lesson 2*, is also one of God’s holy attributes.

33. How can God be both just and merciful at the same time?

God’s justice and mercy met in Christ on the cross. We *are* sinners who deserve punishment for our sins and yet God’s Son, in unfathomable (impossible to measure or understand) mercy, paid the penalty for our crimes. Justice was served, and mercy was given in Jesus’ blood sacrifice. For those who do not receive God’s mercy, which is Jesus’ taking the rap (criminal charge), justice will be served with an eternal sentence of hell.

34. Read Romans 4:23–25. How do we share in God’s attribute of righteousness, and become righteous?

Definition: The word *credit* has various meanings but in the context of Romans 4:23–25 it means that a payment has been recorded to one’s account. Abraham was reckoned or *credited* righteous because he believed in God and His promises (Romans 4:20–22).

The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Romans 4:23–25 (underlining by author for emphasis)

35. Believers still sin, so how can we live up to God's standard and be righteous in His sight? (Hebrews 9:14; Ephesians 4:21–24; 1 John 1:8–10; Romans 6)

Our righteousness is credited (reckoned, paid) to us through the blood of Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for our sins. Although we do not take pleasure in sin anymore, we can still do wrong things. When this happens, we agree with God that we have sinned and ask forgiveness based on our faith and trust in Christ and his sacrifice on the cross.

Why Christians Continue to Sin

After we are born again in Christ we are new creations. Our sins are forgiven, and we have God's Spirit to lead us in all righteousness. We have the ability to do what is right (Romans 6:11–14) but we do sin (1 John 1:8).

God does not take away our human nature and our ability to choose good from evil (Romans 6:19). We still have free will and we still have Satan and his followers who prowl around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). In our natural body we will always be tempted to put ourselves, our comfort, and our own satisfaction above others. Also, we continue to live in a fallen and corrupted world that can entice or lure us into sinful activities.

Even Jesus, in His humanity, was tempted (Matthew 4:1–11). Satan tried to persuade Jesus to turn rocks into bread when He was hungry, to prove Himself deity by testing God, and to receive His reward early by false worship. Jesus was perfect and in every temptation He never sinned. He always chose God's way and righteousness.

Jesus' Spirit lives within believers and helps us to resist temptation just like He did. We need to allow Jesus to take over and work through us (Philippians 4:13). Once we are saved, we begin the process called sanctification. We grow in holiness and purity each day (Hebrews 12:14–15; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8). As new creations, we should not enjoy sin, nor should we continue in sinful behaviors.

When we do sin, we are to agree with God that we have done wrong (1 John 1:9). We use our free will to repent, that is, we turn from doing that particular sin or sins. As Jesus taught, we should pray for help to keep us from temptation because the *spirit is willing, but the body is weak* (Mark 14:38). God gives us grace to walk in His steps.

Note: The last four pages on this lesson contain a “**Contemplative Confession Guide.**” Ideally, confess a sin whenever you become aware of it. Sometimes we may have blind spots to our sinful thoughts and actions. With the Holy Spirit's guidance, use this guide to help bring all sins to mind so you may confess, repent, and remain in holy relationship with God.

Action Step: You are righteousness in Christ Jesus. Give praise to His name.

—End Day Two—

Day Three
The Shepherd

A shepherd is one who watches, tends, or keeps a flock of sheep. Sheep are grass eating animals that were important in ancient Israel. They were used for their fleece, hide, meat, milk, and as an offering in the sacrificial system. Sheep were significant in Israel's economy.

Sheep needed and still need a lot of care for them to be healthy and useful. Not only are they subject to attack by other wild animals, but they have certain characteristics that keep them from being successful as solitary or independent animals. They are skittish (jumpy), tend to overeat, attract parasites, and are not able to keep their woolly hair manageable. The fleece can actually grow and become heavy and cause the sheep to fall over from its weight.³ Once the animal falls down from a full fleece, it will not be able to rise again on its own, and without help will die.

Not every sheep herder is willing to do what is necessary to have healthy and productive sheep. There are good shepherds who are concerned about their sheep and bad shepherds who are not. David, who wrote the 23rd Psalm, knew the difference between the two. Being a good shepherd himself, he was willing to risk his life for his sheep. The Bible tells us that he fought both bear and lion to keep his flock safe (1 Samuel 17:36).

The LORD is my Shepherd (Yahweh Rohi)

36. Read Psalm 23:1. Who is *your* Shepherd?

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. Psalm 23:1

37. Read Psalm 95:6–7a Whose pasture and flock do *you* belong to?

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; ⁷for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Psalm 95:6–7a

In the Bible sheep are used in various instances to symbolize God's people. God often uses what His people know and understand in the physical world to help them relate to Him in the spiritual world. For example, sheep can wander off, lose sight of the shepherd, and become lost. In Isaiah 53:6, God tells us that we are like sheep and go astray; we lose sight of Him and get off track.

38. What are some ways that *you* are like a sheep?

39. How has God been *your* shepherd?

³ *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23* by Phillip Keller is an insightful guide that you might want to read. Published in 1970 by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers 38–39 and pray with your discipleship team.

David was not the first person to think of God as his shepherd. God established this particular name and how it relates to His people in the first book of the Bible. He then uses this strong and tender name throughout Scripture. It is a holy and meaningful picture of our God.

40. Read Genesis 48:15. How long did Jacob (Israel) say that God had been his shepherd?

Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.” Genesis 48:15

Read John 10:11 and answer questions 41–45:

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” John 10:11

41. Who is speaking in this verse?

42. Do God the Father and God the Son share the name, Shepherd? Yes No (Underline One)

43. How did Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lay down his life for *you*?

44. How can *you* be a shepherd to a flock or group of people?

45. As a shepherd following Christ, how do *you* lay down *your* life for your sheep or people?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers 43–45 and pray with your discipleship team.

46. Read Revelation 7:17. List two things the Shepherd will do for you as a sheep of His pasture?

“For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 7:17

Jesus, the Lamb and Shepherd, leads His sheep to springs of living water. In Revelation 7:17, living water means eternal life. Not only will the Shepherd’s sheep receive everlasting life, but they will receive a life with no tears. God’s people will be filled with eternal peace and joy.

Read John 21:16 and answer questions 47–49:

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” John 21:16

47. What does Jesus ask Peter to do?
48. Is Jesus asking you the same thing, to take care of His sheep? Yes No (Underline One)
49. Explain your answer to question 48 about taking care of Jesus' sheep:
50. What are some specific ways that a Christian leader is a *good* shepherd of sheep?
(See Matthew 4:19, 5:38–42; James 5:13; John 10:9–16, 21:15–17.)

Action Steps: Pray and Practically Apply

O Great and Good Shepherd,

I am the sheep of Your pasture and have every good thing that I need. Your tender mercies are new every morning. Thank you for seeking me when I was lost and calling me back when I stray. I am forever indebted to You for laying down Your life for me, a simple sheep.

Thank You for continually protecting me from the evil one who wants to destroy me. No one can do anything to me except by Your permission. If I am caught in a trap or hindered in anyway, You will release me in perfect timing.

O loving and caring Shepherd, anoint and teach me to be a shepherd like You. Help me to lead, guide, serve, encourage, forgive, and lay down my life in Jesus' name. Thank You Holy Spirit for powerfully working through me for God's holy service and glory! Amen.

51. Choose one of the ways a leader is a *good* shepherd (see your answer to #50) so that you can apply it to your own life. What did you choose to do, and how will you begin to use it?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers 48–51 and pray with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

Day Four

I AM

Misusing any names of the triune God is wrong. This includes using God's names in flippant or frivolous ways. He is not a God to trifle with in humor or jest. He created us to have wholesome humor, but we are surely guilty if we say or use God's names, including Jesus, in an unholy or unworthy manner.

All of God's names are to be revered (honored) and not misused. The Bible makes this clear (Exodus 20:7; Matthew 6:9). But we should not be so worried about misusing God's names that we never say them. God wants to hear us speak His names in love and adoration. Think about it: "Don't you like to hear your name spoken out loud with fondness or affection?"

God is relational and He made us relational. He has revealed His names to us in Scripture so we could know and relate to Him. If God did not want us to speak or meditate on His names, He would not have clearly revealed them to us.

The correct use of God's names reminds me of the story of the talents (Matthew 25:15–29). Recall the servant who received one talent. He hid it for fear of losing it and having to face a tough master. The master was not pleased at all. In the same way God is a righteous Master, and He will punish anyone who misuses His name. However, like the earthly master wanted His talents increased and not hidden, God wants the proper use of His name increased and not hidden away. He desires His name to be praised and honored among the nations.

God has given us His name as a pure gift of revelation and love. Let us return this gift with our love and respect. Let us be thankful and always use His Name properly.

52. What do you do when you hear any of God's names misused by a person, through a movie, or social media?

53. Explain whether or not you think God will hold you responsible for your response to another's misuse of His name:

When someone is misusing God's name, you can ask them *in a kind and loving manner* to stop. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in what to say and how to say it. If you are truly living out your faith, others may recognize your genuineness and refrain from swearing in your presence. If you are in a situation where the misuse of the Lord's name is continuous and you cannot escape it, pray for the strength of your witness and the mighty power of Jesus to change lives.

The media, including movies, social media, misuses God's name constantly. At the least, do not watch or listen to these kinds of things. Pray for Hollywood and other film makers not to abuse the name of our Lord. At the most, undergirded (firm basis) by prayer, consider ways you can affect this industry. Perhaps you might contact studio leaders by some means, asking them to honor God's name in all of their products.

Action Step

If you have ever misused God's name, take time now to confess, repent, and receive God's mercy. When you get angry and offensive words just seem to slip out, confess, repent, and again receive God's mercy. In time, you will cease to have those slips in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I AM, HE IS (EHYEH, YAHWEH)

We now turn our attention to the name God said was to be remembered from generation to generation (Exodus 3:15). It is a powerful and holy name that encompasses some of God's exclusive attributes. It is the name that God gave to Moses to use in a significant and historic mission.

Read Exodus 3:13–14 and answer questions 54–55:

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" ¹⁴*God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* Exodus 3:13–14

54. When Moses asked God for His name, what name did God give to him (v. 14)?

55. After God told Moses His name, what further instructions did God give (v. 14)?

In the Hebrew text, the word God uses for His name, *I AM*, is EHYEH (אֶהְיֶה). It is the *first* person, singular, qal, imperfect tense of the verb *to be*. Context, syntax (sentence structure) and grammar give words various meanings and nuances. The Qal imperfect expresses the kind of action as incomplete or an incomplete state of being, whether in the past, present, or future. In fact, in the previous verse Exodus 3:12, the same verb is translated, *I will be*, reminding of that God is timeless. Recall the Lord God, **who is**, and **who was** and **who is to come** (Revelation 1:8).

When we use God's name we say YAHWEH (YHWH), *HE IS*. The word is the *third* person, masculine, singular, qal, imperfect of the verb, *to be*. This is the name that Moses uses when he goes to the Israelites and tells them that YAHWEH (HE IS) has sent me to you.

In English, the verb *to be* can mean to have existence, give description, continue or happen. It can also mean to live, occupy a position, to have a certain identity, or to become. Bible translators have made various attempts to bring out the real sense and meaning of God's name EHYEH (אֶהְיֶה), *I AM*:

I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS (NLT)

I AM THAT WHICH IS (YLT)

I am he who is (NJB)

I AM THE BEING

The One who Eternally Exists
The Self Existent One
I am the one that has being within himself⁴

God is spirit and is not restricted by time, space, or matter. He created all three when He created the universe. God acts and moves within the time and space that He created but He is not limited by it. God is timeless and eternal, with no beginning and no end. So, when God says I AM, He is revealing His self-existent nature. He is dependent on no one. However, everyone is dependent on Him.

God exists everywhere (Jeremiah: 23–24; Psalm 139:7–10); HE IS. He is omnipresent (Omni means all in Latin). God’s omnipresence is difficult for us to understand because we live in time and space surrounded by matter. We can be separated in time and space from people and things, but God cannot. He is present with you and with me and with all creation at the same time. Whether or not He reveals His presence in some tangible way, has no bearing on this truth of his omnipresence.

However, God is not identical or contained within His created universe (Pantheism). This is a non-Christian idea. This is a New Age view of God. Taken to extreme, the New Ager will declare that all things are god or in god so that there is no difference between God, man, or a tree.

56. How does studying the name YHWH enlarge your view of God?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to question 56 with your discipleship team.

Read John 8:58–59 and answer questions 57–59:

“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.
John 8:58–59

57. What name does Jesus call Himself?

58. When Jesus called Himself “I Am,” why did the Jews attempt to stone him?
(Cf. Leviticus 24:16)

59. What name does God the Father and God the Son share but we do not?

⁴ J.D. Douglas., *New Bible Dictionary*, Second Edition, (Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 1991) 427.

Read Colossians 1:15–17 and answer questions 60–63:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15–17

60. Who is the image of the invisible God (v.15)?

61. Who do we depend on to keep our world together (v.17)?

62. Why should Jesus' name be revered and kept holy (v.15–17)?

63. Why do you think some people think misusing Jesus' name is not as egregious (awful) as misusing God's name?

Action Step

64. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you to someone in the next couple of days that you can communicate the truth of God and Jesus being one and sharing the same holy name, YAHWEH. Make notes about your experience and share with your discipleship team:

Accountability: Be prepared to share what happened from Action Step 63 with your team.

—End Day Four—

Day Five

In His Name

We looked at three names that God the Father and God the Son share: *The LORD Our Righteousness, The Good Shepherd, and YHWH*. Sharing the same name is another powerful testimony to the fact that Jesus and the Father are one. Recall that God's name is synonymous (identical) to Himself. No one could call himself YHWH except God.

Read John 17:11–12 and answer questions 65–66:

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. John 17:11–12 (Judas Iscariot was the one doomed to destruction.)

65. Jesus prayed to the Father to protect His disciples by the power of His name. Since John died in exile and the other ten apostles were martyred, how was Jesus' prayer answered?

Jesus was praying that God would keep the disciples in His name. He wanted the disciples to be one with the Father and Himself rather than being lost to eternal damnation (condemned to hell or eternal punishment). Jesus was not praying that their bodies would remain safe, but their souls or spirits would be true to God. Jesus' prayer was answered in that all His disciples except Judas remained faithful, even to death.

66. Based on Jesus' prayer, how will you adjust or refine your prayers for those you are discipling and for others (v. 11–12)?

67. Read and meditate on John 14:13–14. List two reasons Jesus will do what you ask in prayer:

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:13–14

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to questions 65–67 with your team.

Asking in Jesus' name means we are dwelling in or living in Him. We are standing firm and following Jesus daily. Our desire is to bring honor to God and not to ourselves. In fact, our prayers match up with the Father's will and what He wants to accomplish through us. We, like Jesus, have the Father's glory in mind when we make our requests.

Read Acts 5:40–41 and answer questions 68–70:

His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.
Acts 5:40–41

68. Did Jesus' name keep the apostles from being flogged? Y N (Underline One)

69. After the flogging, why did the apostles leave rejoicing?

70. How have you suffered disgrace for Jesus' Name?

Jesus suffered both emotional and physical persecution while he walked the earth in human form. Being in Jesus or living in His name means that we may be called to suffer in similar ways. The servant is not greater than the Master. Jesus does not promise a life without pain and suffering but one lived victoriously through Him, both now and forever.

71. According to Luke 10:20, what should you rejoice about?

However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20 (Cf. Revelation 21:27)

72. Read Psalm 52:9. Where do you place your hope?

For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good. Psalm 52:9

73. Action Step: Memorize Isaiah 26:8 and 42:8:

Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. Isaiah 26:8

"I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols."
Isaiah 42:8

Accountability: Be prepared to share your memory verses #73 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Five and Lesson 9—

Next—Unit 2: Christian Leadership, Lesson 10: Active Leadership Mission

Rev 5/20/2022

Contemplative Confession Guide

Holy God, You are good and set the standard for righteousness. I ask to walk in Your holiness and light.

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5

Search my heart O God, my thoughts and my ways, and see if there is any offensive way in me.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23–24

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; Psalm 66:18

Holy Spirit, please reveal my sins to me and lead me in godly sorrow for my transgressions.

When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. John 16:8–11

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Romans 8:26–27

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Examine your conscience and confess (agree with and say plainly) to God about your wrongdoing. You might begin by praying: Father, I come to You as Your child and ask how I have hurt You, or caused You pain and heartache? (Genesis 6:6; Ephesians 4:30–32)

Listed below are questions to help recall the specific wrong actions, deeds, or thoughts:

1. Relational Problems: Am I respecting and honoring God? Am I treating people including family, friends, stranger, and enemies in a Christ-like manner? Have I mistreated anyone? Have I been jealous, prideful, arrogant, or selfish toward another? Am I patient?

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

Note: Sometimes it is helpful to confess to another trustworthy Christian who will listen, keep a confidence, and pray with and for you to overcome temptation.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16

2. Moral Purity: Do I have purity of mind and heart? How have I been impure? Am I watching or using social media, movies, or the internet in ways that are dishonoring to Christ? Am I listening to conversations, music, or any words that do not honor God? Are my reading materials pure?

I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. Psalm 101:3

3. Anxiety: Do I trust God completely without worry or concern? Do I tend to despair (feelings of hopelessness)? What am I concerned about that reveals my faithlessness?

Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Matthew 6:27

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. Habakkuk 3:17–18

4. Disobedience: How am I following God's direction? Am I walking in God's will and plan for my life? Am I following His word, the Bible?

"If you love me, keep my commands." John 14:15

5. Pure Motives and Attitudes: Do I have an unhealthy pattern of thinking? Do I complain or criticize others? Do I complain or criticize circumstances or things in my life? Am I self-indulgent with my time? Do I harbor a grudge or unforgiveness toward anyone, past or present?

Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate. Psalm 101:5

Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! James 5:9

6. Moral Character: Am I honest? Can people depend on what I say? Do I say things in a way as to hide the truth of a situation? Am I ethical and deal fairly with everyone? Do I cheat? Do I gossip? Am I easily angered? Do I lack self-control? Do I submit to authority?

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5–8

7. Is there anything in any area of my life where I have sinned?

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

I John 1:8–10

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 1 John 2:15

O Merciful Father, I am sorry and sad for all the sins I just acknowledged. I turn back to You and turn away from my sins.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. ⁵Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. ⁶Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. ⁷Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. ⁹Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. ¹⁰Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. ¹⁴Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. ¹⁵Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. ¹⁷My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. ¹⁸May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁹Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar. Psalm 51:1–19

(Instead of hyssop (v. 7), I pray to be cleansed in Jesus' blood. I end my prayer using Psalm 51 (v. 19) in this way: Then You will delight in the one righteous sacrifice, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.)

Lord Jesus, You are the Christ, the atoning sacrifice for my sins. I accept Your free gift of forgiveness for all my sins, past, present, and future, known and unknown, intentional and unintentional. I pray that I die to sin and live for righteousness. Thank You, my Lord.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. I John 2: 1–2

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” 1 Peter 2:24

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

O God, please show me if there is anything I need to do to restore anything that I have taken, either physically or spiritually from another. May I never blame anyone else for my sin but accept fully my responsibility.

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Luke 19:8

Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, thank You for continually forgiving me. Help me to always forgive others and follow Jesus’ instructions. I ask to walk in the light with You, be a light to all people, and have loving fellowship with other Christians. Thank You.

“Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.” Luke 17:4

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. I John 1:7

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Galatians 6:1

Lord Jesus, thank you that I may now draw near to God and enter into His presence in assurance of faith.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. Hebrews 4:14

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Hebrews 7:25

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:22

Bibliography: Disciples Cross by Avery Willis Jr.

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