

An Interview with Sheryl Giesbrecht, Author of *Experiencing God Through His Names*



What's in a name? Names are more than groups of letters that represent a person or identify objects. Names are powerful. A person's character and destiny can be influenced by his or her name. When it comes to God, His attributes and personality support His unique and distinct names. In *Experiencing God Through His Names* (Bold Vision Books), author Sheryl Giesbrecht leads readers in a study to discover truths about God's character by a study of His various titles and names.

Q: You wrote *Experiencing God Through His Names* after some very personal encounters. Please share what led you to explore the different names for God.

I was a stressed-out pastor's wife, working a full-time job outside of our home, mothering a preschooler and kindergartener, exhausted from the demands of family and ministry. I was full of fear with one child in a public school and the other with a daycare provider. I needed the connection of women friendships but was afraid of rejection and how I might fit in since I was a working mother. I wanted to learn how to trust God in a practical way. I joined a Moms in Touch group (now known as [Moms In Prayer International](#)) to pray for my child in school. Through this amazing group of women, I learned how to pray specifically for my own needs and the needs of my family by understanding the names of God. Added bonuses were learning to worship using the names of God and drawing near to God by calling on His specific names.

Q: The book takes an in-depth look at 31 names for God. Are these all of the names for God found in the Bible?

No, these 31 names of God are not an all-inclusive list. Of course, some of the names of God are listed more times in the Bible than others. The name "Father" is a distinguishing title used more than 390 times in the New International Version of the New Testament. The name of God, "Elohim" (Creator), is used more than 2,500 times in the Old Testament. Other names such as "El Bethel" is used only once in the entire Bible. There are many more names of God, and this study is just an entry point for an exciting new way to experience God.

Q: Why is it so important for believers to know God's various names?

Believers must know God's names to understand His character, faithfulness, love and provision better. When we grasp the impact of God's love and sensitivity by studying His nature in this way, we can apply this truth to all areas of our lives — parenting, marriage, marketplace and personal communication.

Q: How can meditating on each of the characteristics of God deepen a believer's walk with Him?

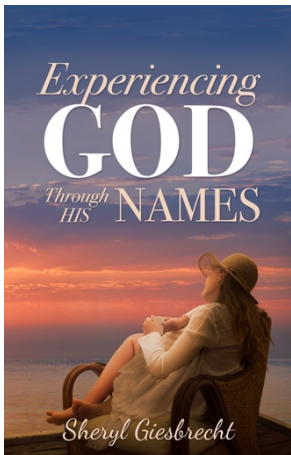
A believer's walk with God is strengthened by meditating on God's characteristics because God *wants* us to know Him better. God does not hide from us, yet He *waits* for us to seek Him. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." At the times we do not know what to do next, if we doubt God cares or wants to help, we must remind ourselves in prayer from Psalm 9:10: "Those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You."

Q: Sometimes the problems of life seem bigger than we can handle, and we can't see a solution. How can believers put these "giants" into perspective?

In our study of God by examining His names, we are exposed to a personal view of God as we get acquainted with Him. This brings us to a close encounter of a sacred kind with Him as we never have experienced before. A few examples are:

- He is our "Elohim" (Creator). God made man and woman in His image. We are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).
- He is "Jehovah Sabaoth" (the Lord of Heaven's armies). As a victorious warrior and leader of the heavenly host, He is a sure victor to win the battles raging in our lives (I Samuel 17:45).
- He is the King, "Jehovah Hamelech," righteous ruler over all mankind. Even in situations that seem chaotic, His plan is fulfilled as we look forward to His coming kingdom (Revelation 21:1-4).

God is greater than our problems. We can remind ourselves of this when we affirm God's supremacy, authority and power. We commit ourselves to surrender our issues to His will be done. Our "giants" then take their proper place, minimized to manageable proportions under the shadow of God's presence, power and purpose.



Q: Describe the imagery you use when comparing the study of the names of God to looking at a postcard of the Grand Canyon.

Postcards are single, small photographs of an expansive, panoramic view. In the same way, studying the names of God one at a time is like stopping to examine intricately the beauty and detail of a solo shot of a single postcard one at a time. When we observe one individual name of God at a time and consider the cross-section of His personality traits associated with it, we can access strength, wisdom, patience, grace, love and much more of God's presence for our needs and the needs of others. We can understand the reality of His presence and apply the capability of His character.

Q: One of the names you focus on is "Jehovah Maozi," meaning rock or fortress. How has God been a very real fortress for you during difficult circumstances?

Once a stage four cancer patient, after six months I was finally finished with my final chemotherapy treatment. A few days later, I entered our Sunday school class and was met with concerned friends' unkind comments. I wanted to run away physically from the pain of their harsh words. I thought of the name of God, "Jehovah Maozi" (Fortress), and prayed, "Help, Lord." I remembered a song I taught my own children: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run to it and are safe." "Jehovah Maozi" provided a safe haven for me that day; I found emotional relief and spiritual strength in the protection of His peace and comfort during my time of immediate need.

Q: Is there one of God's names in particular that resonates most with you?

Each of the names of God is my favorite — depending on how He wants me to praise Him or submit my needs or the needs of others to Him. Some that come immediately to mind are: "El Shaddai" (the God who is almighty and all-sufficient), "Jehovah Rohi" (the Lord my shepherd) and "El Roi" (the God who sees).

Q: How has getting to know God more through His names helped the focus of your own ministry?

Before the ministry was launched in 1996, I learned to trust God and began to understand how to let go of my emotional, relational and physical brokenness. I found complete independence when I traded my bondage for spiritual breakthrough. Through the process of standing firm in my identity in Christ and understanding His character through studying His names, I was able to move from captivity to freedom by believing God and taking Him at His Word.

God has fashioned my personal walk with Him by graciously revealing more of His character to me through studying His names. The habit of studying His names and praying His names has helped me to pray more effectively for myself and my family. I use the same method to pray for others efficiently. The practice has deepened my prayer life as I seek actively to trust our Almighty God and let Him lead the ministry He has called me to.

The same breakthrough freedom is possible for anyone who chooses to dedicate themselves to find out what God thinks. When we seek to find Him by examining His names, we are able to understand His character further. God helps us untangle the knots of deception so we can walk intentionally in our identity in Christ. The result will be transformation into the best version of ourselves we can be. This complete makeover is what gives God glory. "Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free," says John 8:32.

Learn more about more about *Experiencing God Through His Names* and Sheryl Giesbrecht at www.FromAshesToBeauty.com, or follow her on [Facebook](#) ([AuthorSherylGiesbrecht](#)) and [Twitter](#) ([SGiesbrecht](#)).