

# GOD

## (1) Speaking the Names of God

One of the most influential spiritual mentors in my life was a man by the name of **Don Wagner**. He was a Christian counselor who had no degrees, and no formal graduate or even undergraduate education, and no credentials. He unashamedly depended on the Holy Spirit, and on wisdom of the written Word of God.

The Lord led me to Don 22 years ago shortly after my divorce, and the pain that followed:

- **Mourning of the loss of 11 years of Marriage**
- **Fired from my position as Lead Pastor of the Church**
  - Belief that I would never return to the ministry
- **Guilt of leaving a legacy of pain to my daughters (then ages 7 & 5)**
  - Navigating the help and support they needed
- **A 2-year excruciatingly fierce battle for custody**
  - Two paper routes, Home Depot, painting houses on the weekend to make ends meet – and somehow finding the energy and time as a single parent to be a father to my girls...
- **Confusion, and honestly, anger around my unmet expectations of “Why ‘God’ let this happen?”**
  - Was He was upset with me?
  - Did He have any use for me anymore...now that I was a “failure”

Through all of that, every counseling session and every discussion Don would remind me that all of my pain, all of my expectations, all of my struggles, my entire perspective – *everything* – depended completely on how I viewed God.

### Who is God?

I had to work through my answers, and my mostly preconceived and erroneous assumptions about not just what, but who was behind that word.

- Did He care about what was happening?
- Was it even on His radar?
- Why Had ignored my decade of pleading for a healthy, and healed marriage?
- Why did my ministry count for nothing when it came time for Him to save me in my darkest hours?
- Was He angry at me? Disgusted?
- Was this divine punishment for my many sins and patterns of failure?

**I have come to be utterly convinced, that how you answer the question “Who is God?” determines how you will respond to and experience the course of your life.**

**“GOD” is not a proper name.** It’s more of a classification or a category.

**Exodus 20:3** “Thou shalt have no other *gods* before me.”

- It’s like saying “deity”—and in fact, the word’s etymology comes from old Norse and Germanic mythology and paganism.
  - It’d be like always calling (and thinking about) all the males in your life -- “Man”
  - Your kids -- “Offspring”
  - Your dog or cat -- “Pet.”

And “God” is the most common word we use – even as Christians – to describe the One who we claim to have given our lives wholly and intimately to... **That’s a problem.**

**Studying the Names of God is not an academic or intellectual pursuit.  
It’s an emotional and intimate one.**

- **Unjustly and Callously Fired from my position as Lead Pastor of the Church**
  - **El Roi** – *The God Who Sees Me* (**Genesis 16:13**)
- **Guilt of leaving a legacy of pain to my daughters (then ages 7 & 5)**
  - **Yahweh Rophe** – *The Lord Will Heal* (**Exodus 15:26**)
- **In Battle to Preserve My Right to be in My Girls’ Lives**
  - **Yahweh Nissi** – *The Lord is My Banner* (**Exodus 17:15**)
- **Working 24/7 to pay the attorneys, child support, child counselors, insurance, an apartment...and somehow finding the energy and time as a single parent to be a father to my girls...**
  - **Yahweh Yireh** – *The Lord Will Provide* (**Genesis 22:14**)
- **When I would desperately long for the moment every day I could climb into the most remote and darkest room of my parents’ house, lock the door, and literally get under the covers and sob...**
  - **Maon, Machesh, Magen, Metsuda, Migdal Oz** – *“ Dwelling Place, Refuge, Shield, Fortress, & Strong Tower”* (**Psalms 91:10; 46:1; 28:7; 18:2; Proverbs 18:10**)
- **Confusion, and honestly, anger around my unmet expectations of “Why ‘God’ let this happen?” Was He was upset with me? Did He have any use for me anymore...now that I was a “failure”**
  - **Yahweh Roi** – *The Lord is My Shepherd* (**Psalms 23:1**)
- **When I was convinced that my life was over...**
  - **Miqveh** – *My Hope* (**Jeremiah 14:8**)

- 1. To Know Him More Intimately Than We Ever Have Before**
- 2. To Call on Him and Speak the Power of His Name**
- 3. To Worship and Honor All That His Name Represents**
- 4. To Increase Our Faith**

**I Come in the Name of the Lord Almighty...**

**1 Samuel 17:41-46**

Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. <sup>42</sup> He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. <sup>43</sup> He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup> “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!” <sup>45</sup> David said to the Philistine, “**You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands...**”