

## SUMMER DEVOTIONS WEEK #9: July 27- August 2, 2015

This week, I'm going to be writing about the character of God. I didn't grow up in church. My understanding of spiritual things was at zero when I received Christ. There was no faith in my family growing up. We didn't even own a bible as far as I knew. I wanted to get to know God. I was encouraged to do a study on the different names of God in the Old Testament as a way of getting to know God. I did it. It was profoundly impacting. I pray the same will be true for you. One of the key things I discovered was that God gives Himself different Hebrew names – each one designed to meet a need in our lives. And as I studied each of these names, I found God working in my life, meeting my needs and growing me spiritually. Dig deep. Get to know God and His character. Endure. Persevere. Stay the course. Never give up. Keep moving forward. Love you guys.

Pastor Mike



Monday, July 27, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #57

### ***First name of God: Jehovah Shammah = “God is always there!”***

*“May God, the source of hope, fill you with joy and peace through your faith in Him. Then you’ll overflow with hope...”*

**Romans 15:13 (GW)**

So many people I meet feel hopeless. Maybe you have felt trapped in a hopeless marriage. It's on the rocks and you've tried anything and everything and it's going nowhere fast. Or maybe you've felt trapped in a hopeless career and you've bounced from job to job to job and you just haven't found where you fit yet. Or maybe you're stuck in a hopeless health problem. Or maybe you've got a hopeless situation with a child. Or maybe you've got a hopeless situation with your finances and you're not getting out of debt; you're getting deeper in debt – month after month.

What do you do? You give it to Jesus Christ. When you do, you will have a rebirth of living hope in your heart. You remember the presence of God. That He is always with you and that you will never be without Him. You may not feel it, but He is there. He is aware. He cares. He can help. *Jehovah Shammah* – “*I am the God who is always there.*” No situation is hopeless for those who have hope in the Lord, for those who trust in the Lord, for those who give their lives to the Lord.

For a kid who was a product of divorce and had no one to show him the ropes in life, this truth about God was huge. The town I grew up in – about 90% of those born there – they died there. There was a real sense of hopelessness. No real future. No real dreams. But then God became the source of my hope. He filled me with joy and peace and a confidence that He had a plan and purpose for my life. And not only was my heart and mind and soul filled with hope, but God worked in me in such a way that I became a dispenser of hope to others. This is exactly what God wants to do in you as well. Dish out huge gobs of hope to others as you help them see God and His character. And never forget - You have to hope to cope. You need to have hope to believe that God will work in your life. You need to have hope to believe that God can change your situation, that God can meet your needs. You've got to have hope.



Tuesday, July 28, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #58

## The Second Name of God Jehovah Rapha = “*I am the Lord who Heals*”

“*God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.*” **Psalm 147:3 (NCV)**

How many of you have ever had a broken bone? How many of you have ever had stitches? How many of you have ever had a surgery of any kind? How many of you have ever had a knife wound? In the kitchen or a dark alley? How many of you have ever had a gunshot wound? How many of you have ever been wounded in a war? There are some great stories from those wounds – am I right?

Well, today, I want to talk with you about How God Heals Your Wounds. Not the physical, but the hidden wounds. Hidden wounds are the memories that still hurt, those recollections from your past that when you think about those things they still cause pain in your life.

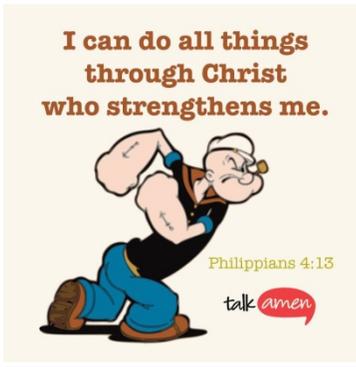
Some of you have memories of abandonment. Some of you have memories of abuse. Some of you have memories of ridicule, severe criticism, hatred, prejudice or criticism that just tore you down – physical abuse, spiritual abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse.

Where do you get the hidden wounds of life? You can get them from everywhere, from the prejudices in society, from family members (parents, kids, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles). You can get them in the work place. You can certainly get them on the schoolyard from mean children. They’re everywhere.

I’ve been a pastor for a long time and I’ve talked to a lot of people and I’ve learned two truths about life. One is everybody has a hidden wound. You may be masking it but everybody has at least one. Sometimes it is an emotional scar from somebody in the past that hurt you in some serious way.

The other thing I’ve learned is that emotional scars take longer to heal than physical wounds. The good news is this: Jesus Christ wants to heal your hidden wounds. You can start on that process this morning.

In Exodus 15:26, God says, “*I am Jehovah Rapha,*” which means, “I am the God who heals.” God wants to heal your hidden wounds. Open up your heart to the Lord and allow Him to begin the healing process. Would you pray this in your mind and heart this morning: “*Jesus Christ, I realize that You see all the pain in my heart, the hurt and the resentment and the anger and guilt, fear, insecurities. You see it all. I need Your healing for my hidden wounds. Today, by faith, I want to take a step of faith towards you.*”



Wednesday, July 29, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #59

## The Third name of God: El Shaddai = “I am your all-powerful God.”

“... the kingdom of God is not just fancy talk; it is living by God’s power.” **1 Corinthians 4:20**

“God is awesome... He gives power and strength to His people. Praise the Lord.” **Psalms 68:35 (NLT)**

I love this about God. You and I don’t have to live powerless lives. You and I don’t have to look for other sources of power. God says, “I want you to have My power today and everyday.”

But folks, God doesn’t want us to just talk about power. He wants us to access it. God says the Christian life is more than talk and wishful thinking, it is power – power to move forward – power for victory – power to overcome problems – power to deal with difficult people – power to deal with your past – power to cope with the present – power to prepare for the future.

Psalms 68:35 sums it up by saying, “God is awesome. He gives power and strength to His people. Praise the Lord” Is that a great promise or what? When I started studying this name of God, it was at a time in my life when I needed God’s power. I decided not to play football my senior year. Instead, I ran for Student Body President and made my focus academics and going to college.

I wasn’t ready for the ridicule I would take for not playing. I wanted to strike back and vindicate myself. I needed God’s power, El Shaddai, in my life. God showed up and in every instance in my life since, when I have needed His power, God has come through.

I can count on God’s power when I’m tired. I can count on God’s power when I need discipline. I can count on God’s power to help me love others and forgive others.

Every week, I teach/preach here at COV, I feel inadequate! Every week I prepare a message and am plagued by doubt. “Will this connect? Will this make sense? Will this be life changing?” I mean, here’s the truth – I just don’t know if the message will connect. So, I pray and I pray. I listen to the Holy Spirit and what He has to say and then I just go for it. Then, every once in a while someone will come up to me and say, “That makes sense, you were speaking my language today.”

You see, when I feel inadequate, when I feel like I am useless, when I feel like I have nothing to offer, God says, “My power will show up when you’re weak.” El Shaddai. Where do you need God’s power in your life?



Thursday, July 30, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #60

## The fourth name of God: Jehova Roi = “I am the God who shepherds you.”

*“I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me...” John 10:14 (NIV)*

The only thing I don't like about this verse is that you and I are referred to as sheep. Sheep are dumb! Very dumb! If you don't know that, have you ever seen sheep in a circus? No. They're too dumb. Have you ever seen sheep run? They don't bend their knees and they have knees. They have not figured it out yet. They are dumb!

Hundreds of times in the Bible we are called sheep. It's like as if God is saying, “You want to know how the body of Christ works? Study sheep.” A sheep farmer will tell you this: Sheep require endless attention because they easily stray. I wonder why we're called sheep.

Folks, because we are called sheep I want to remind you of some truths this morning. No matter where you are in your spiritual journey, my prayer for today's devotion is that when you're done reading it, you would not be the same person. That this would not be the nice poetic devotion but that it would be personal. That it would not just be inspirational, it would be transformational.

Listen to Jeremiah 31:3 - *“The Lord said ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with a loving kindness.’* I've drawn you - Some of you wonder why you're at COV. It's because God's love is drawing you to Him. God loves you very deeply and He wants you to know it today.

In Ephesians 3:17-18, Paul says, *“I pray that you may be able to feel and understand how long, how wide, how deep and how high His love really is and to experience this love for yourself.”* Do me a favor and underline the word “experience”.

Many of us have heard that God's love is long enough to last forever; it's wide enough to include everybody. We have heard that God's love is deep enough to reach into our pain and despair and high enough that we can't take anything over it.

But have we experienced God's love? Have you experienced God's love in your own life? Have you experienced that God loves you all the time? He loves you on your good days, your bad days, your moody days, your not so pretty days. Folks, he loves you on your ugly days, on your hateful days. He will love you when no one else can or will. WHY? Because that's all God can do. The Bible tells us that *“God is love.”*

Some of you know that my spiritual journey has been a long one. I've been a Christian since I was a teenager – 37 years ago. It took me 10 years of being a Christian before I really knew and experienced God's love. I went to Bible College. I learned about God's love. I went to graduate school and learned from some of the best teachers in



*past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.”*

Folks, God is in the change business. He wants to transform our character. How does God change us? How does the change process happen? What the Bible teaches about change – the biblical process of sanctification – is that there is a God part and there is an “our” part.

God’s part is His power. Our part is our cooperation. We cooperate in this process of change but God’s power through His Holy Spirit controls the process. It’s God’s Spirit in us that does the changing and we do the cooperating. If you miss this you miss some big stuff because God wants to change us and if you miss out on this process you miss out on everything God intended you to be.



---

**Saturday, August 1, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #62**

## ***The sixth name of God: Jehovah Shalom = “I am the God of Peace”***

*(Jesus) “I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart! And the peace I give isn’t fragile like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”* **John 14:27 (LB)**

God has promised peace of mind because it’s a fundamental need of your life. One of the Hebrew names of God is Jehovah Shalom. Shalom means peace. Jehovah Shalom means, “I am the God of peace.”

Some of you might be thinking, “If God has given us a gift of peace, then why don’t I have it?” Great question – that’s what we are looking at in today’s devotion. We’re going to look at The Path to Personal Peace.

Before we start, I need to say right up front that peace has nothing to do with problem-free living. If you have to wait until all your problems are solved to be at peace, you’re never going to be at peace. Folks, Jesus said, *“In the world you will have problems.”* You’re going to have tribulation – count on it. Peace of mind does not come from conflict-free living. Much of your life you’re going to have conflict. But God promises in the midst of the turmoil, in the middle of the strife and anxiety and conflict I can give you peace.

Would you like peace in your life? You have to make some choices. **CHOICE #1 IS TO ACCEPT WHAT CANNOT BE CHANGED.**

Worrying about what cannot be changed certainly won't give you peace. Becoming resentful or bitter about what cannot be changed will certainly not give you peace. Feeling guilty about things that cannot be changed will not give you peace – so you can stop beating yourself over the head. Having self-pity over things that cannot be changed in your life will not give you peace.

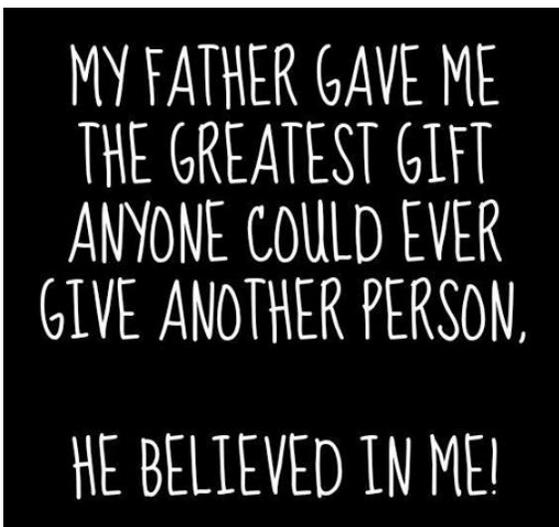
When you go through experiences in life that are hard, experiences that are painful, you do what you can to make the situation better. You do your part, but in the end if things don't work out, then you accept what can't be changed. If you've got a health problem, a handicap, a difficulty, you go to the best doctor you can find and work on it. But once you've hit the wall and nothing else can be done, you accept what cannot be changed.

If you've got a problem with a child, you try to work with that child and you do the best you can. You get the best experience and advice – whatever you can. But once you've hit the wall and there's nothing more to be done, you accept what cannot be changed.

If you are in a marriage that just isn't working out, you do the best you can in bringing some resolution, but you accept that person whether they ever change or not. You're never going to learn to really accept the things of life without God's power in your life.

Let me tell you the one thing that keeps you from peaceful circumstances, what keeps you tense and nervous and stressed out about the things in your life. It's your demand for an explanation. When something goes wrong in your life, when something doesn't happen the way you think it ought to happen, you go, "Why?? Why, God? Why is this happening?"

Can I say something to you? It may not make you too happy, but I need to say it - God doesn't owe you an explanation for anything. He's not obligated to explain everything that He does to you. You are the creation, and He is the creator. God is a good God, He's a just God, He's a fair God, He's a loving God, and He understands things that you don't. You need to just say ok. The fact is, God doesn't owe you an explanation for anything in your life. Be at peace. Trust in God.



Sunday, August 2, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #63

## ***The seventh name of God: Jehovah Nissi= “The Lord is our Banner”***

*“His banner over me is love.” Song of Songs 2:4 (NIV)*

The key here is to understanding the word “Banner”. Banner sounds kind of wimpy. I want His sword of love over me, His .44 magnum of love over me. A banner doesn’t sound like much until you understand the meaning. So let me tell you about the banner of God’s love that hangs over you.

This term most often refers to the banner of God on the battlefield. His banner over us signifies His presence, His power, and His provision. A couple of guys would march out in front of the army of Israel, carrying this banner, marching into war. This banner reminded the Israelites that God was with them, God was fighting for them, and God was going to protect them.

That’s the banner that hangs over you 24/7. You are Gods. He is your heavenly Father. He’s got your back. He believes in you. He is watching over you, doing things for you that you know not of. He is watching over your kids and your spouse. He is making a way for you. He is fighting for you.

When you head into the battle this week – remember His banner of love that hangs over you. You are not alone.  
Jehova Nissi