

## **Strength in the Names of God**

*Presented by Lauren Stibgen*

Air Dates: December 30-January 3, 2025

### **Day One**

Are you anything like me? I find myself wondering how another year is coming to a close. The older I get, the faster they seem to go. Honestly, sometimes I am just tired. Competing priorities of work, family and attempting to maintain some semblance of wellness during our most gluttonous time of year has me feeling weak. While I am in a good habit of starting my day in God's word and journaling, sometimes the time is hurried. How much do I "know" God?

One of the ways I am drawing near to God this season is through studying his names. You have heard a lot about Emmanuel this season, as we celebrated the birth of Jesus. It's the beautiful name that reminds us God is with us, but this week I want to focus on some of the other names of God.

Emmanuel reminds me of the one and only gift that Jesus is. God as man. He walked this life to rescue the sinner like me with the ultimate sacrifice of his life on the cross. This reminds me God is relational, and he wants me to know him and be in relationship with him.

As working women, it is easy to let life get the best of us like I mentioned above. Perhaps as you approach year end, finances are tight. Maybe finances aren't only tight, but you are looking for work. With the end of the year, maybe you are in the process of performance evaluations at work. You feel like you have done so much but it is evident no one sees it like you do.

As a working mom, maybe you are asking for some extra helping hands during the holidays from your spouse or children and they aren't hearing you.

And, overall, you are feeling down, or maybe all of this has taken a physical toll on your body. The Bible is full of reminders about our God. He is our provider. He sees us. He hears us. And God is our healer.

What I have come to understand is God wants to be my everything. The names he uses to describe himself to me are all reminders that he is truly all I need.

If you need extra strength for this season like me, join me this week as we consider the names of God: Jehovah Jireh, El Roi, Elohim Shama, and Jehovah Rapha.

### **Day Two**

As a working woman, you could have several different reasons you go to work. God created us for work.

Sometimes this "work" can be paid. Sometimes this "work" can be volunteer based. Either way, we are Christian working women. Our roles span from grocery clerks to CEOs, ministry workers to sole proprietors running our own business. Whatever "work" we find ourselves doing, we need to look for our strength in God—Jehovah Jireh, God our provider.

Maybe like me, you are the sole financial provider for your family. Or you work alongside your spouse to provide for your family's needs. Perhaps your work is as an unpaid volunteer. There isn't one right or wrong reason to go to work whether the work is paid or unpaid, but the implications of financial security for ourselves and our loved ones can create stress and a reliance on self that isn't what God wants for us at all. In revealing himself to us as Jehovah Jireh, we can better understand his will for our work.

Maybe your work just seems impossible. It is something you must do, but it isn't something you really love to do. Perhaps you aren't making enough to make ends meet, which makes the going even more difficult. Maybe you have been an unpaid volunteer, but with tight finances, you need to go back to work. All of this can be a drain on our strength and can lead us into deep self-reliance.

God often will call us to do hard things. In Genesis 22:13-14 God calls Abraham to hard work. God calls Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. In obedience and great faith, Abraham sets out in obedience to God. And, just in the final moments, God provides a ram to take the place of Isaac. In the right moment God supplies Abraham with just what he needs.

If your work seems impossible, the stress of financial needs seems insurmountable, or the job hunt seems never ending, know the Lord will provide for you. His will for our work is to seek him first in all things, because God is our ultimate provider.

*And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).*

Are you leaning into God as Jehovah Jireh? What do you need to lay before him today?

### Day Three

Sometimes it just feels like I blend in. Do I really matter at all? If I am honest, this mantra can play out in every area of my life: work, home, ministry, parenting. You name it. I feel small, unseen. I know I am not alone, and much of this small and unseen feeling stems from forgetting our identity starts with El Roi—a God who sees me.

I am sure most of you have heard the terms omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. For now, let's focus on omnipresent. This means God is present everywhere at the same time. In this big world he created, he sees me and you right now—in this moment. As we start this new year, let's rest in this omnipresence of God. Pause for a moment and think about it. Maybe you are setting forth plans for this year or reminiscing on what was. Maybe you are feeling small and unseen. Maybe you are dealing with sin that is hidden. In each of these scenarios God is El Roi—a God who sees.

Just when you think you are alone, whether it is with a thought, feeling, or, well, sin, you realize you are always seen. You are seen in each moment, watched over in your rest. God sees.

Perhaps this is comforting to you, like it was to Hagar. In Genesis we learn Sarai gives Hagar to Abram to bear a child because she is barren. When she becomes pregnant, Sarai becomes cruel and Hagar departs, alone into the desert. God provides for her, and even speaks to her in this low moment!

*She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13).*

I have felt put off, alone, wandering, and in need of provision. I can empathize with Hagar. She was doing what she was asked by someone she trusted. The result was not what she expected. She was alone—except she wasn't.

Perhaps the thought of God seeing you causes fear. The path you are on has some unrepented sin he sees. There is not one moment you are not alone with God. The good news is this is the best time to talk to God!

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).*

Whether comfort or fear, take heart. El Roi—the God who sees—loves you and wants for your good.

## Day Four

Yesterday we learned God is omnipresent—in all places, at all times, at once. He sees us. But God also hears us, even when we are not speaking!

*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar (Psalm 139: 1-2).*

Psalm 139 is clear. God can discern our thoughts. Even when you are thinking something, God is Elohim Shama—a God who hears.

Even so, God loves when we talk to him directly through prayer!

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).*

Work, family, and life in general can be frustrating. Sometimes, absent of someone to vent to, we can keep our feelings stored up. This can add to stress and even cause despair if it goes on for long enough. Especially at work, there can be challenges that are hard to speak with others about. Maybe it is a conflict with a colleague or boss, or perhaps you are contemplating a new position. Perhaps you were unhappy about feedback you received. Or, on the opposite end of this, you are happy you received a great review. God wants to hear from us!

He asks we bring everything to him. Everything. With “everything” in mind, think about the last time you were angry with God about something. What about that time you told a small lie? Or maybe you are weighing a very heavy personal decision. God wants to hear about this too. In fact, you honor God in prayer because he already knows and discerns your every thought!

Maybe you feel like you don’t know what to pray or how to pray. That’s ok too. The Holy Spirit can help us in our weakness.

*We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans (Romans 8:26).*

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us! Whether it is God discerning our thoughts, or the Holy Spirit interceding, we also need to give thanksgiving to God.

In the moments when we feel defeated and unheard, sometimes the only thing we can give to God is the thanksgiving that you know he is Elohim Shama—the God who hears you.

God provides for me, sees me, hears me.

## Day Five

What in your life needs healing? When we think of healing, we quickly think of our physical bodies— healing from sickness, recovery from surgery, or something worse like a diagnosis. But healing can be so much more. God is our great healer, and foundationally, the first thing he wants to heal us from forever is sin.

*On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).*

Maybe you don't feel sick with sin, or on the other end of the spectrum, maybe you don't feel like your sin rises to the need of a healer. Our ultimate healer is God, Jehovah Rapha. The truth of the matter is we are all sick with sin, not one greater than the other.

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).*

It isn't that some of you sin; it is all. And, going back to omnipresence, God is in all places at all times at once. More than this, God is omniscient. Simply, God knows everything! There is no hiding this sin.

Thankfully, God sent his only son, Jesus to die on the cross for our sins—the ultimate sacrifice of love for us!

But what about the other healing—the physical or mental well-being healing we often turn to God for? Jehovah Rapha promises this too.

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).*

*Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security (Jeremiah 33:6).*

Not only does God want health and healing for us but he also wants for our abundance, prosperity, and security. Amid a trial, especially when you need physical or mental healing, it can be hard to imagine abundance, prosperity, and security.

Ultimately, we won't fully experience this until heaven. We know God will wipe away every tear from our eyes in heaven.

We are citizens of heaven here on earth and until we find ourselves in heaven, we need to lean into knowing more about God and all of his names. After all, he is Emmanuel, God with us, a provider, the best at seeing us at our best and worst, the very best listener, and the ultimate healer!