

FBC TODAY

U N L E A S H I N G T H E G O S P E L

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ARTICLE
God's Self Introduction

Prayer Spotlight
Prayer for Song of Songs Concert



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MAIN SERVICE
 | Physical & Youtube |
 Sundays 8:45am / 11:15am

YOUTH SERVICE
 | Physical |
 Sundays 8:45am

SUNDAY SCHOOL
 For Ages 3 to 12
 (Preschool to std 6)
 Physical Classes
 8:45am / 11:15am

God's Self-Introduction

This article is basically a summary and a short review of the book "God has a Name" by John Mark Comer. Comer is my current favorite author and preacher. In this book, he presents that what and how you think of God will shape your destiny in life because we become like what we worship.

If you think God is...	Then this distorted reality will...
Homophobic, racist, and mad at the world	shape you into a homophobic, racist, and mad at the world
A Cosmic version of a life coach here to maximize your life	shape you into a self-help yuppie, even if you sugarcoat it as "Following Jesus" (yuppie = a fashionable young middle-class person with a well-paid job)
Like one of us humans	Lead us to not follow God's actual image because we start to make God in our image.)



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Therefore, what we believe about God affects who we are and what we become therefore it is crucial that we get who God is right. Comer says: “Most of the time when we talk about God we start with the Omni’s: God is omnipotent (He’s all- powerful), God is omniscient (He is all-knowing), God is omnipresent (He’s everywhere at once). All of that is true- I believe it! But here’s my hang up, when God describes Himself, He doesn’t start with how powerful He is, or how He knows everything there is to know, or how he’s been around since before time and space and there is no one else like Him in the universe. That’s all true but apparently to God, it’s not the most important.”

When God first properly introduced Himself in Exodus 34:6-7, it gives insight into what He wants us to know about Him, and His character. Comer calls it His “press release to the world”:

“Yahweh, Yahweh, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

(You might see the version above is slightly different than yours because instead of using the word LORD, the name Yahweh is used. An interesting fact, is when the English translation of the bible uses “LORD” (all in capital letters) instead of “Lord”, it is referring to the name “YHWH or Yahweh”)

Comer expounds on Exodus 34:6-7 in the following categories:

1. “Yahweh, Yahweh”
2. Compassionate and gracious
3. Slow to anger
4. Abounding in love and faithfulness
5. Maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation

1. "Yahweh, Yahweh"

Saying something twice in Hebrew implies it is important. The name YHWH stands for "I AM WHO I AM", or said in another way: "whatever I am I will be", meaning whatever this God is like, he is that way consistently. He then proceeds to introduce the type of person He is, listing His character traits as shown in the following boxes.

2. Compassionate and gracious

In Hebrew, order matters, and for Yahweh to introduce the first character He wants to be known as is "compassionate and gracious. The word for compassionate is the same word used to describe what the real mother in King Solomon's story felt when he gave out the order to cut the baby in two. The word is translated as "deeply stirred" in 1 Kings 3:16 NASB.

This is what Yahweh feels for us, He is paternally and maternally deeply stirred for us, His children. Comer says where "compassionate" is a feeling word, "gracious" is an action word, where God comes to the rescue when His kids need help.

In other words, Yahweh is saying He is the kind of person to feel deeply stirred about his children in trouble and would come to their rescue.

As followers, we can ask Him to stir our hearts so that we see people the way He sees them and become the paramedic team that applies some First Aid for them in the ambulance car, while bringing them to God the healer.

3. Slow to anger

Other gods of that time are often portrayed as having temper tantrums over petty things whereas Yahweh is saying He isn't like that.

He is slow to anger and we are asked to do the same in James 1:19. Do you believe that the God we worship is the type that gets angry very easily every time we slip up?

4. Abounding in love and faithfulness

This may seem similar to being compassionate and gracious but the point that is meant here is "loyalty" or faithfulness, how loyal? He's willing to die to keep the promise or covenant with us. In Genesis 15, when Yahweh made a covenant with Abraham, they cut the animal in half, meaning if any one of the parties broke the covenant, they will be cut in half like the animal.

But in verse 17, only Yahweh walks through the promise, and eventually, Jesus died on behalf of humans' failure to keep the covenant. We are also called to be faithful to the covenants we make in our marriage, our work, and other promises.

5. Maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.

You may be wondering how is punishing descendants a good thing. But the point of this sentence is the comparison that it is trying to convey. Yahweh is both loving and yet just. But in this sentence, He is saying that His love and mercy are hundreds and thousands of times more than His desire to act out his justice through punishment. The imagery Comer describes is a super unbalanced scale where the weight of love and mercy is so much heavier and overflowing compared to the weight of justice and punishment (see the figure below). Yahweh is telling us He is so much more eager to forgive and show mercy than He is to punish, and as His followers, we should be the same.



Now, my presenting these points does not mean I am able to carry out all those things perfectly, I see that as an end goal that I am still in the process of working towards that goal such as Paul was in Philippians 3:12-16.

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained."
Philippians 3:12-16

I want to encourage you all that part of the process of sanctification is knowing what kind of a person our God is - His character, how He sees us, what kind of heart He has towards us, and who is the type of person He was us to become. We can't become god-like if we have no idea what our God is like, or worse, we have the wrong idea about Him and turn into something entirely different and ungodly.

I am not asking you to TRY harder to be like Jesus, I think the most important initial step is to ASK harder to be like Jesus (who is the embodiment of Yahweh) and allow the Spirit to guide us in the process of transformation. Of course, it is also accompanied by the "discipleship/training" aspect where we participate in activities like life groups, reading the Scripture, and being part of discussions to KNOW what Jesus/Yahweh is like.

Therefore, ask. Ask God, ask Yahweh, and plead with Him to transform you, if you feel stuck keep asking like the persistent widow in Luke 18. Our Yahweh will be like a parent who is 'deeply stirred' and He is ever ready to forgive and to form and guide you to be more like your true Abba father in heaven.

There are more items that the book address, such as why does God need the name "Yahweh", why not just be known as 'God'? There are other examples of illustration that was able to hit home to my heart that I was not able to fit into this article. Therefore I encourage you to fully experience what this book has to offer.

How to get the book?

If you are tech-savvy and know how to subscribe and to unsubscribe to things, here is the digital library subscription I use called **Scribd**:

<https://www.scribd.com/audiobook/343252486/God-Has-a-Name>

If not, I recommend the **audio CD** since John Mark Comer speaks very well:

<https://www.bookdepository.com/God-Has-Name-John-Mark-Comer/9781536616422?ref=grid-view&qid=1664443252504&p;sr=1-2>

If you insist on a physical book, you can order here.

<https://www.bookdepository.com/God-Has-Name-John-Mark-Comer/9780310344209?ref=grid-view&qid=1664443252504&p;sr=1-1>



By Toh Kai Xian

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PrayerSpotlight

Prayer for Song Of Songs Concert

1. May the Lord grant Ken and Bernice wisdom in managing and producing the event. Pray also for the unity of the team. From man agement to coordination and performance, pray that the Lord will unite the hearts of those who are involved - the band members, guest performers, FBC office, FBC members, ushering team, ticket booth helpers, etc. Pray for our hearts to serve together humbly, as one body, all for the glory of God.
2. May the Lord prepare the hearts of the audience, so that they will not just come and enjoy the music, but will be able to feel and grasp God's love through the message and testimony that we're going to share in between.
3. Pray for the outreach effort - the event will serve as an effective platform to reach out to the community, bringing them nearer to Jesus through this cultural mandate. May the Lord open the ways for us - be it through social media marketing, across different churches, or other methods of promotion. May the Holy Spirit help to anchor our faith in God alone, and rejoice in the Lord always.