

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

Name of God Series: *God Almighty/El Shaddai*

God invites us to know Him by name...to know Him better. The most important thing about us as humans (both on a personal level and a communal level) is our ideas, images, and concepts of God. Thankfully, we do not have to search in the dark to figure God out, and we certainly aren't at liberty to make God whatever we want Him to be. He has revealed Himself to us. The Bible bears witness to that. So over the next several weeks we'll be examining how God has revealed Himself by looking at some of the various names He has gone by throughout the Bible.

It is important to note that "God" is not God's name. "God" is a title or reference (El in Hebrew). The Triune Being who is God actually has a name (or several names) which communicates/reveals something about His character and attributes.

Yesterday we looked at the name God Almighty (or El Shaddai in Hebrew). This is one of the earliest names God introduces Himself by (see Genesis 17). Throughout the Biblical story we are given evidence that God is strong and powerful. God has the authority to do everything (He is the sovereign and rightful King); the strength to do anything; and the ability to do what is impossible for humans to do. We see His power at work in creating and sustaining our world, through various signs, wonders, and miracles recorded in Scripture, and through redeeming and transforming humans. As was pointed out in the sermon, only God can make us blameless...we can't do that ourselves.

The fact that God allows us to know Him by name demonstrates His desire to be known by us. And while we can be awed by His overwhelming power, the beautiful thing we see throughout Scripture is that God uses His power for good. He is selfless, others-focused, in how He wields His power. His desire is for us to join Him in His work of ruling creation...by His power.

It should also be noted that while God wants to be known as God Almighty, He doesn't ONLY want to be known as that...because He is much bigger than that. God Almighty, while true, is still limiting. We see an interesting dialogue between God and Moses in Exodus 6, *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of My mighty hand he will let them go; because of My mighty hand he will drive them out of his country. God also said to Moses, 'I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by My name the LORD I did not make Myself known to them.'"* (Ex. 6:1-3) God desires to be known as more than just God Almighty...but He certainly is that too.

The name El Shaddai suggests that God IS powerful, as opposed to God HAS power. Power is simply part of who God is...so He doesn't need to accumulate it or fear losing it. And He enjoys sharing it...when those He shares it with uses it for good. Both His power and His character are demonstrated in that He shares His power. At the cross of Jesus, we see God, paradoxically, at His most powerful—power in the sense of ability/capability and in the sense of character. He is so powerful that He can relinquish power, empty Himself of it, out of love for His creation and out of wisdom knowing that the way of sacrificial love is the best way for us to operate.

- Q. What's the story behind your name?**
- Q. If you've named kids, what's the story behind the names you gave?**
- Q. If you were to give each other nicknames based on character qualities/attributes, what names would you give each other?**
- Q. When you pray (or journal), how do you address God?**
- Q. How have you experienced God as strong and powerful?**
- Q. How, or in what ways, does it cause you questions (or even doubts) when God doesn't use His power in ways you'd want, expect, or hope? (What are some ways you'd like to see God use His power?)**
- Q. If you were all-powerful, what would you do?**
- Q. How does it affect/impact you, what is your response to, conceiving of God as God Almighty/El Shaddai?**
- Q. As you conceive of a Being that is All-powerful, what other characteristics/attributes would you hope came along with that? (Or, to ask it a different way, if a Being's only attribute was all-powerfulness, what problems/issues might come with that?)**
- Q. God revealed Himself to Abraham a God Almighty. As you've come to know God, what name do you know Him by? Has that, or how has that, evolved over the years?**
- Q. What's the difference between saying "God has power" versus "God is power"?**
- Q. What do you think/feel about the idea that God wants to share His power with you? (i.e. He empowers us to reign with Him.)**