

Our Intimate God Has an Intimate Name

In the first chapter of Genesis, Moses simply calls God "God." He chooses this more impersonal name to fit with the more impersonal overview of creation. Biblical writers often use this name for God in creation scenarios.

Then things change. In the second chapter of Genesis, events get most personal and so does God's name. In chapter 2, Moses refers to God as the "LORD God." (See Genesis 2:4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, and 22.) LORD is the English translation of the Hebrew word, YHWH. Biblical writers often use this name for God in relational scenes. It's God's intimate name.

The name change from "God" to "LORD God" is one of those details that we tend to skip right over and ignore. That would be a bad choice, because this name change is significant. The *name* change lets us know that the *subject* has changed. Moses has shifted from a physical focus (chapter 1) to a relational focus (chapter 2).

By using God's intimate name, Moses calls our attention to the fact that Adam and Eve have an intimate, relational God. Of course Moses shifts to God's intimate name.

Moses knows what he's talking about when in he introduces God's intimate name - he and God have a relationship filled with personal encounters. God wants the rest of us to have personal encounters with Him as well. Of course he does – He loves us.

Do You Ever Depersonalize God?

I cringe when I hear the phrase "the man upstairs." People may not intend this connotation, but to me, the phrase depersonalizes God and puts Him at a distance. I've heard others depersonalize God with different words saying, "*God has to love me, He's God.*" Obligatory love? That's not love at all. It depicts a cold, unfeeling God.

When I say that God loves us, I'm not talking about an abstract, impersonal connection. I'm talking about a warm, personal relationship that includes both God's joy and His tears.

Recognizing God as *LORD* God, the God with the intimate name, sets us straight. The LORD God hasn't changed since Eden. The biblical words are intended for our eyes. God offers *us* the same intimacy He offered to Adam and Eve: intimacy with Himself.

A FEW QUESTIONS

- Do you think that God continues to act with love towards Adam and Eve after their rebellion?
- Do you think God's love for you varies with your behavior?
- Do you think you have to shape up before God *begins* to love you?
- Do you think you have to perform for God to *continue* to love you?

- Does God seem personal or impersonal to you?
- How might your response to God change if you knew that He yearns for an intimate relationship with you even before you begin to love Him?
- How might your response to God change if you knew that he yearns for intimacy with you even at those times when you feel indifferent or hostile towards Him?
- How might your response to others change if you imitated God?

God's love for us includes both His joy and His tears.

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