

El Shaddai
Almighty God

Genesis 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

What will it take to make you truly happy? What will it take for you to reach that state of contentment? Finding some financial security .. pay all your bills and have some left over? retire comfortably? But in reality no one seems to know how much is enough for contentment.. in fact the more we have the more anxiety we seem to want... we won't ever be able to answer "How much is enough?" in terms of money.. it can only be answered when we come to realize that God is enough...

Have you reached the point in your relationship with God that He is enough.. Are you confident that He is sufficient to meet all your needs?.. the Bible tells us to be anxious for nothing.. how many of us live without anxiety? it says we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us... have you found that to be true in your life?

Abram faced a challenge to his faith that God used to show him that He was sufficient to fulfill His promises.. God had promised to make Abram the father of a mighty nation.. but there was one small problem.. Abram was ninety-nine years old and still childless as far as he and Sarai his wife..

"El Shaddai".. occurs first time in Genesis 17..

God had made these promises back in Gen 12 when God first told him to leave his country and his relatives and dwell in a land He would show him.. it took great faith for Abram to leave everything he knew to live in a land of foreigners.. as time went God kept reassuring him but he still had no heir..

Gen 15:1-2 as we saw last week the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision "Do not fear Abram, I am a shield to you.. your reward shall be very great".. Abram's frustration came out.. "O Lord God (and he used the name Adonai meaning "owner and ruler").. what will you give me since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?.. since you have given me no offspring, one born in my house is my heir".. and immediately God confirmed His promise to Abram... Eliezer is not going to be his heir but a child that will come from his own body..

God took him outside and gave him an object lesson.. look up at the stars if you are able to count them.. so shall your descendants be.. the next verse tells us very simply "Abram believed and it was reckoned to him for righteousness"..

But in the next chapter (Gen 16:1 "Now Sarai Abram's wife had borne him no children").. after all these years Sarai now became desperate and convinced Abram to go in to her Egyptian maid Hagar.. this was a fleshly act to help God fulfill His promise and it created disastrous results.. when Hagar conceived Sarai despised her and treated her harshly, so Hagar ran away but an angel of the Lord convinced her to return and submit to Sarai.. from this union of Abram and Hagar was born the child Ishmael.. up to this point the promise of God still remained unfulfilled and the situation had only gotten worse..

But we've probably all had times in our lives where we struggled with God promises us and tried to take matters into our own hands and run our lives our own way .. we believe what God says about salvation and forgiveness but then we turn around and live the Christian life doing things as if it all depended on us and we run our lives independently of God and we say "Well, God helps those who help themselves!" "You can't just sit around and wait for God to hand you a job.. you have to train yourself and get out and find a job".. Abram believed God but he thought what are we supposed to do.. we can't just go on waiting forever.. so they had a child taking matters into their own hands.. trying to help God out...

That brings us to Gen 17 which reminds us he was now ninety-nine years old.. by human reckoning he and Sarai were past childbearing age.. but they needed to learn that with God nothing is impossible..

At this point God assures Abram by revealing His name El Shaddai (God Almighty).. "

Genesis 17:1-2 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." .. Abram fell on his face before the Lord in absolute surrender.. God then reminded of the covenant promise He had made.. He tells Abram that he is going to be the father of a multitude of nations.. and to show the certainty he changes his name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude).. and Sarai's name is also changed from Sarai (to exert herself or contend) to Sarah (princess).. Sarai had exerted herself in coming up with the solution to have Abram go in to her handmaiden.. but now she would be Sarah the princess and mother of nations.. Abraham was still overwhelmed by the greatness of the promise God had just confirmed but he surrendered to the will of God..

What is the meaning of the name El Shaddai?.. it comes from combining two names of God .. El (God) and Shaddai (Almighty, sufficient).. so we get "God Almighty" or "Almighty God".. the word Shaddai points to God as all-powerful, able to do anything and everything at any given time.. together as El Shaddai this name is found seven times in the OT.. but another 41 times God is referred to solely as Shaddai "The Almighty"..

Abram and Sarai had grown old and weary waiting for the promise.. they had tried their own methods to try to help God out but nothing positive came out of it.. even made things worse.. now they were still waiting without a child, wondering what had happened or if God had abandoned His promise..

We can understand how they must have felt.. sometimes we feel God is taking too long to meet our needs.. to find a mate, make our marriage get better, help our children with their struggles.. help meet our financial needs or our health problems or our loved ones..

That's when God reminds us who He is.. when Abram was at his moment of doubt God told him his name was El Shaddai (Almighty God).. in the Hebrew we find that this name Shaddai comes from the word Shad which refers to a mother nursing her child... to nourish and supply that which is necessary in our most helpless state.. as a mother nurses her little helpless infant and supplies its nourishment for life, so God is almighty and able to nourish us and supply our life's needs...

Abram and Sarai could not have a child.. they couldn't produce life.. she was barren.. how could God's promise which depended on her having a child be fulfilled when she had no capacity.. they knew they couldn't fulfill the promise on their own..

If you've ever felt your own complete inability to produce and carry out what you believed was God's will for your life yet you knew you couldn't possibly achieve it.. how could God work it out when you have so little to offer.. that's when God reminds us that He is the Almighty God... who creates things out of nothing and nourishes and sustains our life all on His own.. El Shaddai.. He will work it out.. we don't have to figure it out.. He's got it under control.. He doesn't need our unrighteous help, our human methods, all our trying to solve things our own way.. all we're going to do is get in the way of His fulfillment of His divine plan.. just Abram and Sarai had only hindered and delayed His promise..

God would do what He said He would do simply because He is faithful to His promises and covenant.. only He is able to bring into the visible physical realm that which exists in the invisible realm.. He certainly didn't need Abram and Sarai to try to help Him give them a child.. His name is El Shaddai, the Creator and Sustainer of life.

All Abram could do was fall on his face.. he couldn't understand it, all he could do was believe what God was telling him..

God told him what the requirement was... Walk before me and be blameless.. just surrender and give me your undivided trust in My ability..

This doesn't mean walk before me and be sinlessly perfect... it means place yourself openly before Me in My sight and walk in humble submission to Me as Almighty God..

This meaning of El Shaddai as the Almighty God as the all sufficient one like a mother nursing her child is completely different than the idols of the pagan gods of the other nations who often were depicted as a woman with many breasts showing that was like a grotesque image that was supposed to represent that if the people would fall down in front of this multibreasted woman figure it was supposed to bring forth the rain on the earth and supply the crops and yet this was just a stone image that couldn't actually supply anything... in contrast our God who reveals Himself as El Shaddai the Almighty God who can bring forth a child of promise to an empty womb is the living God who can supply our every need... and He is at the same time the God of comfort who tenderly understands us and wants us to know He alone can meet the needs of His people...

Are you tired and discouraged? Have you messed up along the way? Have you been trying to help God out and instead of surrendering to His will, only making things worse... if that's you I want to encourage you to focus on the name El Shaddai... God Almighty... you may have waited a long time and made plenty of mistakes along the way but you're still here, just as Abraham and Sarah, and God can still provide..

Psalms 91:1-2 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Shaddai). 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

What it comes down to is.. it's all about where you abide.. where you hang out.. if you dwell where God dwells in the shelter of the Most High.. then He will be your El Shaddai.. God wants you to walk before Him and be blameless.. He wants your presence, your relationship, your trust, your faith.. walk before Him, dwell with Him, walk in His presence..

Like Jesus said "I am the vine and you are the branches.. he who abides in Me and I in Him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing... (John 15:5).. to abide with someone is to hang out with them.. It's the secret to an abundant life.. If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you..(vs 7) Just as a baby can't feed himself.. he can only receive the nourishment he needs by remaining close to his mother... we receive all we need when we are close to Him...

When we follow Him and trust that He is able.. we discover that He truly is all we need..

At times it seems God has abandoned you.. or is forsaking.. and some of those times are the result of mistakes we've all made.. but the beautiful thing even though God told Abram at 75 He would make him a great nation and even though Abram stumbled along the way.. God still came back at 99 and said "I'm El Shaddai.. I've got this.. are you ready to trust Me this time?"

And within a year Abram and Sarai had a son.. why not stop trying to do everything in your own strength and your own wisdom.. stop relying on yourself and stubbornly insisting on doing everything your own way.. to experience God's fullness you have to empty yourself of your pride and your own strategies... Abram knew he was at the end of the line.. that's when he learned that God is all sufficient..

God has abundant resources to supply our needs.. Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.