

Subject: *The Third Commandment*

Scripture: *Exodus 20:1-7*

The first two commandments have to do with the proper worship of God. The first is about who we worship. He is the one and only true God. All other gods are false gods, substitutes for the one true God. The second commandment is about how we worship. We must not think of God in a physical way and reduce Him to a visible image. God is a jealous God. He will not allow any rivals, but He demands and deserves our total love and devotion. He will not allow anyone to misrepresent Him. We come now to consider verse 7, and the third commandment about having proper respect and reverence for God's name.

1. The Holiness of God's Name

Bible names were important in describing a person. For example, the name Adam means "earthy" because God made him from the dust and Eve means life because she was "the mother of all living." Abraham means "father of a multitude." Christ has the names "Immanuel" (God with us) and Jesus (Jehovah saves). The name of God represents the nature of God, His very being and character. The name of God is more than a label. It represents all that God is. Several verses make that very clear.

Exodus 33:18-19 ¹⁸ And he (Moses) said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. ¹⁹ And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

Exodus 34:5-7 ⁵ And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Psalms 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Psalms 9:10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Malachi 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

2. Dishonoring God's Holy Name

To take God's name in vain is to use His name irreverently. Vain means empty or worthless. We take God's name in vain when we treat it as if it worthless, empty, and of no value.

A. Using God's name in profanity and cursing

This is very common thing and a very serious thing. Using God's name in profanity reveals an empty head and an empty heart. What does profanity show about a person?

- Profanity shows disrespect for God – Sometimes a person will say, “Well, I didn’t mean anything by it.” Just think about that. A person takes the name above all other names and uses it in a filthy way to express disgust. In the Way of the Master training Ray Comfort asks people if they use God’s name as a curse word, and then he asks them “What would you think if I used your mother’s name as filthy curse word? Would that bother you?”
- Profanity shows rebellion against God – The Bible says, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” God says don’t do it. What a rebellion, what arrogance to do what God strictly forbids us to do.
- Profanity shows rotten character – Evangelist Sam Jones used to say, “When I hear a man curse and swear, I lay hold of my wallet, for any man who will swear may steal also.” There’s something very bad on the inside. A person may say, “I’m not all that bad; all I do is curse a little.” He might as well say, “All I do is steal a little; all I do is commit adultery a little; all I do is kill a little.”
- Profanity shows ignorance. Someone has described profanity as the attempt of a feeble mind to express itself forcefully. Years ago in Marine boot camp we had a drill instructor named Sgt. Carter who showed us how to clean our rifles, and he used every word of profanity he could find. I thought to myself, how ridiculous.

B. Using God’s name lightly or casually

For example, when a politician gives a speech and ends with that phrase, “God bless America.” He may not even believe in God, but it just sounds good. He may have said things in his speech contrary to God’s Word, and then has the gall to invoke the name of God. A person takes God’s name in vain when he uses expressions like “Oh, my God” (OMG) or “Good Lord” or “My Lord.”

C. Using God’s name falsely or hypocritically

Leviticus 19:12 *And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.*

Matthew 7:22-23 ²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* ²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Jesus will say, “You claim to know me, but I don’t know you. All that service in my name was just a sham.” Teachers and preachers may claim to speak for God, but when they misrepresent God and say that He condones abortion and approves same-sex marriage, they are taking God’s name in vain and treating it as worthless.

The third commandment states that God will not hold a person guiltless who takes His name in vain. It is a serious matter to dishonor God’s holy name.

Deuteronomy 28:58-59 ⁵⁸ *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;* ⁵⁹ *Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.*

3. Honoring God's Holy Name

Most of the Ten Commandments are written in a negative way (“Thou shalt not”), but the positive side of the commandments is also true and important to remember.

- A. Using God's name in worship – God's name represents all that He is. We honor Him when we know Him and praise Him for who He is.

***Psalms 34:3** O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

***Psalms 103:1** Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

***Psalms 115:1** Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

- B. Using God's name in prayer

***Matthew 6:9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

***John 14:13-14** ¹³ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

- C. Using God's name in preaching and teaching

In the Book of Acts when believers began spreading the Gospel, the Jewish leaders didn't like it and they warned them to stop teaching and preaching in the name of Jesus. But they didn't stop. They couldn't stop. They continued to proclaim God's holy name and the Gospel.

Acts 4:7-12; 5:27-29; 38-42

***Psalms 115:1** Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

- D. Honoring God's name by godly living

***2 Timothy 2:19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. We honor Christ's name when we live in a manner that reflects positively on Him.*

Alexander the Great had a soldier in his army who was accused of disorderly conduct. When he was brought before Alexander, the king asked: “What is your name?” “My name is Alexander, like you sir.” The king said, “Either change your name or change your ways.” If you call yourself a Christian then live like one. We protect the integrity and sanctity of God's name by our actions and attitudes. A Christian bears the name of Christ. One man said, “Show me your redeemed life and I may be interested in your Redeemer.”

***Colossians 3:17** And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Are you honoring God's holy name with your lips and your life?