

GOD'S GUIDE TO A GREAT LIFE
Sermon Series on the Ten Commandments

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HONOR GOD'S NAME

Exodus 20:7

**"You shall not misuse the Name of the LORD your God,
for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His Name."**

The Third Commandment is rooted in the First, the unique and exclusive God who alone is to be worshipped. The Second Commandment prohibits visual representations of God (or gods), while the Third focuses on verbal representations of God, with His Name as an extension of His person. Out of respect for God, God's people are to exercise the greatest caution when talking about Him or invoking His Name.

In the Bible, the name of a person was linked to his character. The Name of God (Yahweh) was a revelation of God's nature, and thus to use His Name in an inappropriate manner would be an insult to the character of God. This commandment addresses any insincere reference to the Lord, as His Name is the revelation of His person:

1. THE COMMAND: "Do not misuse the Name of the LORD"

• What's in a name?

Reputation
Character
Authority

• How can we misuse God's Name?

The first way is *irreverence*, speaking or thinking of God in a way that insults Him by not taking seriously His wisdom and goodness.

- Using God's Name to Insult.
- Using God's Name to Indulge.
- Using God's Name to Intimidate.
Jesus instructed His disciples to avoid frivolous swearing. Rather, they should be known for their integrity; their yes should be yes, and their no should be no (Matt 5:37).
- Using God's Name to Impress. Titus 1:16

The second way is *bad language*, using God's holy Name as an ordinary word to voice men's feelings.

- Using God's Name Impulsively. Isa. 29:13; Mat. 6:7
This includes offering praise or singing to God out of routine without any thought to what one is saying or singing.

The third way, and the one that needs special stress because we are all so slack here, is *keeping promises*. Lev. 19:12

• How Can I Use God's Name Correctly?

REVERE God's Name Continually. Psalm 29:2; Psalm 9:10

Through Christ, we can know God on a "first- name basis." We can call Him Father. Jesus says to all of us, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your Name'" (Luke 11:2). But if anyone should presume upon that intimacy, Jesus reminds us that we do not take God's Name "in vain," we hallow it.

REPRESENT God's Name Clearly. 2 Tim 2.19

RELY on God's Name Completely.

Whatever we ask of God, Jesus said, we should ask in his Name, and whatever we ask in his Name, God will grant (John 16:23-24). When we trust His Name and when we surrender to Him in a life of love and trust, God is honored.

2. THE CONSEQUENCE: "The LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His Name."

To trivialize the Name of God is to diminish His person and His glory. To trivialize God's Name is to show the utmost disrespect for the God to whom we owe everything. God will directly sanction those who violate the Third Commandment.

Final Thoughts:

The early Christians had no doubt about the Name. It was their assurance, their life-and-death confession. When they spoke it, it was often at risk to their lives. But for them it was a conquest of earth by the eternal.

We seem to have lost this glory. We no longer have the grand Yes of the Third Commandment, the commandment that encourages us to live in the power of God's Name. To misuse God's Name isn't only by cursing; many of us do so by neglecting its wonder and power. Let's make sure that, whether by words or actions, we honor the Name of our God.

*"Take the Name of Jesus with you, child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you; take it then, where'er you go
Precious Name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heaven!"*

Lydia Baxter