

The most popular baby name of 2026 in the states so far are Liam and Olivia. England and Wales: Muhammed. If the West doesn't wake up, there will be no West. There for a long season it was Jennifer. For our Jennifers you had like a 14-year run! A Jennifer epidemic!¹ Mostly, we don't think real intentionally about names except for maybe the ring of it or perhaps the first letter: Can I get a witness Leah Landry Lincoln Lucas Locke. Or Liam Levi Locke Lorelai.

But, in the ancient world, naming was deeply meaningful.² A name was tied with the person and their character. No so much anymore. I for one, am thankful for that. Robert Blake. But think of some of the names in Scripture: Jacob means "he grasps the heel." Nabal means "perverse fool." Asher means happy, Josiah means YHWH supports, Joshua means "Yahweh is salvation." A name is an identifying label.

Our God reveals his name to us (Exod 3:13-14). God wants us to know him. Not a distant maker but a personal being. This is a gesture of intimacy.³ Friend, this is your purpose in life. To know God and be known by him. You know why it hadn't been working out for you? You got your purpose wrong. Seek to know him and live for him.

20:7 Other translations: do not misuse the name of the Lord. Now, there is a simplistic understanding of this command: Just don't cuss: no GD, no JC. Got it. Don't make any rash oaths in God's name. Lev 19:12: "You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD." Ok, move on. *But* as usual, the Bible's teaching is more sophisticated than that. This command is about more than our words. Not just our lips but also our lives.

A person's name is tied to their being. We all understand that. When I hear the letters ALICIA put together, I smile with gratitude. Not due to those letters of the alphabet – I mean they are fine. I have nothing against them - but I smile because of what they represent. They are tied to a person in my life whom I know and who knows me.

The name of God is tied to his person. **9:16.** Ps 8:1: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" 29:2: "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name." Ps 74:10 "Is the enemy to revile your name forever?" Isa 52:5 "all the day my name is despised." Matt 6:9: hallowed be thy name. Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Rom 10:13: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Phil 2: all will bow at the name of Jesus.

So, for sure, we should not use God's name in vain. I think we even ought to be thoughtful about shorthand's like oh my gosh. We should not use the name Jesus Christ out of frustration. Isn't that an odd practice? We don't use anyone else's name that way. You stump your toe, Elvis Presley that hurt. You fail the Physics test, Sylvester Stallone, I thought I did better than that. Go to fill up: / We should not be too casual with weighty words like hell or damn. Those realities are anything but casual. Words matter. Listen to Jesus: "I tell you, on the day of judgment

¹ Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By* (Wheaton, Crossway, 2021), 48.

² Wilkin, *Ten Words*, 49.

³ Dickson 78

people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt 12:36-37).

Christians should speak reverently. We revere the name of the Lord because we revere him. Especially in American Christianity, we can be too casual about things. Flippant even. Did you know that in all twenty-one of the letters in the New Testament, the name “Jesus” is only used 28 times, but he is referred to as “Lord” or “Christ” 484 times. 28 vs. 484. Ninety-five percent of the time, he is referred to with a title of honor and respect.⁴ Something to chew on.

We should not blaspheme. Blasphemy is a serious crime. In fact, a capital crime. Lev 24:15-16: “And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.” For Israelites and the pagans – stoned to death! Pelted in the head rocks until you stop breathing. Serious.

So, yes, how we use God’s name is vital. But there is more here. Don’t misuse his name. Don’t associate his name with lies about who he is. Do not defame him. So, theologian John Frame writes, “All sin, therefore, can be seen as a violation of the third commandment.”⁵ One commentator writes, “It prohibits any use of the divine name that would detract from how God is perceived. The Israelites must exercise extreme caution when talking about God or invoking his name, especially when using God’s name in order to promote their own agenda.”⁶ This is why Jews won’t use the name God revealed: YHWH.

God says do not take the Lord’s name in vain. The word “take” here can mean “bear” or “carry.” We must bear the Lord’s name faithfully. Do not carry his name *in vain*. The word “vain” can mean worthless. Friend, don’t live worthless lives. Don’t waste it. It is so short. 4K weeks. That’s it. What are you living for? At the end of the day, anything not done for Christ is vain. Empty. Meaningless. Purposeless. Pointless. C.T. Studd: only one life, will soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.

In other words, we must live faithfully. To carry his name in a way that honors him. We must live in light of our confession. If we talk the talk, we must walk the walk. What are some ways we might talk the talk but not walk the walk. What are some ways we might falsely bear the name of the Lord? I can think of 6 main ways.

1. Disobedience. Not doing what we know to do. And doing what we know not to do. Listen to Jesus in Luke 6:46: “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” Some of you know right now. There is an area of your life you are saying no to God about. And you need to

⁴ Wilkin, *Ten Words*, 56.

⁵ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 493.

⁶ Alexander, *Exodus*, 102.

repent – agree with God and turn from it. Our mission statement is SSBC exists to move all people to surrender all of life to King Jesus." All of life. [moment]

2. Related: Hypocrisy. We can misuse the name of the Lord by speaking hallowed words while living hollow lives.⁷ You say one thing, but do another. You are one person on Sunday morning, another Monday through Saturday. You force your child to apologize but you never do. You show up on Sundays and sing praises but you haven't cracked open your Bible in six weeks. You pray publicly with great eloquence but barely pray on your own. You act generous but never give.

The call is the same: repentance. Turn from sin and self and turn to Christ the King. Change your mind and change your life. / Sometimes people will dismiss Christianity by saying it's just full of hypocrites! On the one hand, they're right: we are all hypocrites. We all fall into it. We all speak better than we live. But here is the difference: we don't stay in the hypocritical rut. True Christians are repenting hypocrites. We hate it and are seeking to bridge the gap.

So, on the one hand the objectors are right: we are hypocrites, but also, Jesus agrees with such an objection.⁸ SOTM: whole middle chapter. The religious leaders in Jesus' day experienced mission drift. God chose them in order to bless the nations but they became self-righteous and cursed them. They were elect for the sake of the nations but adopted a mindset of being elite over the nations. And they were hypocritical to the core. Jesus said they honored him with their lips but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me (Matt 15:8). / **Rom 2:1-3, 17-24** (cf. Ezek 36:16-23) / So, Jesus agrees with your objection. Exposing hypocritical religion is part of Christianity's own heritage. You are partway on the team already.

3. Earthly mindedness – living as if this life is all there is which is really living like there is no God. We don't live for him but for the world and the things of the world. Materialism. You live for stuff not for the Savior.

4. False teaching. The name of God can be misused by distorting God's Word. Or using God's name for wrong ends. Think prosperity preachers who prey on their people to pad their pockets. There's a special place in hell for such peddlers. Just this week I saw that fallen preacher Steve Lawson published a book about his fall – and is charging for it. Tragically I saw that one day it was a best seller on Amazon. Preachers can be restored after falling, but peddling the story in the same year is not the path.

There was a clip going around of a PCUSA pastor in Austin calling the Bible mythic and denying the resurrection of Jesus. "Maybe Jesus rose from the dead. Maybe not" It may not be a literal symbol.⁹ "If there is an eternity, it has already started." Then last week an Episcopal priest

⁷ Wilkin, *Ten Words*, 53.

⁸ As do the prophets before him. Mal 1:6-14.

⁹ <https://x.com/protestia/status/2101967935195508917?s=46>

recently called God trans and since he is non-binary, Mary assigned his gender as male.¹⁰ That is taking the Lord's name in vain. Misusing the name of God to push an anti-God agenda.

We can misuse God's name by invoking it for our own purposes. This can happen in charismatic circles sometimes when they claim the authority of God. "God told me to tell you." Don't do that. Jer 23:16: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.'"

23:21: "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied."

23:25-26: "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart" (Deut 18:17-22).

Now, the Spirit is alive and well and we want to be a congregation open to and eager for the Spirit's leading. But, to have an impression is not the same as the authoritative Word from God. Don't misuse his name.

5. Neglect of the bride of Christ. Abilene is full of this. We misuse his name when we claim to follow the head but neglect the body. Head and body go together. No decapitated discipleship.

6. Related: false conversion. This is big. People who say they know Christ but Christ doesn't know them. This was me. . . . / Matt 7:21-23: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

Maybe that's you today? Like, are you sure you are saved? 100% sure? / You know how you know? Do you love Jesus and hate sin? No repentance.

Ok, that is 6 ways we might bear the Lord's name in vain. **How then, can we** bear his name faithfully rather than in vain? In other words, how can we hallow his name. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. "Your name be honored as holy" (CSB).

After we trust Jesus, he commands us to be baptized by immersion as a believer and when we do, we are baptized into the name. Baptism is a naming ceremony. Matt 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them *in the name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." How then can we live up to the name? 6 ways:

1. Well, obviously, obedience. If you call him Lord, do what he says. You can trust him. He knows best. If there is a man that says he's gonna die and be raised three days later and then he dies

¹⁰ <https://x.com/caeser2606/status/2103022700583075977?s=46>

and is raised from the dead three days later, do everything that man says. Peter Leithart writes, "Speaking or silent, active or passive, we bear the name *all* the time in *everything* we do."¹¹

2. Honesty. Christians tell the truth. We don't lie and if we do we confess and repent. We don't make rash oaths. We don't invoke the name of the Lord. / Young people, always always always be honest. Even when it costs you.

3. Be all in. Be sold out. If you have been hypocritical, push all the chips forward. Know what I mean? Life is short eternity is long, hell is hot, Christ is King. Quit dilly dallying. You know who the most miserable people are? / You want a simple NT summary of the third commandment, look no further than Col 3:17: "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."¹²

4. Quick repentance. To be an all in Christian does not mean you don't battle sin. I wish! That day is coming. Deary dying lamb, thy precious blood will never lose its power, till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more. / But until that day, we want to repent quickly. Men, you be the chief.

5. Mission. The Pharisees had mission drift. To bear the Lord's name is a missional activity. We carry it with us as ambassadors, constantly gossiping the gospel.

6. Use your words to honor Christ by building the church. Use your words to edify others. Speech that does spiritual good to others.¹³ The latter half of Eph talks a lot about sanctified speech: **Eph 4:11-16, 25, 29, 5:4, 18-19, 6:4.** / [Col 1:28, 3:16-17. Two kinds of Word work. What I do to you, you do to one another. Reverberation. Heb 3:12-13, 10:22-25.]

Why? Why does all this matter? Look again at verse **7** – *for* the Lord will not hold him guiltless who misuses his name. This is bad news for us all, for we have all misused his name. We are guilty. God is holy. He will punish all sin.

¹¹ Leithart, *The Ten Commandments*, 47.

¹² DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, 62.

¹³ Tony Payne, *Let the Word Dwell Richly* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2026).