

## “The Ten Commandments (Part 4 – Revere His Name)”

What we call God is a big deal to Him because His name reflects His nature. He’s spent eternity building His name. We could say God’s name is copyright protected. That’s what the Third of The Ten Commandments all about, which forbids wrong words about God. Commandment #3 is found in Exodus 20:7, where the Lord says: “*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.*” The positive side of this command exhorts us to: revere His name, honor the name of the Lord, hold His name in high esteem, stand in awe of His name, fear His name, and attach great weight/value to His name. We could say it this way: *When we see God as weighty, we won’t want to take His name lightly.*

To take God’s high, lofty, holy name in vain means *to empty it of its weighty content so that it becomes useless, worthless or void of meaning.* We take God’s name in vain when we use it in a frivolous, casual, or careless way. It’s the same as saying, “*Your name is worth nothing in my estimation.*” Here’s one way to paraphrase this Third Commandment: *You shall not use the name of the Lord without meaning something by it.*

One way people break this Commandment is through **hypocrisy**. Even without verbally uttering His name we profane the name of the Lord when our lives do not match the majesty of the Almighty. We empty God’s name of its weight when we profess to know God with our lips but deny Him by the way we live. Of course, we also break this Command with our lips. We need to watch our words so that we don’t break this Third Commandment in any of the following nine ways:

- **Blasphemy:** This is when we speak with contempt about God or are defiantly irreverent. Be honest with God, but never be disrespectful;
- **Cursing:** This is when we wish that some form of adversity or misfortune will befall someone or something. Don’t use God’s sacred and powerful name to wish terrible things upon others;
- **Cussing:** This is when we use obscene or profane words either towards God or against those made in the image of God. The Scripture is clear that followers of Jesus need to abstain from using filthy language or course joking;
- **Reciting memorized prayers without your heart being in it:** Don’t just rattle off holy words if you’re just using them as a good-luck-charm;
- **Careless conversation:** Don’t use God’s name to just describe something earthly (i.e. “*Good Lord,*” or “*Oh my God*”). Along that line, avoid any abbreviations while texting or using social media which belittles God;
- **Failing to mean what we sing in our worship songs:** If you sing, “*I surrender all,*” and then continue to hold the reigns you have just sung a lie;
- **Using irreverent titles for God:** Never belittle God’s magnificent name by referring to Him as “The Big Guy in the Sky,” or “The Man Upstairs,” or “My Homeboy,” or “My Golf Buddy,” etc.;

- **Using substitute swearing:** While many Christians don't use God's name in vain outright, some have simply substituted euphemisms which come very close to the real thing, like "gosh," or "what the heck," or "jeez," etc. We need to be really careful about not using really polite ways to be profane;
- **Perjury:** This is when we swear to God we're telling the truth but we're actually lying.

During the Welsh revival of 1904 foul-mouthed miners, who had been converted to Christ, had to retrain their mules because they were no longer able to understand their commands without the use of profanity! Oh, may this continue to be the case when people come to Jesus. If you want to refrain from taking His name in vain, revere His name. Treat God's name as weighty and you'll be less prone to be profane. Get lost in the magnitude of His majesty and you'll find yourself worshipping God's name instead of treating it as worthless.

## **Discussion Guide/Action Steps**

1. If you use expressions that are eerily similar to the names of God, come up with some new expressions. Like:
  - "Wow, wow, wow"
  - "For Pete's sake"
  - "My lands"
  - "Blimey"
  - Etc.
2. Don't allow worldliness to creep into your life or into the lives of your children or grandchildren. Don't listen to music or watch Tik Tok or YouTube videos with profane words or ideas. Screen movies at <movieguide.org> to know what themes, language, and content a particular movie contains from a Christian perspective.