

Subject: God's Moral Law – The Third Commandment

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-7

The first two commandments have to do with worshipping God. The first commandment is about WHO we worship and it forbids all false gods. There is only one God. The second commandment is about HOW we worship and it forbids all false worship. God commands all people to worship Him as He truly is. He is a jealous God who will not tolerate any rivals or any substitutes. He is jealous His character and will not allow anyone to misrepresent Him. The third commandment is about having reverence for God's holy name.

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.

I. The holiness of God's name

In the Bible names were significant in describing a person. For example, the name Adam means "earthy" and Eve means life because she was "the mother of all living." The name Abraham means "father of a multitude." Christ has the names "Immanuel" (God with us) and Jesus (Jehovah saves). God's name expresses who He is. The name of God is more than a tag or a label. The name of God represents the very being and character of God.

Exodus 33:18-19¹⁸ 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 34:5-8⁵ 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.⁸ And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

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.

II. The wrong use of God's name

The word "vain" means empty, worthless, of no use.

A. Using God's name in profanity

This is very common thing, and yet 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?

- 1) Profanity shows disrespect for God – Sometimes a person will say, “Well, I didn’t mean anything by it.” Think of that. A person takes the name above all other names. What he is saying is that God means nothing to me. 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?”
- 2) 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 forbids.
- 3) 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.” Someone may say that it’s worse to kill a man than to use God’s name as a curse word. That’s saying a man is of more value than the God who made the man.
- 4) Profanity shows ignorance. Someone has described profanity as the attempt of a feeble mind to express itself forcefully. When I was in Marine boot camp we had a drill instructor named Sgt. Carter. He showed us how to take care of our rifle, 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 at the end he tacks on 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 that contradict the Word of God, 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 deceitfully 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 7:22-23²² *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.* Some pretend to know the Lord and serve in His name, but they don’t believe in Him and obey Him from the heart. Jesus will say, “You claim to know me, but I don’t know you.”

D. Using God’s name in false teaching

Teachers and preachers claim to represent God, but they misrepresent His character. For example, if a person teaches that God condones abortion or same-sex marriage he is taking God's name in vain and treating it as worthless.

III. The right use of God's name

We must glorify and honor God's holy name. Here are some of the ways we can do that:

- A. Using God's name in praise – 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, teaching, and witnessing

He is the one true and living God. 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.

Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Acts 5:41 *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

- D. Using God's name in 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 His sacred name if we live in a way that represents and reflects who He is.

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, "Soldier, 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 is one like Christ or "little Christ." Our actions speak louder than our words. One famous world leader 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.*