

# The Ten Words – Reverence His Name

## Exodus 20:7

### INTRODUCTION

Please turn in your Bible to **Exodus 20:2, 7**. . Let's be honest for a moment...as individuals and as a nation we really don't consider this command (word) important. At least not as important as the first two. **Let's face it...the first two are pretty heavy...serious.** The **first commandment** prohibited the worship of false gods. We can understand why that's a big deal. After all, you can't go around worshiping the wrong god. And the **second commandment** prohibited worshiping God in the wrong way. That makes sense too. An invisible God has the right to determine how He is to be made visible (or not). **The first two commandments seem foundational.**

If we're honest, though, when we come to the third commandment, we feel like we can let our guard down just a little. *"Watch what you say. Don't swear. Be careful with your OMGs."* Got it. The third commandment feels less like a bedrock principle and more like a good reminder. **Most people when they hear the third commandment think it only has to do with using God's name as a swear word.** That is part of it, as we will see, but there is so much more to it than that. **Many of us were raised to believe that "taking God's name in vain" means using the words "God" and "Damn" in the same sentence.** By extension we were led to believe that the Third Commandment also covers salacious language, dirty jokes, vulgarisms, and what is (used to be) called "gutter talk."

So, what's the problem? If we understand what this means, let's clean up our language and move on to the next Commandment. Right? Wrong! There's so much more! We have forgotten **that "You shall not take Yahweh's name in vain" implies "You shall honor the name of Yahweh in your words and conduct."**

Before we can even get into the commandment itself, we must first understand the importance of a name, and particularly, the importance of God's name. After all, what's in a name?

*Let's begin with the why behind the what...*

### I. The \_\_\_\_\_ for the command: "the name of the LORD, your God"

Why is God's name so important that God includes this commandment as part of the Ten Commandments? We must understand that a name is more than just a label.

A. A name points to one's \_\_\_\_\_

B. A name points to one's \_\_\_\_\_

C. A name points to one's \_\_\_\_\_

*The reason: the name of the Lord, your God...next, please note the what after the why...*

## **II. The \_\_\_\_\_: do not misuse the name of the LORD, your God**

- *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, (KJV, NASB, ESV)*
- *You must not use the name of the Lord your God thoughtlessly; (NCV)*

What does it mean to misuse God's name? What exactly is forbidden by the third commandment? The word **vain** (as it's rendered in the ESV) can mean "*empty,*" "*nothing,*" "*worthless,*" or "*to no good purpose.*"

The key to unlocking the full meaning here might just be in the word **take**—**a word that we could give a very literal translation of "take up," "lift up" "carry" or even "wear."** A more literal translation would read something like "*You shall not lift up the name of the Lord your God for nothingness.*" So really, the key to this commandment is that we violate this commandment when we "*take up" the name of God, but our taking up the name of God is "in vain."*

We are forbidden, therefore, from taking the name of God (or taking up the name or bearing the name, as the phrase could be translated) in a manner that is wicked, worthless, or for wrong purposes. This doesn't mean that we have to avoid the divine name altogether. The name YHWH (or Yahweh)—"*the LORD,*" in most translations—appears some seven thousand times in the Old Testament. We don't need to be superstitious about saying His name. But we must not misuse it. Consequently, to take God's name in vain means to empty His name of content or to make it irrelevant. Taking God's name in vain would mean any empty, frivolous, or insincere use of God's name.

## **How do we misuse God's name?**

There are several ways we can misuse the name of God.

1. We can misuse God's name with our \_\_\_\_\_

*So that is the first way we can misuse God's name – with our words. It is probably the way we most often think about misusing God's name.*

## 2. We can misuse God's name with our

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We can also misuse God's name with our actions. **Titus 1:16** speaks of those who *“claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.”* Let me give you brief examples of how we can misuse God's name with our actions.

*The reason for the command...the rule and lastly, please note...*

**III. The \_\_\_\_\_: “for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”**

**What are the consequences of misusing God's name?** God will judge those who take his name in vain. The word *“guiltless”* comes from a verb meaning *to be empty, clean or pure*. When God holds you guiltless, you have a clean record or an empty slate. **There is an irony here. Those who empty God's name of honor and meaning will not have their slates emptied or be cleaned of their sin.** This is a sin that God will not acquit or leave unpunished. Notice it is the Lord who will judge you in this matter. Men may choose to excuse each other on this matter, but God will not hold the person guiltless who misuses his name.

## **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning? We have all broken the third commandment, and we are all deserving of God's just punishment. Thank God once again for Jesus Christ who came to be our Savior. He died to take the punishment for your sin so that you would not have to. Once you have broken God's commandments, there are only two choices. Either you will pay the punishment for your sin, or you can place your trust in Jesus who died to take the punishment for you. God offers you forgiveness for your sins through Jesus Christ. Will you come to Him today?

Please allow me to ask you to consider three ways in which we may use God's name rightly (I'm indebted to Dr. Ray Pritchard for what follows):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **speech**

2. \_\_\_\_\_ **speech**

3. \_\_\_\_\_ **speech**

**Here is the bottom line:** When we affirm others, God affirms them through us, and His name is honored. If you want a simple summary of the third commandment—a New Testament exhortation putting in positive language all that is required of us—here it is: *“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17)*. We obey the third commandment by living as Christians, by speaking and doing everything according to the family name. For when we do all that we do—and do it in Christ, for Christ, and through Christ—we show that His is the name we value, the name we love, and the name that is above all names.