

## LESSON 5. GOD'S NAME (3<sup>RD</sup>)

Exodus 20:7

**MEMORY VERSE:** "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3).

The third of the ten commandments was, "**Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain**" (Exodus 20:7). This command was also included in the new covenant of Christ. It is probably the most frequently broken commandment of the nine still in effect in the Christian Age. While the Psalmist says we should praise the Lord's name continually, many do just the opposite and take God's name in vain by cursing and using slang or idle words.

### THE MEANING OF VAIN

The word "vain" means empty, useless, worthless, or devoid of real value. While many think this commandment forbids only cursing or swearing, it is much broader than that. Taking God's name in vain is the use of God's or Jesus' name (or other references to divinity) in any way that is flippant, light or irreverent. God's name is holy and should only be used with utmost respect, reverence, godly fear, and honor. In teaching His apostles to pray, Jesus began the prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9).

While some have little regard for God or His name, many Christians thoughtlessly take God's name in vain. They do not even realize they are being disrespectful to God and breaking one of His commandments. They develop the habit of using God's name in various situations that have no connection to God or anything spiritual. Even though they have no intent to "insult" God, they do so by such profane use of His name.

### COMMON WAYS GOD'S NAME IS USED IN VAIN

It would be impossible to list all the ways man shows disrespect for God's name. Some vain uses of God's name are more common in certain areas of the country than in others. This is because we tend to pick up phrases, both good and bad, as we hear them being used by those around us. A few the writer has heard and the situation that provoked the comment include:

<u>SITUATION</u>	<u>VAIN USE OF GOD'S NAME</u>
In reply to a question	Oh God no (or yes).
For some petty problem	Lord have mercy, or Oh God!
Some big problem develops	Well, Jesus Christ!
Talking about something one likes	God how I love that, or Oh sweet Jesus.
Something bad happens	Oh dear God, no.

We must constantly be on guard that we do not use such phrases or use God's name in a careless manner. The last part of the commandment says, "for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). We are guilty of taking God's name in vain when we use it in any way that is disrespectful to God, whether intentional or simply without thought.

Perhaps you have heard such comments from parents, friends, or even leaders in the church. They are likely unaware they are dishonoring our Father or His Son. If so, you need to gently remind them that using such empty reference to His name is forbidden by God. (This is one good reason for attending Bible class where such topics are discussed and you can learn what God wants us to do or forbids us to do.)

### **BE CAREFUL IN SPEAKING**

Almost everyone at some times “opens his mouth before his brain is in gear,” and at times we say things we ought not or things we later regret. We must be careful in all we say. Jesus said, “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36). Paul wrote, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth” (Ephesians 4:29). James wrote, “The tongue is a fire . . . it defileth the whole body” (James 3:6). Does it matter what we say? Absolutely! Neither Jesus, Paul nor James were talking about casual and honest conversations. They were talking about using the tongue to utter gossip, “gutter talk,” dirty jokes, half-truths (lies), cursing, and the vain use of God’s name.

The use of slang is often a crutch for those who feel they are unable to express themselves adequately. Words such as darn, heck, gosh and jeez are just slang words (euphemisms) for damn, hell, God and Jesus. These are idle words that have no purpose and are empty. Is there a difference in the meaning of “no,” “heck no” and “hell no”? Think about it! All three mean “no,” and the use of “heck” or “hell” adds nothing to the answer. Jesus condemns such words by saying, “let your communication be Yea, yea [yes]; Nay, nay [no]; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:37).

Some think they must resort to using vain language or cursing in order to impress their friends. Those who do this are showing a lack of maturity as well as disobeying God. If using slang or cursing is what it takes to make someone like you better, that person is not a true friend! If you refuse to use such words you may be able to influence your friends to improve their own thoughts and vocabulary.

### **CONCLUSION**

God’s name is holy and should be used only with reverence, respect and honor. He forbade its use in a vain or careless manner. We need to insure that all we say is honorable and in accordance with good manners. We must avoid picking up vain phrases from those with whom we associate. Jesus says we will give account of every idle word we speak. This does not mean we cannot enjoy kind-hearted jesting or casual conversations. But it is essential to know what is meant by idle words. Too many in the world are unaware that they are being disrespectful and disobeying God when they use His name in a vain way. We all have the responsibility to know what God requires of us. We learn that through Bible study, in Bible classes and worship, and by being around other Christians.

### **MATCH THE SCRIPTURE WITH THE TEACHING AND WHO GAVE IT**

<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>TEACHING</u>	<u>WHO GAVE IT</u>
_____ 1. Exodus 20:7	A. Let no corrupt words come from your mouth	a. Jesus
_____ 2. James 3:6	B. All will give account of every idle word spoken	b. Psalmist
_____ 3. Ephesians 4:29	C. The tongue is a fire	c. Paul
_____ 4. Matthew 12:36	D. Holy and reverend is His name	d. God
_____ 5. Psalm 111:9	E. Do not take the name of God in vain	e. James

### **FILL IN THE BLANKS**

1. “Abstain from all \_\_\_\_\_ of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
2. “Swear not at all; neither by \_\_\_\_\_; for it is God’s \_\_\_\_\_: nor by earth; for it is his \_\_\_\_\_” (Matthew 5:34, 35).
3. “Out of the same \_\_\_\_\_ proceedeth blessing and \_\_\_\_\_. My brethren, these \_\_\_\_\_ ought not so to be” (James 3:10).
4. “But let your communication be, \_\_\_\_\_, yea; \_\_\_\_\_, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of \_\_\_\_\_” (Matthew 5:37).

### **TRUE OR FALSE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It is a sin to curse, but there is nothing wrong with slang words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Those who take God’s name in vain are guilty of sin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Some use God’s name in vain without realizing they are dishonoring God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus said God’s name is Hallowed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. God does not want us to use His name in vain, but it is not a sin if we don’t know better.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Using curse words will make us more mature and important.

### **POINTS TO PONDER**

1. What are some of the vain words or phrases you frequently hear others use?
2. Have you been guilty of using God’s name in an irreverent manner in the past? If so, what should you do about it?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said we will be held accountable for every idle word?
4. Are you impressed or “turned off” when a peer curses or uses language disrespectful to God?
5. Why do people use God’s name in vain?
6. What is God’s punishment for sin? (Romans 6:23).
7. What are some ways we can learn what God wants us to do or not do?