

TEN: Free to Obey

A Christian Looks at the Ten Commandments

Honoring God's Name

Exodus 20:7; Colossians 3:8

INTRODUCTION: I hope you are digging into the Ten Commandments with me, but I also hope you are using a New Testament shovel. Because in our study, we do not just want to learn what the commandments meant to Israel in the centuries under the law, we want to know what these words from God mean to the followers of Christ who are not under the old covenant of law but are under grace.

What have we believers in the Lord Jesus learned about God thus far from the first two commandments?

- That **God does not want anything to come before Him in our lives.**
 - That truth is backed by our Lord Jesus saying that the first commandment of all is ... **“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” Mark 12:30 NKJV**
- That **God does not want us to bow down or serve anything except Him.**
 - Likewise Jesus said, ... **“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” Matthew 4:10 NKJV**
- And **God wants us to be especially careful in keeping Him first for the sake of our children** who will be strongly influenced by what we do.

Now let us go to the third of God's Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:7 NKJV 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.

1) What does the THIRD COMMANDMENT reveal about God?

- The key word in the commandment is vain.
 - To take in vain means to empty something of its value.
 - It means to treat something as worthless.

- This is why this commandment is often summarized as “No profanity.” To profane means essentially the same thing as “take in vain.”
- Anything that lessens the value, dignity, or magnificence of the name of God is prohibited by this commandment.

So, let’s come back to the question.

1) What does the THIRD COMMANDMENT reveal about God?

- **God wants His names to be valued, honored, and treated with reverence.**
 - I say names because God reveals many names for Himself, each one reflecting a portion of His character.
 - **Elohim reveals God as the Triune Creator God.**
 - **YHWH reveals God as the Redeemer God who never changes.**
 - **EI Shaddai means God Almighty** and reveals to us the God who does the impossible and who keeps His promises.
 - **EI Elyon is God Most High**, revealing God as the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, the God who is in control.
 - In Holy Scripture God is called **YHWH YIREH**, or in the way we have anglicized the name, Jehovah Jireh, **the Lord who provides**.
 - **YHWH Ropha reveals the Lord who heals.**
 - And **YHWH Shammah is the Lord who is there**, the Lord who abides with His people.
 - And there are many more, each with significance, importance, and great, great value.

God does not want the value of any of His names thrown away as if it were a worthless trinket.

- **God does not consider the trashing of His name to be a petty offence.**
 - In a recent survey, 63% of Americans confessed that cursing is the most frequent way they express their frustration.
 - And while not every curse specifically uses the name of God in it, we know that quite frequently it does.
 - Our culture has become exceedingly tolerant of profane language, and it is one area of life where there is no longer much of a gender barrier.

- While our society may have become permissive of expressions of anger, surprise, and frustration that take the name of the Lord in vain, people's collective opinion holds no sway with God.
- God says, "I will not hold him guiltless who takes My name in vain."
- Using God's name in vain is a personal insult to our Creator.
- Imagine someone calling your name and saying "He or she is a ..." and then using the most vile, profane name that can be imagined.
- How insulted would you be?
- How hurt would you be?
- Folks, every single time God's name is taken in vain, God is insulted. God is offended. I do not think it is stretching the truth to say God is angered by such a personal attack.
- And the attack is not lessened by lamely saying, "I didn't mean it. It was just an expression."

Let us move to the second question:

2) How does God want this portion of His character to show in our lives?

- **God wants us to demonstrate reverence and honor for His name.**
 - Jesus taught His disciples to begin their prayers like this:
Matthew 6:9 NKJV In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed (reverenced) be Your name.
 - We should intentionally (with purpose and effort) offer praise and honor due to the name of the Lord.
 - The Scriptures can aid us in our praise.
 - ❖ First as we read the Scripture, especially aloud, letting the words of Scripture become our words.
 - ❖ Secondly, if we will do this often enough, we can pray these words from memory or learn how to pray praises and words of honor like these to the Lord.

Listen to the praise of the Psalmist:

Psalm 8:1 NKJV O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

Psalm 103:1–5 NKJV

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,

4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Do you believe these things about the Lord? Then if you will read them aloud to the point you can recited them, all the while thinking how true these words are, then you will quit misusing God's name!

Daniel learned from the Scriptures to pray and bless God as the Psalmists did.

Listen to him.

Daniel 2:20–22 NKJV

20 Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,

For wisdom and might are His.

21 And He changes the times and the seasons;

He removes kings and raises up kings;

He gives wisdom to the wise

And knowledge to those who have understanding.

22 He reveals deep and secret things;

He knows what is in the darkness,

And light dwells with Him.

- Singing songs and hymns that are rich in the praise of God and of His name, not just in church, but even as we go about our daily activities.
- Songs like Bless the Lord Oh My Soul, Blessed Be Your Name, either the praise song or the old hymn, Blessed Be the Name of the Lord.

- And folks you will discover that while we get hung up on the music to the song, God is all about the words!

While I could continue to talk about how God wants this portion of His character to be reflected in our lives day by day, I want to move to the third question, because it will shed a lot of light on how we can practically show honor and reverence to God and to His name.

3) What does the New Testament say that helps us understand this commandment better or how to live it out day to day?

Folks, as we continue to ask this question of each of the commandments, we will see a similar principle applies to each one. The New Testament takes to Old Testament Law and broadens it and addresses the heart issues related to it.

So, the O.T. says “Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.” The N.T. says

- **Deal with the heart issues that cause you to profane the name of the Lord.**

Colossians 3:8 NKJV But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

The Holy Spirit says to the Christian,

- Get rid of the anger, wrath, and malice in your life.
- Then you will be able to also get rid of the blasphemy and filthy language you are using.
- **Do not just quit doing bad, do good instead.**

Romans 12:14 NKJV Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

As I was preparing this message, the Lord brought an application to my own life to mind. Now I do not have a problem with cursing or taking God’s name in vain, but a big point of vulnerability with anger and where I am most prone to say something that does not honor the Lord is when somebody does something stupid in front of me when I am driving.

See, even my using the word stupid tells you how I feel about it, doesn’t it.

So, how many of you share my point of vulnerability? You don’t have to raise your hands, but raise your heart so that God knows you’re being honest!

Well, like I said, I don’t cuss when someone cuts me off or something like that, but I have developed the habit of calling them a jerk. Now, I don’t think even my dear mother would have called the word “jerk” a cuss word, and she was pretty strict about that.

So I think that if I were just under the O.T. Law, I could get by with the explanation that calling that inconsiderate, reckless driver who ought to have his license suspended a jerk would not be taking the name of the Lord in vain.

But folks, when I come to the New Testament's dealing with this principle, I find I cannot escape. Because if I call a guy a jerk because he did something I didn't like in his driving, then I certainly have not put off anger or malice. Neither have I blessed the guy who persecuted me with his evil driving.

So, I thought, Ok, Lord. I get the point. So what new habit can I develop in place of saying, "You jerk!" when someone does something that pushes my button on the roadway? And the Lord said, "Do what I said. Bless him!" So I have decided that when that happens, I am going to say to that careless driver, "God bless you!" Knowing that if he keeps driving like that he is going to need all the blessings of God he can get.

I will seek to deal with the root causes, and not let any bad word, even jerk, come out of my mouth. You know this is also the application on another N.T. principle.

Romans 12:21 NKJV Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- The second thing I find in the New Testament related to the third commandment is that **the New Testament tells us as followers of Christ, to focus our attention, conversation, and activity upon the name of Jesus.**
 - Sadly, the name Jesus has become the most common name of God that is used in vain.
 - And it does not have to be accompanied by a profane word.
 - Just saying Jesus or Christ or both together as an expression of anger or surprise is without question lessening the value of the name of our Lord.
- Instead, we are to do the opposite. **We are to exalt the name of Jesus!**

Paul reminds us

Philippians 2:10 NKJV ... at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

- **The New Testament further instructs us that instead of using the Lord's name in vain, we are to**
 - **Be saved in the name of Jesus.**

John 20:31 NKJV but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Acts 4:12 NKJV Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is **no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."**

- **Pray in the name of Jesus.**

John 14:14 NKJV If you ask anything **in My name**, I will do it.

John explains in his first letter that asking in Jesus' name is not a magic formula to be used for whatever we want, but it is to be used to pray for what we know to be the Lord's will.

1 John 5:14–15 NKJV 14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, **that if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

- **Give thanks in the name of Jesus.**

Ephesians 5:20 NKJV giving thanks always for all things to God the Father **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**,

- **The NT tells us to be healed in His name.**

Peter said to the lame man

Acts 3:6 NKJV ... "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, rise up and walk."

And the man got up and walked. He was healed! Later, they testified to the source of the healing power.

Acts 4:10 NKJV let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

Listen, friend, are you sick? Do you know someone you care about who is sick? Pray for healing in the name of Jesus!

No, God does not heal everyone who is prayed for. Jesus did not heal every sick person who was ever around him. Peter and Paul did not heal every sick person. Paul had an affliction that was not healed.

But God can and does still heal, and He heals in the mighty name of Jesus. So when you yourself or someone else is sick, pray for healing in the matchless name of Jesus.

- **Be cleansed and transformed in the name of Jesus.**

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 NKJV 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor

idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- **In fact, the NT says to do every godly thing in the name of Jesus.**

Colossians 3:17 NKJV And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Listen my friend, if you are saved, cleansed, and transformed in the name of Jesus,

And if you will pray and give thanks in the name of Jesus,

If you will pray for healing for yourself and others in the wonderful name of Jesus,

And if you will do everything in word or deed in the name of Jesus,

I think you will find it hard to use the name of Jesus in vain and empty it of honor. I think if you do, you will sense conviction quickly and the Spirit will lead you to rapid repentance and help turn you away from repeating that sin.

CONCLUSION: And mothers and grandmothers, let me appeal to you on this special day. Use your example and influence with your children and grandchildren to always speak with honor and reverence the name of the Lord our God.

If you train them young, even if they stray in rebellion for a season, that teaching and influence is an ever present tool of conviction by the Spirit to bring them back to trust and walk with Christ.

Do you ever struggle with taking God's name in vain or filthy speech?

What a great time to deal with it in repentance and commitment.