

# UNSULLIED NAME - FULL

Part 4 of LOVE GOD, Exodus 20:7.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. November 7, 2021.

## INTRODUCTION: FOR PETE'S SAKE!

For Pete's sake! O, hi. Sorry you had to hear my little outburst. I'm fine now. Have you ever used that little phrase? For Pete's sake! Like, when your kid gets fouled out of their basketball game by a ref who needs a new pair of glasses? Or when they forgot to put the burger in your drive-through order AGAIN!!!!

Yeah, so I just want you to know that I'm offended at your use of my name when things don't go your way. O yes, indeed. You're taking my name in vain.

OK. Seriously, today, we've arrived at the third commandment and it tells us not to take the LORD'S name in vain. For context, let's read Exodus 20:1-7.

### READ EXODUS 20:1-7.

1 And God spoke all these words, saying,

2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,

6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 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.

If you're like I was on Thursday morning this week, you're wondering what it means to take the Lord's name in vain and how to avoid doing it. I'm so glad you asked. Let me tell you. Actually, let's ask and answer three questions: what does it mean, why is it important, and how can we apply it today?

## WHAT DOES THE THIRD COMMANDMENT MEAN?

The Hebrew language scholars tell us that the third commandment literally says: "You shall not raise up Yahweh's name **for no good**." The New International translation reads, "You shall not **misuse** the Lord's name."

By name, we're talking about any name for God - Yahweh, Jehovah, God, Almighty, Jesus, Christ, Savior, Word, Holy, and so on.

I did a concordance study and I found several ways the Hebrew word for vain is translated in the Bible; for example, worthless, useless, false, deceptive, empty, lie.

So, we could paraphrase the third commandment this way: "Never use God's name in a false, empty, or worthless way." Don't use his name to lie, curse, or emphasize.

Let's put that positively: "Only use the Lord's name with reverence, honor, and love."

## WHY IS THE THIRD COMMANDMENT IMPORTANT?

The third commandment matters because of what the Lord's name signifies. It represents God himself - his being, character, and deeds. He and his name are inseparable. Misuse the name, misuse God.

- If I use God's name to make a lie sound plausible, I misrepresent God as a liar.
- If I use God's name as a careless OMG in an online comment, I misrepresent God as trivial, not sacred.
- If I use Jesus' name to curse when I'm upset, I misrepresent Jesus as unworthy of respect, as undignified as a curse word.

When Moses asked the LORD to show him his glory (Exodus 33:18), the LORD agreed. How did he do it? He proclaimed his name! Listen:

Exodus 34:5, 8 (ESV) The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, **and proclaimed the name of the LORD** ... 8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.

How did Moses react to the proclamation of God's name, the revelation of his glory? He quickly bowed down in worship. He gave reverence to God.

God's name represents God. In a sense, it is him. Several other Bible passages reinforce this idea:

Psalms 8:1 (ESV) O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

Matthew 6:9(ESV) Our Father in heaven, hallowed (sanctified, set apart as holy, sacred) be your name.

Acts 4:12 (ESV) And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Philippians 2:9-10 (ESV) Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ...

Before we move on, let me share one more reason to keep the third commandment. It's found right there in the second half of Exodus 20:7. It's a sobering thought:

(Exodus 20:7b) for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

God won't let us off the hook if we use misuse his name. The commandment doesn't specify the exact consequences, but in the subsequent history of Israel, God did not turn a blind eye to misuse of his name; for example, God handed over the false prophets who prophesied lies in his name to the king of Babylon to be executed (Jeremiah 29:21).

Now, let's ask answer the third question, how can we keep the third commandment today?

## HOW TO KEEP THE THIRD COMMANDMENT TODAY

I mentioned earlier that a positive way to state the third commandment is: "Use the Lord's name with reverence, honor, and love." OK. What are some ways to do that?

**STUDY.** Study God until your mind is filled with reasons for reverence. Daily Bible reading is a key part of this. The Psalms are full of reasons for reverence.

Psalms 145:3 (ESV) Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

Verses like that renew the mind to such an extent that we find it very difficult to misuse God's name. Do you remember Isaiah's experience in the temple?

Isaiah 6:1-5 (ESV) In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

I'm certain that Isaiah's reverence level expanded exponentially. Seek encounters with God that change your heart and mind and fill you with awe of God. Do it through prayerful, Spirit-filled. Bible reading and reflection.

I also recommend reading some books about God. Three come to my mind right away:

- The Holiness of God by R.C. Sproul.
- Knowing God by J.I. Packer.
- The God You May Not Know by David Jeremiah.

Studying God will train your mind and heart to honor God internally, so that you can train your body and your mouth to honor him externally.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE.** When I was first saved, I had such a potty mouth that I was embarrassed to be around other Christians. The Holy Spirit spoke so much conviction into my heart about misusing God's name. So, I did what the apostle Paul did: I beat my body - not literally (1 Corinthians 9:27) - and I decided to take control of my mouth for the glory of God. I made myself a rule: every time I took the Lord's name in vain, I skipped my next meal. At 19 years old, I had a raging metabolism, so it was no joke to miss a meal. Remarkably, with the combined power of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God, and my hunger, my mouth got saved and sanctified.

1 Timothy 4:7 (ESV) Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather **train yourself** for godliness;

When we acknowledge that God cares deeply about the honor of his name because his name represents God himself, that's when we'll commit to self-discipline. We'll be determined not to go along with the godless crowd.

Taking the Lord's name in vain is ingrained in our culture, in our vocabulary. It may not seem like a big deal to say, "O my God" in conversation, but it is actually a sin. It offends God and robs him of glory.

Don't use names for God in careless or trivial or irreverent ways - OMG, Jeez, good Lord, God-damn, gosh, and so on, are all off limits. Don't accuse, criticize, or blame God when you're frustrated. Make a decision now to clean up your mouth.

One thing that will help you discipline your life to honor God with your mouth is a daily prayer time. The first part of prayer should be adoration and praise - just as we do here together every week.

By taking time to speak praise, you will train your mouth to honor God. Teach yourself some biblically based prayers; Psalm 100 is an excellent place to start. Learn some hymns or worship songs that you can easily sing to the Lord. Use the Field Manual for Prayer on the book table. I've put a Daily Prayer handout on the book-table. It's based on the A.C.T.S. Use the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer or as an app on your phone.

Make praise a habit and it will become a lifestyle. Fill your mouth with praise and it won't have room for taking the Lord's name in vain.

**JESUS.** There's a hymn that goes like this, "There is a name I love to sing, I love to sing its worth. It sounds like music in mine ear, the sweetest name on earth. O, how I love Jesus, O, how I love Jesus, O how I love Jesus, because he first loved me."

A powerful way to grow love for God's name is to grow deeper in love with Jesus. We grow deeper in love with Jesus as we reflect longer on his love for us.

1 John 4:10 (ESV) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Ephesians 5:2 (ESV) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Think about those verses for some focused time every day and see what happens in your heart. If you'll contemplate the Savior hanging on that cross for your sins, I guarantee that the Holy Spirit will rekindle a blazing fire of love for Jesus.

And when you love Jesus, you'll also love his name. You'll want to speak his name with reverence and awe. You'll regard his name as a sacred word to be set apart and used only as a way to honor him.

Colossians 3:17 (ESV) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## **NO COMPROMISE**

It's not always popular to or culturally acceptable to own the name of Jesus. It's tempting to hide or compromise our commitment to Christ at work or with friends. Sometimes our reputation, job, or freedom are at stake. Last week, I was working out and thinking about the third commandment and it struck me: When we deny Jesus, we're taking his name in vain because we're not bringing him honor and praise.

Back in the first century, the government in Jerusalem arrested Peter and John in an attempt to get them to quit telling people about Jesus - especially in public places. But the apostles would not back down. Listen for "the name" in their response:

Acts 4:8-12 (ESV) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to

all of you 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 is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is **no other name under heaven** given among men by which we must be saved.”

The government leaders discussed what to do. Then, they decided ...

Acts 4:17-20 (ESV) But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone **in this name.**” 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

"No," Peter and John said. "No, won't suppress the name. We're won't deny the name. We're not ashamed of the name. We'll go on preaching and healing in the name. We've been saved by the name. We honor the name. We worship the name. We lift high the name. We'll tell the whole world the name, JESUS!"

Two important concluding remarks:

First, a word to those listening who are not yet believers in Jesus. The first way you can keep the third commandment is to put your trust in Jesus, the name by which we are saved. Honor him with your faith in who is and what he has done to restore us to God.

Then, a word to the already believers. Honor Jesus by refusing to compromise your faith. Honor him by standing firm, but not shutting up, by gently and respectfully owning your faith in the name both at home and in public.

We all break the third commandment from time to time, but Jesus is a great Savior, the source of our cleansing and forgiveness. Don't run from Jesus when you fail him, run to him. His arms are open wide. His mercy is broad and his grace covers all our sins.

His name is above every other name. Amen.

**WORSHIP CELEBRATION**  
**Sunday, November 7, 2021**

**Welcome & Invocation - Peter**

**Prayer - Peter**

*Who You Say I Am* [ Default Arrangement in G: Julia, McKen Ashley

*My Jesus* [ Default Arrangement in F# ]  
Ashley

**Pray & Dismiss Kids**

**Missions Update - Ember Liddiard**

*God So Loved- Ashley* [ Default Arrangement in A: ashley ]

**A.C.T.S. Prayer - Peter**

**Teaching**

*Goodness Of God* [ Bethel Music in Ab: Ashley ]  
Ashley

**Updates - Peter**

**Blessing - Peter**

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