

TEN COMMANDMENTS
(Part Three)
Respect For God's Name

Text: Exodus 20.7 (in pew Bible p. 74 / in large print Bible p. 115)

Intro:

-Part Three in series on Ten Commandments.

- Part One = No Other Gods / *respect for God's authority.*
- Part Two = No Idols / *respect for God's uniqueness.*
- Part Three = Respect For God's Name.
 - **illust.** Western Farmer Hits Thumb With Hammer – “Trudeau!”

-Laura Schlessinger: crisis of ethical vacuum *in our world.*

- ethics provide direction, meaning, purpose and value to life.
- help us to fulfill our mandate to represent God in this world (Genesis 1.26, 27).

-Ten Commandments provide a moral compass for:

- **Jews** = foundation of God's covenant w. O.T. Israel – *relationship & community.*
- **Christians** = all are reaffirmed in the N.T. & *therefore are binding on Christians.*
- **Everyone** = all people can understand & do the right thing.

-pattern for the Ten Commandments:

- 4 are God-ward = only one God, no idols, name not in vain, keep Sabbath holy.
- 6 are man-ward = honour parents, respect life, moral fidelity, honesty, truthfulness, no coveting.

Take Home Point:

- Lewis Smedes: instead of “live and let live” – “love and help others live.”

- transform prohibitions *into positive **directions.***

-paradigm for studying the Ten **Directions:**

1. What does the command *ask or forbid?*
2. Why does the commandment *ask or forbid?*
3. How should I obey the commandment?

-so let us turn to the third commandment / **direction:** You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name (Exodus 20.7).

- avoid giving God a bad name & *diminishing other people's belief and respect for God*

- e.g. Daniel 9.15 – 19.

1. MEANING OF RESPECT FOR GOD'S NAME

-God's "name" = title revealing facts concerning God's methods of with us.

- **Jireh** / provider, **Nissi** / refuge, **Shalom** / peace, **Shammah** / there
- **Tsidkenu** / righteousness, **Rapha** / healer, **Raah** / shepherd, **Jesus** / savior.

-"name" = more than title.

- includes nature, being, very person.
- involves relationship.
 - **illust.** proper care & handling of our flag

-main question = what is the meaning of "vain" use of God's name?

- Hebrew = unreality / empty, idle, insincere, frivolous.
- express mild surprise or to fill in gaps in speeches or prayers.
- **illust.** Leviticus 24.10 – 23 = half-caste blaspheming the Name.

2. WHY WE MUST RESPECT GOD'S NAME

-it is an issue of respect for God's reputation.

- speech = gift from God (Exodus 4.11), unwise use diminishes God's reputation.
 - take "in vain" by using it in false humour – view sacred things *frivolously*
 - use speech with reverence (i.e. fearing God) *and caution.*
 - to do otherwise, defames and *curses God.*

-it is an issue of respect for God's will.

- take name in vain when used in a way that God did not intend it to be used for.
 - asking God to damn someone or something – this is "in vain" because it is usually not meant and this is something that God never does (i.e. our own impenitence "damns us").
 - prophesying, casting out devils, and doing mighty works by God's name but they are not known to the Lord (Matthew 7.22, 23).
 - this does not truly or properly represent him.

-it is also an issue of respect for people.

- directing profanities towards them or simply in their presence.
- sacred nature of their relationship with God and our responsibility to them .
 - our misinformation might cause them to live carelessly without God.
 - our desire ought to be that people will come to know God intimately.

-the Lord will not hold is guiltless if we do not respect his name.

- "guiltless" = "clean" / we will not be held as morally clean.

- speaks of a proper relationship to God.
 - continuation of the warning about punishment for idolatry in v. v. 5 & 6.
 - **illust.** judgment for idle words

p. 3

3. HOW WE SHOULD RESPECT GOD'S NAME

-intend to keep a promise made in the name of God.

- You shall not swear falsely by the name of your God and so profane the name of your God (Leviticus 19.12).

-people like the Quakers avoid following this practice.

- let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no (Matthew 5.37 & James 5.12).
 - Jesus was correcting the error of putting a fence around the law of God.
 - swearing by heaven, earth, or Jerusalem in order to find a loophole.

-Jesus is speaking against using God's name in unnecessary oaths.

- Jesus himself did not refuse to be put under oath (Matthew 26.63).
- Paul gave a sworn pledge to Galatians & Thessalonians.

-this teaches us about the sanctity of all promises.

- God takes no pleasure in fools (Ecclesiastes 5.4 – 6).
- swear to your own hurt & change not (Psalms 15.4).

-a good practice to bless God by using his name at the beginning of a meal or a journey.

- **illust.** Ancient Rabbis

-in prayer don't just speak to God in order to ask him for something.

- **illust.** Athletes
- **illust.** Martha Williamson
 - take time to connect with God concerning our contribution to his world and expectations.
 - this will cause us to become better in thought, word, and deed.

Conclusion:

1. Know what God wants.

- the command asks / forbids - avoid giving God a bad name & diminishing other people's belief and respect for God.

-the reason for this command – is bound up in the First & Second Commands – God's total Authority and Uniqueness.

2. Know how to do what God wants.

- obey the petition “hallowed be Thy name” in the Lord’s prayer (Matthew 6.9, 10).
- ushers in God’s Kingdom & facilitates God’s will on and in earth.
 - extends God’s kingdom and truly blesses our community.

p. 4

-instead of “live and let live” – “love and help others live.”

- don’t be a stumbling block - But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak (1 Corinthians 8.9).
- use God’s name in the proper way.
 - call on the name of the Lord to be saved (Acts 2.21).
 - pray for healing in the name of Jesus (Acts 3.36).
 - ask for needs to be met in the name of Jesus (John 16.24).
 - retreat into the name of the Lord when facing troubles (Proverbs 18.10).
 - proclaim Jesus’ name to those who are lost in life (Romans 1.5).
 - baptize new believers in the name of the Lord (Matthew 28.19).
 - worship Jesus by bowing before his name (Philippians 2.10).

-if you struggle with obedience pray about it – you will see a gradual victory.

- James 3.5 – 10.

-never let it be said that Christians used God’s name in vain – unreality.

- in jest, in falsehood, in anger.
- hold God’s name high & never mar it.

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4.12).

3. Know that you will do it.

-Closing Hymn: #262 Holy, Holy, Holy (v. v. 1 - 4).

Judgment for idle words

And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you (Matthew 12.36, 37).

Paul’s Sworn Pledges

I declare before God that what I am writing to you is not a lie (Galatians 1.20).

Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you well know. And God is our witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money! As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else (1 Thessalonians 2.5, 6).

Caution In Making Vows

When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it. Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved (Ecclesiastes 5.4 - 6).

Ancient Rabbis

The ancient rabbis held that eating a meal without first blessing God was a form of stealing. Food is a gift from God, and the payment for our meal is acknowledgment and gratitude. For example, the most widely recognized meal blessing is that over the bread: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth" (*The Ten Commandments* Laura Schlessinger, p. 78).

Athletes

Do you ever wonder about the prayers offered by American football teams huddled together before the beginning of the game? Will God help the team with the best prayer? If their prayer is asking God to help them win, it is a vain prayer. When we turn God into a coach who can have an impact on the outcome of a game, we belittle His essence and take his name in vain. If football players gather together and pray that they play to the best of their abilities and exhibit the highest standards of sportsmanship, they acknowledge the true role of God in their game (*The Ten Commandments* Laura Schlessinger, p. 79).

Martha Williamson

Martha Williamson, the producer of the television show *Touched by an Angel*, a self-defined "committed Christian," was interviewed by the *Los Angeles Times* (December 31, 1997) about the unexpected success of her religiously oriented program. When asked whether she felt God had a hand in its success, she replied, "I certainly pray for the show, that God will help me to do the best job I can, but I never prayed for ratings." In her statement, Williamson expresses a distinction between an appropriate prayer and one that might trivialize God (*The Ten Commandments* Laura Schlessinger, p. 79).

