

Commandment III. Honor God's Name

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We are continuing today to look at the Ten Commandments.

Can you remember the first two?

No other gods

No idol worship

And today, we look at the third.

} ***Exodus 20:7 (NIV)***

⁷*“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*

This third command is summed up in these three words:
Honor God's Name.

I. **What is God's name?**

It is that by which he is understood.

Look at a few of the names God is given and see how they describe him.

If you think about it, my name doesn't mean a lot.

“Stephen” means crown.

Am I a crown?

Not really.

In our society, a name means very little.

But the names of God mean a great deal.

Let's look at a couple of them.

A. **“I Am”**

The name he gives Moses tells about his existence.

} ***Exodus 3:13 through Exodus 3:14 (NIV)***

¹³*Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”* ¹⁴*God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

God's name reveals his eternal nature — so to profane his name is to deny his eternal nature.

B. Elohim — “The Strong One”

God’s name tells us he is the strong One.

Strength in a God is essential.

I mean, who wants a wimpy God?

God’s name speaks of his strength.

So to profane his name is to deny his strength.

C. Jesus — “The Lord Saves”

Before Jesus was born, when the angel was speaking to Joseph he said...

} *Matthew 1:21 (NIV)*

²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Jesus’ very name means, “The Lord saves,” and yet how many times do you hear someone say, “Jesus” in a careless way?

Profaning Jesus’ name is denying its real meaning.

II. How people misuse God’s name**A. There are many, but let me give you a few examples.****1. EXAMPLE: By doing what we call “swearing”.**

When I attended the University of Pittsburgh, my roommates and I found ourselves swearing way too frequently.

So we decided we needed to stop.

Instead of saying bad words, we developed substitute words — like *trash*, *rats*, and *blazes*.

We made up these words on the spur of the moment.

One time, when playing a game of foos-ball, my cousin, Terry, scored a goal on me.

I immediately screamed the name of our high-school guidance counselor, as though her name was a curse word.

SUSAN MARIE SMITH!

Terry literally fell to the floor
laughing!

We never told Susan, who was a cousin of
my dad, that we took her name in vain.

I would guess if we did, she would not
be amused.

Neither would God.

It's inappropriate to use God's name as an
exclamation unless you really are addressing
him.

There are some actors I simply avoid
because they seem not to be able to speak
without carelessly

It troubles me when I hear it on television.

It troubles me when I hear it personally.

It's a misuse of God's name.

But there are other ways to misuse the name
of God.

**2. EXAMPLE: By incorrectly attributing
something to him.**

Have you ever been misquoted?

Do you like it?

Not long ago, someone told me they heard I
said something I did not say.

It made me so angry, I wanted to scream!

I think it makes God angry too.

**a. We can dishonor God's name by saying he
said something he did not.**

The most famous of these is what I will call
the "God told me" syndrome.

These are things I have really heard
people say:

*God told me you should be a
missionary.*

*God told me you should increase
your tithe.*

God told me you should resign.

God told me you should leave the church.

Listen: If you are telling people that God told you things, and he did NOT tell you those things, you are misusing the name of God.

The Old Testament penalty for saying God said something he didn't was death by stoning.

I have been your pastor for six years, and I doubt many of you have heard me say *God told me* more than six times.

Why?

Because I never want to attribute something to him that he did not really say.

When you say God said something he did not, you dishonor God's name.

b. We can dishonor God's name by the life we live.

Alliance Pastor, Doug Grogan once remarked that he had hats made with his churches name on it:

Community Alliance Church, Price, Utah.

He said that when the men in his church were wearing their church hats, their behavior was generally better than when they weren't.

Wouldn't it be awful to have your photo taken being arrested while wearing your C&MA hat?

Well, if you are a Christian, you have a hat. And people see it.

You can either honor or dishonor the name on your hat by the life you live.

If you SAY you're a Christian, and live a life that goes against God's

word, you are dishonoring God's name.

3. EXAMPLE: By false teaching.

There are lots of false teachings out there.

God wants you rich.

You can be a god.

Baptism regenerates you.

You must speak in tongues.

Sickness is always a sign of small faith.

All these things are false teachings.

And they dishonor God's name by proclaiming something about him that is not true.

You can see there are many ways to dishonor God's name — more than just swearing.

B. Now let me give you a guideline:

Anything that treats God's name casually is inappropriate.

The ancient Jews thought of God's name as being so holy that they would not write it down.

How different that is from the way others take his name so casually.

Make it your purpose to honor God's name.

III. How to honor God's name

A. To Honor God's Name: Praise It

"Lift it"

} *Isaiah 24:14 through Isaiah 24:15 (NIV)*

¹⁴They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the LORD'S majesty.

¹⁵Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; exalt the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea.

How does that old chorus go?

Praise the name of Jesus

Praise the name of Jesus

He's my rock, He's my fortress

*He's my deliverer, in him will I trust
Praise the name of Jesus.*

You see, since God's names voice his nature when we praise his name, we praise him.

B. To Honor God's Name: Love It.

Was it Gaither who wrote the chorus, "*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, there's just something about that name*"?

There is reward in loving God's name.

} *Isaiah 56:6 (NIV)*

⁶And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—

When you love his name, you love his nature.

C. To Honor God's Name: Trust in It

Have you ever had someone tell you they didn't trust you?

That's painful.

If someone, speaking about you, says "That person can't be trusted," it's painful!

God wants us to trust him.

That' why the psalmist said...

} *Psalms 20:7 (NIV)*

⁷Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

If you want to honor God's name, trust him personally.

Most basically, you have to trust him to save you from your sins.

The very name, Jesus, means God saves.

If you have not trusted Jesus as your personal Savior, then you are dishonoring the very name of God.

You are, with your entire life, breaking the third commandment.

To honor God's name, we must trust in it.

D. To Honor God's Name: Call on It

I love the words of Joel.

And I am in good company, because these Old Testament words are quoted in the New Testament.

Someone else loves them.

} **Joel 2:32 (NIV)**

³²And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

If you want salvation — if you want the name Jesus to mean “God saves YOU” — then you need to call on the name of the Lord.

God — I know I have sinned. Please save me from sin's penalty. I believe Jesus died for my sins. Please forgive me. Please give me eternal life.

Have you done that?

To honor God's name, call on it.

E. To Honor God's Name: Proclaim it

Has there ever been someone who you knew for years, and after being close to them for a long time, you found out they were Christian?

It doesn't happen often, but occasionally when someone becomes a Christian, they tell a friend and the friend says, “Oh — neat!!! I have been a Christian for years!”

My question is, “Why didn't I know you were a Christian?”

You see, part of obeying the third commandment means proclaiming God's name.

} **Deuteronomy 32:3 (NIV)**

³I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God!

To honor God's name, talk about him.

F. To Honor God's Name: Live your life in the name of the Lord.

Look at Paul's words:

} *Colossians 3:17 (NIV)*

¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Everything I do must be done in the name of God.

What does that mean?

Remember —the name of God is representative of his nature.

So everything I do should be in accord with the nature of Christ.

If you want to honor God's name, then behave as he would behave.

Conclusion

That's a pretty stout order, huh?

If you want to honor God's name, then behave as he would behave.

If we are going to do that, it will require God's work in our hearts.

So let's ask him to be at work in our hearts, so we might honor his name.

God...

We praise your name.

*You are an awesome God — the Lord
ALMIGHTY.*

We love your name.

Jesus — Savior.

We trust your name.

*We trust you to forgive our sins because of
Jesus death for us.*

We trust you to be at work in our hearts.

We call on your name this morning...

To forgive

To heal

And to empower us.

We want to proclaim your great name to those around us.

Help us be good witnesses of your name.

We want to live our lives in your name.

May all we do —the way we think, act, and love —be honoring to you.

In CHRIST's NAME we pray. Amen.