**10 Commandments: Law of Life**

**“Don’t Let It Be For Nothing”**

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave the person unpunished who takes His names in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

**COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS**

* Often thought of as the commandment against profanity or cursing.
* But, as we will see, using God’s name to express anger, frustration or surprise *is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ offensive* way the 3rd commandment is broken.
* In reality, the people *who know* God’s name break the commandment **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** than those *who do not know* God’s name but use it in profanity.

**WHY DID GOD SPEAK THIS COMMANDMENT?**

* ***Because God does not want to see us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a precious gift. God is telling us, “I have given you one of the greatest gifts you can ever receive. Don’t let it be for nothing!”***
* “Vain” – lit. – “nothing” or “emptiness”
	+ Psalm 60:11 – “O give us help against the adversary, for deliverance by human beings is in vain (emptiness).”
	+ Psalm 127:1: “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain (for nothing) who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchmen keeps awake in vain (for nothing).”
* God is telling Moses and us, “I have given you something oh so precious, something that changes your life. Do not let it be for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Do not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it of its richness and power!”
* And this gift? **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!**
	+ God has a personal name. He has told us what it is. And God invites us to “take” it.
		- “take” means to “carry,” “to raise,” “to take up”
		- Take it up and use it!

**THE CONTEXT**

* Exodus 3 – A few months before God speaks the 10 Commandments, Moses encounters God at the burning bush. From the bush God speaks a surprising word:
	+ Read Exodus 3:10-15
	+ Moses asks for God’s Name, and God responds in v. 14 and 15.
* When God revealed God’s Self to Moses’ ancestors in the past, God became known by a name, or more, a title. The most important name they used was *El-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*, meaning “Almighty God.”
* But in the burning bush, God reveals much more! The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, sees and hears and feels the people’s suffering, and chooses to get involved with and intervene for His people. *THIS IS A NEW REVELATION! One that needs a new name!*
* So God tells us, “My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I want you to call Me \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NAMES**

* In the Ancient Near East, names carried greater meaning then they do today. A name told you about a person’s essential character and history (past, present and future).
	+ i.e. Nabal – means fool. If you read about Nabal (1 Samuel 25:25) you will see how true his name is!
	+ i.e. Eve – means “mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20)
	+ i.e. Isaac – means “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”. Reminds us that his parents laughed when God told them they could have a child even at their old age.
* Names also were a way to exert power. So one would be careful in giving your name because you were giving them a hold on your life.
* Furthermore, in some cultures, giving your name to someone meant you were establishing a relationship in which all that your name implied is at the disposal of the other.
* And God wants to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! He doesn’t mind being bothered! God lets us know and use God’s name. Yahweh, Y-a-h-w-e-h!

**GOD’S NAME**

* Most English versions of the Bible continue the Jewish reluctance of uttering God’s name by making it LORD, all letters capitalized.
	+ LORD is English translation of Greek *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,* which translates Hebrew word *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.
	+ Although I understand why this is done, God wants to be called by name! “
	+ “God” is not God’s name. It is a generic term.
	+ “The Lord” is not a name. It is a title.
	+ His name is Yahweh and He wants to be called by name.
		- i.e. “Pete” vs. “Pastor” or “Christina” vs. “the wife.”
* In fact, we do actually regularly use God’s name! We just don’t realize it!
	+ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, used so often in worship, is a compound word made up of *Hallelu* meaning “you praise” and *yah* the short form of YAHWEH. PRAISE YAHWEH!

**WHAT DOES GOD’S NAME MEAN?**

* Scholars not 100% sure.
* “Yahweh” is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	+ Derived from “*hayah”* meaning “to be”.
	+ Can either mean “He is” or “He causes to be”. Grammatically could be either.
* Based upon Yahweh’s answer to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”, “He causes to be” can most likely be eliminated because it would not make sense to say “I cause to be what I cause to be”
* So from the burning bush the Living God proclaims, “I AM WHO I AM” which can be rendered “I Am the One Who is.”
	+ But, in the Hebrew sense, the “I AM” is relational, so we need to understand it to mean, “I AM THE ONE WHO IS REALLY THERE, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ YOU AND \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ YOU.”
* Also, Hebrew does not include past, present or future tenses. So it includes all three. So again, Yahweh can be rendered, **“I am Who I am; I am Who I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; I am Who I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_be.”** Or, “***I am Yahweh, The One Who is; the One Who is there with you and for you; the One Who was there with you and for you; the One Who will be there with you and for you.”***
* **THIS IS THE REASON WHY YAHWHE IS THE GOD WHO SEES, HEARS, AND FEELS, AND FINALLY COMES DOWN!**

\*\*It must be noted, that God’s name wouldn’t be fully understood until much later, when God acted in the history of Israel—when He comes in Person, as Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is Yahweh, the with us and for us Yahweh. \*\*

**SO HOW DO WE TAKE THE NAME IN VAIN?**

* And since Yahweh said, “…for Yahweh will not leave unpunished the One who takes His Name in vain,” we must know!
* Also, we must realize, to take God’s name in vain means we are taking God in vain!
* Three ways we break and also the opposite (the way we keep them).

I. The Negative.

* I take God’s name in vain, when I treat God’s name like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	1. Many of Israel’s contemporaries thought that simply uttering consonants and vowels of the Deity’s name could get the Deity’s attention and exercise power over it. Simply uttering God’s name would bring god’s power and blessing.
	2. For Israel’s contemporaries, there was no way of uttering god’s name in vain. Whenever they did, things started to happen!
	3. So the 3rd commandment goes against this view. Simply knowing and uttering God’s name, by itself, does not guarantee a response. God refuses to be conjured up, to do our bidding just because we speak His name.
	4. Although modern believers know this, we still try to do this. We still treat it like magic when we take oath’s in God’s name, “By God I will do it,” or “So help me God , that’s the truth.”
		1. But doing this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God’s name. Which is why Jesus commands us to not bring God into it at all! “Let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no.’” Matthew 5:33-37.

The Positive

* But God’s name does make things \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! Demons flee at the mention of the name. “The mountains bow down and the seas will roar at the sound of Your name.” God’s name brings great authority and weight
	1. The Disciples and Apostle Paul clearly heal and exorcise demons in the Name of Jesus. (Acts 3:1-9; Acts 16:16-18)
	2. The name “Yahweh” and the name “Yeshua,” Jesus, carries clout in the spiritual realm. It carries clout in the whole universe. Philippians 2:10-11 says, “…at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of those who are in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

“We take the name in Vain when we treat it as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We take up the name in honor—in fullness—when we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ its inherent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

II. The Negative

* I take the name of God in vain when I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in a way that does not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the name. The prophets charged Israel with blaspheming God’s name by the way they lived (Isaiah 52:5).
* How often the church has brought shame upon God’s name through the way we live!
* Just look at the Crusades, the church’s silence in Nazi Germany, the many times we build lavish cathedrals in slum areas, and the fact that North Americans spend more money annually feeding pets then we do to alleviate world hunger.
* We empty the name, make it nothing in the world, by the way we, live.
	+ Friedrich Neitzsche, “ Show me the way that you are redeemed and then I will believe in your redeemer.”
	+ Gandhi, “I like what I see in your Christ; it is you Christians that cause me trouble.”

The Positive

* We take up God’s name in honor and in fullness, when we do live a life \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Yahweh’s character. “You shall be holy for I, Yahweh your God, am Holy” (Leviticus 19:2).
	+ We become like our gods. We become like that we truly worship.
* So Jesus teaches us to pray, “…hallowed be Your name.”
	+ Literally, we are asking God, to make His name as real on earth as it is heaven. We are asking God to make His name as real in my life as it is in heaven. We are asking God to honor Himself through the way He enables us to live.
* We bring honor to the name of Yahweh when we speak \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, because Yahweh is a God of truth. The same with justice, mercy, patience. We bring honor to God’s name when we give ourselves to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for Yahweh is the God of the marginalized. We bring honor to the name, when we enter into another’s suffering, for Yahweh is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Servant. We bring honor to God’s name when we practice hospitality, both to others and strangers, when we step out and share our faith with the world, when we try to make peace, when we live sacrificially for the Kingdom’s sake, for Yahweh’s great moment of glory was on the cross, when He laid down His life for the world!

III. The Negative

* I take up God’s name in vain when I throw it around \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, thoughtlessly. We do this when we use God’s name to express anger, frustration or surprise.
	+ But we also do it in our religious circle. Preachers probably the worst. We use God’s name for our agendas, provoking it to win an argument or make a point.
* “Jesus.” It is the most precious name in the Universe. How can we throw it around carelessly? How can we say it without profound gratitude!
* Also, the 3rd commandment tells us to take God’s name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Why? Because disregard for God’s name reveals a disregard for Yahweh! (see Luke 6:45) If we throw the name around carelessly, it reveals the carelessness of our hearts!
* And because God takes His name seriously, strict Jews chose not to say it at all! By the first century, it was uttered only once a year: on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies. So sad…
* The reason God gives us His name is because He wants to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. To not speak God’s name at all is to take the name in vain, for not to speak the name means we *fail to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* who Yahweh is—the God who is there, with us and for us.

The Positive

* We take up God’s name with honor, in fullness, when we “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” This is the opposite of using it carelessly and thoughtlessly.
* Take some time to read the Psalms this week and watch for the way the psalmists, “call upon the name.” Remember whenever you see “The LORD”, the name Yahweh was being used. Read the Psalms out using God’s personal name:
	+ Psalm 3:7; Psalm 5:1; Psalm 6:1,2,8
* Deuteronomy 4:7 – “What great nation is there that has a God so near to it as is Yahweh our God whenever we call upon Him.”
	+ Of course Yahweh is that near, for His name means: “I am there with you and for you, all that I am I am with you and for you.” For Yahweh always acts in a way that makes His Name holy. Never will He act in a way that goes against His name.

*“Calling on the name of Yahweh turns out to be the highest form of honor we can give, higher than praise. For when I call on the name, I am acknowledging that Yahweh is greater than I, and that I cannot make it without Jesus. The reverse is also true. Never calling on the name is the greatest insult. It says I can make it without Yahweh, without Jesus.*

 *Now you can see why I thought of subtitling this chapter, “Something Worse than Profanity.” Joy Davidman puts it best: “Many church-goers think of the third commandment as meant primarily to forbid casual profanity. Yet casual profanity is perhaps the least of our offenses against it. We commit the ultimate blasphemy by not calling upon God at all.”*

 *The ultimate blasphemy? Yes, because not calling upon God says we do not need God no matter what the name is.*

*“I Am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of slavery.*

 *I am Yeshua your Savior who claims you for My own.*

 *I give you My Name.*

 *Do not let it be in vain.”*

*- Darrell Johnson, “The Ten Commandments”*