

Commandment # 3

- No Disrespect

Exodus 20:4-6

¹ Most of us in our American culture tend to use words too loosely. We often say things, and then think about what we've said.

But the Bible tells us to be **quick to listen** and **slow to speak!** ¹ Commandment # 3 is telling you to show more respect toward your Creator. You need to use your tongue more wisely, especially when it comes to addressing God or speaking about Him. He is your Creator and the absolute ruler of the universe. He expects you to address Him as such ²

Our scripture is Exodus, chapter 20, verse 7, **You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.** ³

¹ James 1:19.

I. What Did This Mean to Them?

What did this mean to them? ⁴

What's in a name?

Names meant more in ancient times than they do today in modern culture. We use names today only to identify who a person is; not much more than that. ⁵

In ancient times there was a vital connection between a name and the one it identified. ⁶

The New Unger's Bible Handbook states, "The name was almost the same as the person it identified. They generally expressed some personal characteristic, some incident connected with the birth, some hope or wish or prayer of the parent; & henceforth the child embodied it, & for the parent's sake, felt it like a personal vow & made his life an effort to realize it." ^{2 7}

² Merrill F Unger, The New Unger's Bible Handbook, Moody Press.

Names were given during ceremonies like circumcision.³

Names had meanings.⁸

Isaac⁴ meant laughter because when Sarah was told she would bear a son when she was ninety years old, she laughed.^{5 9}

Esau,⁶ the first of Isaac's twin sons, sounds a lot like the Hebrew word "hairy".⁷ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.^{8 10}

Jacob,⁹ the second twin, was named the "supplanter" because he was holding on to his brother's heel!^{10 11}

³ Luke 1:59 - On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him . . .

⁴ יִצְחָק.

⁵ Genesis 21:6 - Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."

⁶ עֵשָׂו.

⁷ שָׁעַר.

⁸ Genesis 25:25.

⁹ יַעֲקֹב.

¹⁰ Genesis 25:25-26 - The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.

Moses, ¹¹ name means “drawn out” because when he was discovered by the Pharaoh’s daughter, he was taken out of the river. ¹² ₁₂

Jesus, or Joshua, ¹³ means “savior”. The angel proclaimed the meaning of His name, **She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**” — **which means, “God with us.”** ¹⁴ ₁₃

The Lord’s other name, **Emmanuel**, ¹⁵ from the same passage above, describes Who He, literally, is. Lord Jesus is God, in a human life! ₁₄

So, what is the Lord God’s name? ₁₅

¹¹ מֹשֶׁה.

¹² Exodus 2:10 - When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “I drew him out of the water.”

¹³ Ἰησοῦς.

¹⁴ Matthew 1:21-23.

¹⁵ Ἐμμανουήλ.

He told Moses at the fiery bush on Mount Sinai, **“I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**¹⁶ The Hebrew name is **Yahweh**¹⁷. It is not supposed to have vowel markings, so it can only be expressed in a whisper! In the Bible it is transliterated “Jehovah” in the American Standard version. The best and most recognized translation is “I Am Who I Am”. (The verb “to exist” in both Hebrew “tenses”¹⁸)¹⁶

This implies that God always was and always will be! He is unique. He is majestic and beyond all human understanding!¹⁷

How do the Jews respect this name?

Back to our scripture in Exodus, chapter 20, verse 7, **You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.**¹⁸

¹⁶ Exodus 3:14.

¹⁷ יהוה

¹⁸ Hebrew and Aramaic do not have tense in the sense that we have in English.

Misuse, ¹⁹ means to be deceptive and false. Here, it means empty. The King James Version translates it “vain”. What this should mean to you is not to put the name of God into a context that may “empty” it of its meaning. ¹⁹ The Jews, to play safe, will never pronounce it!

I am all in for this practice! I experienced a Jewish synagogue service years ago. The congregation stood and read aloud, in unison, from the scripture. I knew enough Hebrew to be able to follow along as they read (although not well enough to translate the words) and, sure enough, when we arrived at the divine name, everyone substituted “Adonai” (Lord). Out of respect for this view, many English translations will substitute “LORD” in place of the divine name where it is found in the Old Testament. ²⁰

¹⁹ אֲשׁוּר.

II. What Should This Mean to You?

What should this mean to you? ²¹

How about swearing – using vulgarity in your speech?

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Your words carry more power than you realize. James, chapter 5, verses 14 and 15, **This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.** ²³

Lord Jesus said, **“Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move.** Nothing will be impossible for you.” ²⁰ ²⁴

But your words should not be used flippantly! ²⁵

James, chapter 3, verse 10, **Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.** My brothers, this should not

²⁰ Matthew 17:20.

be. ²⁶ Also, in Colossians, we find, **But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.** ²¹

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The Lord warned us, **But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**" ²² ²⁸ This is echoed by the Apostle Paul, **Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.** ²⁹

How about putting the Lord's name, or references to the Lord, in a vulgar context?

Do you ever say, "God!", or "Oh God!", or "Jesus!", or "Jesus Christ!" as an exclamation? Isn't this practice bringing the sacred names down to our vulgar level?

²¹ Colossians 3:8.

²² Matthew 12:36-37.

I remember a devout Christian lady. She was the example to me of an aristocratic southern lady. She was very proper and dignified. Everyone loved and respected her in our small church in Virginia.

She had the habit, whenever she got excited about something, to declare, “Oh Lordy!” I knew her well enough to know the sincerity of her faith and her Christian walk. If she ever thought she was having a reference to the Lord’s name in a disrespectful way, she would be aghast! But don’t a lot of us, without thinking, use the sacred references to the Lord in a base, secular context?

Let’s think of Lord Jesus, and our Heavenly Father, always in a majestic, awesome, respectful way. Then we can always address Him and refer to Him in the awesome way He deserves! ³⁰

God's name is so sacred, but we often use it so lightly.

Let's decide, from now on, to think of God more respectfully as we use His holy name.

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