

DATE: May 2, 2010

TITLE: "THE NAME OF THE LORD"

SERIES: "Back to Basics" Number 3 of 10

TEXT: Exodus 20:7

INTRODUCTION: (*PROP – A stop sign – as authentic as possible – on back side words in big, clear print (Computer -generated probably) - DO NOT MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD)

On February 7, 1996, three teenagers breezed through an intersection and directly into the path of an eight-ton truck. These three young men were killed in the accident. During the investigation, it was discovered that there was a stop sign lying on the roadside near the accident scene. Three other young people had thought it would be fun go along the rural roads of Hillsborough County, Florida, and steal road signs the previous night. The three young men were convicted of manslaughter, and each faced up to twenty-seven years in prison for the death of the three teenagers. The judge, during the sentencing, told them, "I don't believe for one minute that you pulled up these signs with the intent of causing the death of anyone, but pulling up the signs caused ramifications that none of you may have ever expected."

We live in a society where many stop signs of morality and decency have been removed. We have been looking at the Ten Commandments in a message series the last few weeks. Whenever one mentions the Ten Commandments, someone is always quick to question their relevance for us and for our time. However, the true story I just read illustrates very well the need for God's rules in our lives today. We live in a society where the stop signs of morality and decency have been removed. To many people, there are no limits to what is acceptable behavior. The boundaries between good and evil, right and wrong, are becoming increasingly fluid. By pulling up the stop signs of morality, we are in danger of exposing ourselves to consequences much more dangerous than we can imagine.

The Ten Commandments are God's stop signs. Contrary to popular belief, they are not given to us to constrain, bind, or limit us, rather to protect, guide, and direct us. The world is telling us a big lie—that the stop signs of culture are no longer needed. However, as God's people, we should know better. That's why we're studying the Ten Commandments. As Christians, we realize we are not saved by following them, but by God's grace. But, in the Ten Commandments, we learn about God's character, about obedience, about how to counter the big lies the world tries convincing us are true.

Today, God puts out another stop sign.

This commandment has been all but ignored by the world and sadly forgotten even by the church.

"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuse his name." (Exodus 20:7)

I. GOD EMPHASIZES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF THE LORD

ILLUSTRATION: In school, back when I was growing up, there was a rhyme that said (*Picture with this) “Sticks and stone may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” I found out, as a young person growing up, that little saying was not true for me.

1. There is power in the words we speak, for the words we speak with the pen of our mouth or write with the ink of our actions often leaves a mark
2. The power of the words we speak is clearly communicated in the book of James. **“The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. (James 3:6)**
3. The words we speak expose what is on the inside of heart. **“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45)**

4. Profanity really says something about the person who uses it.

ILLUSTRATION: Author, William Ward said “Profanity is the use of strong words by weak people.”

5. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you carry around the name, Christian, which means “little Christ.”
6. Your words and actions reflect the character of your Lord.
7. Remember that your character affects God’s credibility.
8. The words you say shape other people’s opinion about God’s reputation.
9. Misuse and profane use of words has become so common that it no longer troubles Christians and have even become part of their vocabulary.
10. That’s why there’s a specific prohibition about profanity in the Bible.
11. Writing about what is proper for God’s holy people, the Apostle Paul says, **“Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.” (Ephesians 5:4)**
12. I wonder if there are not a lot of people whose words spoken during the week do not represent well the Lord they come to worship on Sunday.

According to an AP-Ipsos poll conducted in March of 2006, the use of profanity in American culture is increasing. Nearly 75 percent of the people questioned said they encounter profanity in public either frequently or occasionally. Two-thirds said they think people swear more often than they did 20 years ago. In addition, younger people admit to using bad language more often than older people. They also encounter it more frequently and are less offended by it. In what may or may not be a silver lining, the poll showed that many of those who regularly swear do believe that it's wrong for them to do so. (Associated Press, "Poll: Americans See, Hear More Profanity," yahoo.com (3-29-06))

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” (Ephesians 4:29)

13. The little chorus “O Be careful” reminds us of the importance of the words we speak.

ILLUSTRATION: (* Put on screen with pictures)

Oh, be careful little mouth what you say,

Oh, be careful little mouth what you say

There's a Father up above

Who is looking down in love

So, be careful little lips what you say.

14. The words we speak should match the character of the God we love.

15. Guard the language you speak, guard your words.

16. The Old Testament writers had only about nine hundred Hebrew words through which to convey their message of an indescribable God.

17. A word, therefore, became a powerful idiom and important conveyor of truth.

18. A name can be a very powerful word.

ILLUSTRATION: Author, John Maxwell relayed that during his junior high years, he and his father enrolled in a Dale Carnegie course. He said one of the first and most important things he learned was this, "The sweetest sound a person ever hears is his or her own name."

19. The third commandment must be read against the background of the extended meaning of the significance of a name in the OT.

ILLUSTRATION: Luanne Oleas wrote in *Reader's Digest* some years ago that when the 1960s ended, San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district reverted to high rent, and many hippies moved down the coast to Santa Cruz. Some didn't name their children common names like Melissa or Brett. People in the mountains around Santa Cruz grew accustomed to their children playing Frisbee with little Time Warp or Spring Fever. And, eventually, children with names like Moonbeam, Earth, Love and Precious Promise all ended up in public school. That's when the kindergarten teachers first met little Fruit Stand. Every fall, according to tradition, parents bravely apply name tags to their children, kiss them good-bye and send them off to school on the bus. So, it was for Fruit Stand. The teachers thought the boy's name was odd, but they tried to make the best of it. "Would you like to play with the blocks, Fruit Stand?" they offered. And later, "Fruit Stand, how about a snack?" He accepted hesitantly. By the end of the day, his name didn't seem much odder than Heather's or Sun Ray's. At dismissal time, the teachers led the children out to the buses. "Fruit Stand, do you know which one is your bus?" He didn't answer. That wasn't strange. He hadn't answered them all day. Lots of children are shy on the first day of school. It didn't matter. The teachers had instructed the parents to write the names of their children's bus stops on the reverse side of their name tags. The teacher simply turned over the tag. There, neatly printed was the word, "Anthony." (Luanne Oleas in Salinas, California, *Reader's Digest*)

20. Names are important to us, especially our own.

21. A name is more than a means of identifying someone.

22. The mere mention of some names would elicit an immediate emotional response from you.

23. A variety of images for many of us come to mind when I say names like, Abraham Lincoln, David Letterman, John Wayne, Billy Graham, and the list goes on.

24. What comes to mind when you think upon and focus upon the Name of the Lord your God?

25. Jehovah or Yahweh is God's Old Testament name, par excellence.
26. It occurs some 6828 times in the OT.
27. The Word Yahweh or Jehovah is used exclusively in reference to Israel's God in the O.T.
28. Jehovah was the awesome personal, covenantal, promise-keeping name of God that must not be misused.
29. YHWH basically means "the One who Is." And, it is usually translated as "Lord is here".
The name of God Jehovah was highly revered by the ancient Jews.
30. It was pronounced only once a year by the high priest, when giving the blessing on the great Day of Atonement, according to Leviticus 23:27.
31. They would not pronounce it even in the reading of the Scriptures in public worship.
32. They substituted the word, *Adonai* for the word, *Jehovah* which means 'Lord' or 'Master'.

EXAMPLE: Some biblical historians have pointed out that Israel came to value the name, *Jehovah* so much that when Scribes copied the manuscripts, they would fast and pray before writing the name of God. After the fast, the scribe would ceremonially bathe all over, and then go back to the scroll with an unused pen! After it was written, the pen was discarded and burned, and the clothes worn at the time were also burned.

33. The reverence and holiness of God's name in the minds of God's people in the Old Testament cannot be overstated.
34. The Lord said to Moses, **"Tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to me, so they will not profane my holy name. I am the Lord."**(Leviticus 22:2)
35. God's name is Holy because God is Holy.
"I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." (Ezekiel 36:23)
36. Thus, the Third Commandment prohibits the use of the name of Jehovah in any way that falls short of His own reality and truthfulness.
EXAMPLE: When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He said, "pray 'Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name'." In doing so, He brought out the uniqueness and reverence of the Name of the Lord our God.
37. The name of God must never be used in an empty, frivolous or insincere way or a way that gives a false report or of respect for God's name.
ILLUSTRATION: "In much of contemporary theology, we discover a dehydrated and demythologized deity who bears no resemblance to Jehovah." (author-Albert Mohler)
38. The name of God is not a mere designation, but a description of character.
39. Bound up in the name of God are all His characteristics—His holiness, power, authority, righteousness, justice, mercy, and so on.
40. These things are synonymous with God, Himself.
41. The use of the name of the Lord cannot be separated from His presence.

42. Yahweh had not withheld His name, but had freely given it to Moses and so, to Israel as both a summary and an extension of the revelation of His presence.
43. That God had revealed His name gives some clue to the intimacy of the covenant relationship.
44. The knowledge of the personal name of God, Yahweh, was arguably the greatest gift God entrusted to Israel.
45. The way we use God's name is an indication of our relationship with Him.
46. The way you use someone's name is an indication of what you think of that person.
47. In the same way, how you use God's name indicates what you think of Him.
48. In the third of the Ten Commandments, we find that God is protective of His name.
49. We are commanded to proceed with extreme caution in handling the name of the Almighty.
50. God cares about your relationship with Him, so He cares about the way you treat His name.
51. In general terms, this commandment prohibits a lack of seriousness about Yahweh's presence in Israel, demonstrated through a pointless, misleading, or even false use of His name."
52. If you take God seriously, you won't use His name flippantly.
53. A secularized society feels free to use the personal names of God and Christ with no concern for who they belong to.
54. We must stop and remember the God who stands behind His name.

ILLUSTRATION: The Civil War had ended! Robert E. Lee, commanding General of the Confederate Forces, was left in defeat. He was penniless. However, in the midst of the surrender, Lee's fame had gone far and wide. Even his enemies had great respect for him.

It is said that a powerful financial corporation was organizing an insurance company. The Board of Control wanted to use the Robert E. Lee name and, so offered to make him an honorary President of the firm. They sent a delegation of persuasive executives to tell the ex-general that he would not have actual duties, even though he would receive a comfortable salary. What the company really wanted was Robert E. Lee's name. When they finished outlining all the details, General Lee said, simply, but with finality, "Gentlemen, I have nothing left but my name, and that is not for sale."

55. He understood the significance and importance of a name.
56. The scripture want us to understand the importance and significance of God's name.

**II. GOD COMMANDS US NOT TO MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD
"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name." (Exodus 20:7)**

1. God cares about how His people use His name.
2. God never said, "do what you want with My name."

ILLUSTRATION: T.V. Personality, Jay Leno did an on-the-street questionnaire some years ago. He asked two college girls to name one of the Ten Commandments. They answered, "Freedom of Speech."

3. God has not given us freedom to use the name of the Lord any way we want.
4. God cares about how you treat Him and how you use His name.

5. How you use the name of God reveals to others how you feel about God.
6. The way you use and treat the Name of the Lord says a lot about your heart and your relationship with God.
7. This commandment is couched in language that permits a wide range of application, covering every dimension of the misuse of Yahweh's name.
8. Simply stated, to misuse is to use incorrectly or to mistreat or abuse.
9. Many things can be misused

ILLUSTRATION: Words that sound alike (homonyms) in the English language are often misused. (*Print these words out in a contemporary graphic of some type.) Words like, Accept and Except, Affect and Effect, Allusion or Illusion, Principle or Principal, and the list goes on.

ILLUSTRATION: Misuse of prescription drugs is a growing problem. With recent celebrity deaths related to the abuse of prescription drugs, the public has become more aware of the dangers. I read of a study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine that showed the estimated hospitalizations for misuse of certain prescription drugs increased 65 percent from 1999 to 2006. Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can produce serious health effects, including addiction and even death.

10. It includes using God's name in swearing, but goes way beyond that. .
11. The Hebrew word translated, *Misuse* means, 'in vain', 'unreal', 'empty', 'trivial', 'nothingness', 'frivolous', or 'insincere'.
12. Literally, God told His people not to lift up or take up His name with emptiness.
13. To misuse God's name is to treat it lightly, and not take it seriously, using God's name in an empty, void, foolish or frivolous way.
14. God's people are not to trifle with God's name.
15. Flippant uses of terms related to God's name, such as times when someone expresses anger or surprise reveal lack of reverence for God, who is represented by His name.
16. God declares that His name must be spoken and heard with reverence.
17. This commandment rebukes the blasphemy of irreverence.
18. God is Holy and His name is Holy and worthy of all reverence.
19. Therefore, God's name is not to be treated in an irreverent way, because God is not to be treated in a way that speaks of irreverence.
20. When we sing God's praises from a vacant heart or with empty formality, or pray without devotion, we are misusing His name.
21. When you and I really grasp and embrace who God is with reverence, it makes a profound and radical difference in how we live our lives.
22. The way you speak and act and live should reflect the One you believe in, follow and revere.

"And 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." (Colossians 3:17)

23. Our lives on Monday through Saturday will match with our actions on Sunday.
- ILLUSTRATION: "Christ is not looking for part-time followers." —Anonymous**
24. Trifling with the name of God or joking about God can reveal lack of reverence.
25. God is worthy of all honor and His name should not be used for that which is unworthy.
26. God's name should not be cheapened in any way by our speech.

27. This commandment is all about respect and reverence for God.
28. Your character affects God's credibility, so our lives should not be inconsistent.
29. God's people must take God seriously.
30. Vows, oaths, and promises made before God are never to be broken.
31. The Old Testament taught the importance of keeping oaths we make with God's name.
32. The New Testament attitude is that I should be known to be so honest that my word will not be doubted
33. Jesus calls us to simplicity of speech.

“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, “Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord. But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No;’ anything beyond this comes from the evil one. “ (Matthew 5:33-37)

34. We are to honor God with our lips, life and love.
35. To treat Yahweh's name with disrespect is to treat His gift lightly, to underestimate His power, to scorn His Presence, and to misrepresent to the family of humankind His very nature as the one who always is.
36. We are to reverence God personally, domestically, publically, corporately.
37. A light speaking of God, or to speak frivolously and flippantly the name of God does not match His character and speaks of misuse.
38. We should always use His name in a manner consistent with His character.
39. To misuse the name of God is to take the character of God where it doesn't belong.
40. Any phrase or slang that cheapens the name of the Lord is misuse.
41. We can misuse God's name by not mentioning it at all or failing to use it when the name should be used.
42. The name of Yahweh is not to be used for some magical purpose.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember one time when I was a teenager, my Youth Pastor did a teaching on the Name of Jesus. Some teens began to emphasize that you always close with Jesus' name. Their emphasis was that if you don't use His name, you won't get what you want, and if you do, you will. It was a misuse of the name since the thought was that if you add the name of Jesus that will guarantee a favorable answer more or less irrespective of the contents of prayer. It was a misuse of the name of Jesus and an attempt to use the name in a somewhat magical and manipulative way.

43. Any attempt to manipulate or use the name for personal ends is a misuse of the name.
44. History records God's name has been invoked to sanction all sorts of evils through the centuries.
45. God's name is not to be attached to what we think or used to support what we want.
46. The name of God is not to be used to make us look spiritual or to further our own project.
47. Sadly, some name drop God to give ourselves the ultimate credibility, sometimes allowing God's name to confidently underwrite something that is no more than a hunch or wish of ours.

EXAMPLE: Ezekiel the prophet speaks about those who prophesy out of their own imagination. He said, “Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!” (Ezekiel 13:3) He goes on to say, “They say, “The Lord declares,” when the Lord has not sent them...” (Ezekiel 13:6)

48. Some have described it as using the ‘God card’, trying to use God’s authority to do something we want to do.
49. Giving God a bad name by blatantly using God’s name in the interest of our own selfishness, power, or pride in principle is breaking the third commandment.
50. The name of God is not a power word to be used to fulfill what we want to accomplish.

EXAMPLE: Acts 19 tells of some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits who tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. “They would say, “In the name of Jesus, who Paul preaches, I command you to come out. Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. (Acts 19:13-14). “(One day), the evil spirit answered them. ‘Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’” (Acts 19:15) “Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.” (Acts 19:16).

51. They were misusing the name of the Lord.
52. Is it possible that far too many are guilty of making Christ only a figurehead while continuing to run their lives just as they did before?

ILLUSTRATION :(*Picture with this quote) Author and former Pastor, Ray Stedman said, “God does not intervene in our lives to take sides; He comes to take over, so move over!”

53. Christians must be careful not to grow lax in their vocabulary.
 54. It is concerning that in many cases it seems the church has adapted to the culture around us instead of taking God’s culture into the world.
 55. The name of the Lord should be spoken appropriately on our lips.
- (*Picture) Psalm 34:3 - “Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.”**
56. Our words should bring glory to the Lord, not shame.
 57. We should use our words and our lives to lift Him up.

ILLUSTRATION: When Sharon and I were married, I wanted to buy her a big diamond. So, I bought this big diamond about the size of a pin head. A little bigger. Set in a three prongs. She called me one day in a panic. While washing dishes, she realized the diamond was gone. She called me and was very seriously alarmed. As she went on with her chores, she called me again. When she opened the dryer, there was something sparkling...one warm diamond. We took her diamond immediately to the jeweler’s to mount new prongs to secure it better.

58. The name of God is so precious and pure.
59. Have we, as Christians, lost our grip on treating God as we should?
60. I wonder if you need to remount it if you, too, have lost it in the chores of life.
61. Let us not misuse His name by our words or actions.

III. GOD WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE FOR HOW WE USE THE NAME OF THE LORD

“...For the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” (Exodus 20:7)

1. This commandment is serious to God.
2. God cares about how we use His name.
3. The name of God is not irrelevant.
4. We are called to reverence His name continually.
5. We are to represent His name clearly.
6. We are to rely on the name of the Lord completely.
7. There is power in the name of the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: Joy Davidman says that the third Commandment is like the “warning you see around power plants: ‘Danger—High Voltage!’”

8. For the ancient Hebrews seemed to think of God almost literally as a live wire.
9. God is a powerful God, so His name is powerful and is to be used, but not misused.

EXAMPLE: Remember what David said as he approached Goliath, “...You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty...” (1 Samuel 17:45) The giant enemy was conquered because God’s name is not irrelevant.

EXAMPLE: As Peter approached the temple, he saw a beggar sitting there. Peter said, “...Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” (Acts 3:6) The man was healed for the name of the Lord is not irrelevant.

10. Salvation is found through the name of the Lord.

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

11. We take God’s name in vain when we allow it to be empty of deep personal meaning.
12. God wants you to use the name of the Lord and experience all that it offers.
13. Use the powerful name of the Lord in witnessing, praying, and living out a Godly life.
14. This commandment emphasizes the importance of the proper use of His name by stressing the accountability.
15. Misusing the name of the Lord will not be ignored.
16. That one should use the name carefully is seen by the consequences.
17. Is this commandment as important to you and I as it is to God?
18. God hears and sees how His name is used and will hold us accountable.

ILLUSTRATION: C.R. Smith was one of the founders of American Airlines, and he once made a stopover in Nashville, Tennessee. When he did, he found two desks in the American Airlines corridor of the airport. On one, a phone was ringing away. Sitting at the other, with his feet propped up, was a man reading the newspaper.

Smith walked up to him and said, “Your phone is ringing.”

“That’s reservations. I’m maintenance,” the man replied.

Furious, Smith walked over to the desk, picked up the phone, and began talking to a man who urgently needed to get to California. Smith rattled off the schedule

from memory to the man and hung up. The man from maintenance couldn't believe it!

"Say, that was pretty good!" he said. "Do you work for American?"

"Yes, I do," Smith answered. "And you used to."

It's important to learn what to take seriously – and who.

19. This person was held accountable for what he did not do.

20. We are accountable to God.

"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

21. We are accountable for how we use the name of the Lord.

22. We are accountable to God for the words we speak.

23. Misuse of God's name is often centered around carelessness.

"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." (Matthew 12:36-37)

24. Nothing should be taken more seriously than God, and giving God His proper respect starts with His name, because His name represents who He is.

25. What a tragedy it is to take it so lightly when God takes it so seriously.

26. God will hold us accountable for what we do with His name and how we use it.

27. The Hebrew word translated guiltless here is clean.

28. God will not hold anyone clean that misuses the name of the Lord.

29. God cares about your relationship with Him, for He cares about you.

30. The way you use His name can reveal your relationship with Him.

31. If you have been misusing His name you need to repent.

32. God offers forgiveness.

33. Don't just plan to go on and try a little harder not to.

34. Guard your language at all time through His Holy Spirit.

35. Reverence God in all you do.

36. Live so that your life is a reflection of God.

37. Pray, surrender, and live in the power of the Spirit.

ILLUSTRATION: **PROP: (A gift box – like a present inside words, the name of the Lord – look like glass or breakable, etc.) At a Christmas party one time, I picked up a gift from someone for me. I was kind of tossing it around. Finally they said, "Pastor, you need to stop tossing it around, it is breakable." I didn't realize the value of the gift or what it was. Those of us who know God, know how He should be treated. His name is valuable. Handle His powerful name with reverence, care, and purpose.

CONCLUSION: THE NAME OF THE LORD

I. GOD EMPHASIZES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF THE LORD

II. GOD COMMANDS US NOT TO MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD

III. GOD WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE FOR HOW WE USE NAME OF THE LORD