



Law Series

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The Third Commandment

Children's Bible Study

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Goal: To learn about the Third Commandment of God's Law and why it is important to His people.

Objective: Children will know what the Third Commandment says; children will understand what is meant by using God's name in vain; and children will understand what will happen to them if they break this Commandment.

Relevant Scripture(s): Exodus 20:7

Activity: Each child will receive a Ten Commandments plaque; purchased from the Bible Games Company (www.faithoutlet.com); jumble puzzle worksheet; a game of trivia regarding the Ten Commandments.

Lesson: To understand the Third Commandment and why it is important for us to honor it



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The Third Commandment tells us that we are not to use God's name in the wrong way. God clearly tells us not to take His name in vain. God will not hold us guiltless if we do. It is important for us to understand exactly what taking God's name in vain is if we are to obey this command.

Different translations of the Bible explain the verse differently. Let's examine a few.

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (KJV)

Exodus 20:7 Do not misuse my name. I am the LORD your God, and I will punish anyone who misuses my name. (CEV)

First we need to discuss the definition of the words in the Scripture.

What does "vain" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *lacking significance or value; not leading to a desirable or lasting effect.*

The Hebrew word **vain** means *empty, meaningless, thoughtless, senseless, worthless.*

What does "guiltless" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *without guilt; sinless; innocent*

What does "misuse" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *to use incorrectly or inappropriately; a wrong or inappropriate use.*

What does "punish" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *to impose a penalty on for a real or imagined offense.*

So we can see that taking God's name in vain means using God's name in a thoughtless, insincere way or without a specific purpose. God does not take it lightly if we do. We are responsible for every word that comes out of our mouths, whether they are good or bad.

1John 2:4 But if we claim to know him and don't obey him, we are lying and the truth isn't in our hearts.(CEV)

Matthew 12:36 I promise you that on the day of judgment, everyone will have to account for every careless word they have spoken. (CEV)

How do people take God's name in vain?

The first way we can use God's name in vain is in a desolating manner. What does "desolate" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *feeling friendless or hopeless; unfriendly; having no inhabitants or dwellings; deserted; lonely; without those things necessary or desirable for life.*

If God's name is used to cause feelings of sadness in an individual, then we are using it in vain. What does this mean? This is referring to sadness in a sense of hurt. We are not to use God's name to hurt another person. If we are ill or have something not going quite right in our life, then some people may say we are obviously in a state of sin and God is punishing us. This is hurtful to people and is not to be done. People who say things like this are taking God's name in vain and the Bible tells us they will not go unpunished for it. If people feel hopeless because of our use of God's name, then we are using it in vain. This is unacceptable. What if someone said to anyone of us, "You are a fine

example of a Christian! How can God love you?" or "God doesn't love you because you're a sinner?" That would be using God's name in an unfriendly way and, not to mention, untrue. God loves all people but He hates their sinful behavior.

Hebrews 13:15-16 Let us then make offerings of praise to God at all times through him, that is to say, the fruit of lips giving witness to his name. 16 But go on doing good and giving to others, because God is well-pleased with such offerings. (BBE)

Isaiah 57:15 Our holy God lives forever in the highest heavens, and this is what he says: Though I live high above in the holy place, I am here to help those who are humble and depend only on me. (CEV)

The second way we can use God's name in vain is in a deceitful manner. What does "deceitful" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *deceptive: a means of misleading, tricking, or cheating.*

If we use God's name in a dishonest manner, this is also using His name in vain. God's name is used to trick people all the time. Look at the terrorist activities that are taking place today. These are done in the name of Allah, which is just the Arabic form of the Hebrew word, "Eloah," which is God the Father. Do we think our loving God is behind this? God's name is used to make people believe a lie. People also use God's name to justify the keeping of Christmas and other pagan holidays, which we know we should not keep.

1Peter 3:10-11 For it is said, Let the man who has a love of life, desiring to see good days, keep his tongue from evil and his lips from words of deceit: 11 And let him be turned from evil and do good; searching for peace and going after it with all his heart. (BBE)

Psalms 139:20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. (BBE)

The third way we can use God's name in vain is through idolatry. What does "idolatry" mean?

The "Wordcentral.com Online Dictionary" defines it as: *the worship of an idol as a god; very great attachment or devotion to something.*

We are not to use God's name for anything other than God the Father or it is idolatry. There are other churches that are Trinitarian (they believe God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all one person) or Binitarian (they believe God and Jesus Christ are one person) or polytheists (they believe there is more than one god). They are all breaking the Third Commandment, as well as the First. They say that Christ is the same as God. He is God, just as God is God. This is untrue and they are using God's name in vain. There are people who use God's name incorrectly, and they can deceive us if we're not careful.

Ephesians 5:4-5 Don't use dirty or foolish or filthy words. Instead, say how thankful you are. 5 Being greedy, indecent, or immoral is just another way of worshiping idols. You can be sure that people who behave in this way will never be part of the kingdom that belongs to Christ and to God. (CEV)

The fourth way we can use God's name in vain is without purpose. What does "purpose" mean?

The "Wordsmyth Online Dictionary" defines it as: *a reason or plan guiding an action; motive or intention; determination or resolve; the reason for which something exists.*

We are not to use God's name in a useless manner or without purpose. The profanity (or bad words people use these

days) is an example of taking God's name in vain. We hear people all the time saying things like, "Oh My God", or "Oh God", or just simply "God" with no purpose. This is taking God's name in vain. If we use the name of God for no reason, then it is in vain. We are not to do this. When we utter God's name it is for a purpose, and the purpose should be based in love and respect. It is not to be used as an exclamation or profanity! God will punish us for this. The same holds true for the name of Jesus Christ. We are to give honor to God and Christ and we dishonor their names by using them in a useless or profane way.

Ephesians 5:6 Don't let anyone trick you with foolish talk. God punishes everyone who disobeys him and says foolish things.(CEV)

Proverbs 15:2 Knowledge is dropping from the tongue of the wise; but from the mouth of the foolish comes a stream of foolish words. (BBE)

Psalms 100:4 Come into his doors with joy, and into his house with praise; give him honour, blessing his name. (BBE)

Who is to obey this Commandment?

It is a Commandment given to each one of us individually. How we use God's name and how we treat God's name is a big concern to God. It is up to each one of us to avoid using the Lord God's name in vain. We must never use God's name in an insincere way. God's name should always be honored. This Commandment is directed to each of us. It is directed to every human on the earth.

Ecclesiastes 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are sweet to all, but the lips of a foolish man are his destruction.(BBE)

Isaiah 8:13 I am the one you should fear and respect. I am the holy God, the LORD All-Powerful! (CEV)

Deuteronomy 28:58-59 You must obey everything in The Book of God's Law.

Because if you don't respect the LORD, 59 he will punish you and your descendants with incurable diseases, like those you were so afraid of in Egypt.(CEV)

How long was this Commandment to be in force?

For as long as we live we are to obey all the Commandments. No one who has ever lived, who is living now, or who ever will live is ever to misuse God's name. No person of any period of history is to misuse or take God's name in vain. This is what God demands. This Commandment is in force as long as we live and as long as God exists. God's Law is eternal.

Numbers 35:29 These rules are to be your guide in judging through all your generations wherever you may be living.(BBE)

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 Take care, then, to do whatever the Lord your God has given you orders to do; let there be no turning away to the right hand or to the left. 33 Go on walking in the way ordered for you by the Lord your God, so that life may be yours and it may be well for you, and your days may be long in the land of your heritage. (BBE)

Conclusion

So in conclusion, we need to be aware of our speech. We need to be careful how we use God's name. We should use it in a comforting, kindhearted manner with the utmost respect for God Himself. We need to not only watch how we use God's name but also we need to be aware of our speech in general. As it says in Titus 2:7-8:

Titus 2:7-8 Always set a good example for others. Be sincere and serious when you teach. 8 Use clean language that no one can criticize. Do this, and your enemies will be too ashamed to say anything against you. (CEV)

We are done