

*Honor
Exalting His Name*
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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

Exodus 20:7 (NLT)

7 "You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

Exodus 3:13–14 (NLT)

13 But Moses protested, "If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what should I tell them?"

14 God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."

Isaiah 29:13 (NLT)

*13 And so the Lord says,
"These people say they are mine.
They honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
And their worship of me
is nothing but man-made rules learned
by rote.*

Mark 7:6–7 (NLT)

6 Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

*'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
7 Their worship is a farce,
for they teach man-made ideas as
commands from God.'*

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- If you could choose a new name for yourself, reflecting a personal quality or aspiration you hold dear, what would it be and why?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read Exodus 20:7.** What does it mean to misuse the name of God? How do you misuse God's name in your daily life and conversations?"
- Why is the misuse of God's name considered a sin that "will not go unpunished?" How does this impact how you view this command?
- **Read Exodus 3.** Discuss how the sermon's exploration of God's name as 'I am who I am' reveals aspects of His eternal nature. How does this shape our understanding of God?
- **Read Isaiah 29:13 and Mark 7:6-7.** What do these Scriptures reveal about using, misusing and bearing God's name? Can you share a personal experience where you have seen or wrestled with this?
- The sermon encouraged us to revere and honor God's name by repenting of our sins. What are practical ways we can embody this in our daily lives?
- In light of this message, how can we as a Small Group and individuals ensure that our actions and words honor God's name?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Identify and write down one area of your life where your actions don't align with your words. Take one step to bring that action in line with your words, and God's will for your life.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Heavenly Father, we thank You for the insights and understanding we've gained today about honoring Your holy name. Guide us this week as we strive to reflect Your character in our words, actions, and thoughts. Help us to be mindful of the ways we represent You in our daily lives, and instill in us a deeper reverence for Your name. We ask for Your wisdom and grace to live out what we have learned, and to be lights in the world that glorify You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Question: "What does it mean to take the Lord's name in vain?"

Answer: Although many people believe taking the Lord's name in vain refers to using the Lord's name as a swear word, there is much more involved with a vain use of God's name. To understand the severity of taking the Lord's name in vain, we must first see the Lord's name from His perspective as outlined in Scripture. The God of Israel was known by many names and titles, but the concept embodied in God's name plays an important and unique role in the Bible. God's nature and attributes, the totality of His being, and especially His glory are reflected in His name (Psalm 8:1). Psalm 111:9 tells us His name is "holy and awesome," and the Lord's prayer begins by addressing God with the phrase "hallowed be your name" (Matthew 6:9), an indication that a reverence for God and His name should be foremost in our prayers. Too often we barge into God's presence with presumptuous "to-do lists" for Him, without being mindful of His holiness, His awesomeness, and the vast chasm that separates our nature from His. That we are even allowed to come before His throne is due only to His gracious, merciful love for His own (Hebrews 4:16). We must never take that grace for granted.

Because of the greatness of the name of God, any use of God's name that brings dishonor on Him or on His character is taking His name in vain. The third of the Ten Commandments forbids taking or using the Lord's name in an irreverent manner because that would indicate a lack of respect for God Himself. A person who misuses God's name will not be held "guiltless" by the Lord (Exodus 20:7). In the Old Testament, bringing dishonor on God's name was done by failing to perform an oath or vow taken in His name (Leviticus 19:12). The man who used God's name to legitimize his oath, and then broke his promise, would indicate his lack of reverence for God as well as a lack of fear of His holy retribution. It was essentially the same as denying God's existence. For believers, however, there is no need to use God's name to legitimize an oath as we are not to take oaths in the first place, letting our "yes be yes" and our "no be no" (Matthew 5:33-37).

There is a larger sense in which people today take the Lord's name in vain. Those who name the name of Christ, who pray in His name, and who take His name as part of their identity, but who deliberately and continually disobey His commands, are taking His name in vain. Jesus Christ has been given the name above all names, at which every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:9-10), and when we take the name "Christian" upon ourselves, we must do so with an understanding of all that signifies. If we profess to be Christians, but act, think, and speak in a worldly or profane manner, we take His name in vain. When we misrepresent Christ, either intentionally or through ignorance of the Christian faith as proclaimed in Scripture, we take the Lord's name in vain. When we say we love Him, but do not do what He commands (Luke 6:46), we take His name in vain and are possibly identifying ourselves to be among those to whom Christ will say, "I never knew you. Away from me" in the day of judgment (Matthew 7:21-23).

The name of the Lord is holy, as He is holy. The name of the Lord is a representation of His glory, His majesty, and His supreme deity. We are to esteem and honor His name as we revere and glorify God Himself. To do any less is to take His name in vain.