

Introduction: A study in contrasts – “Then”... and “Now”

The Command:

*You shall not **misuse** (literally – “take up... in vain”) the **name** of the Lord your God...*

Exodus 20:7a (NIV)

The Consequences:

*“...for the Lord will not leave him unpunished (hold him guiltless) who **misuses** (takes in vain) His **name**.”*

Exodus 20:7b (NIV)

What's in a name anyway?

- Name: Synonymous with one's **character, reputation, and authority**.
- God's name reveals His essence.
- Summary: We are to take God _____!
- Axiom: Our use of God's name in **word**, in **thought**, or **deed** will reflect our view of God and our relationship to Him.

In what ways do we use God's name in vain?

- In taking oaths we do not keep – _____.

Do not make a promise in My name if you do not intend to keep it; that brings disgrace on My name. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:12 (GNT)

- In our attempts to use God for personal gain – _____.

These people say they are Mine. They honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.

Isaiah 29:13 (NIV)

- In our everyday irreverent conversation – _____.

³⁶ But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Matthew 12:36-37 (NASB)

Levels of Profanity:

I. **Casualness** with God's name

II. **Contempt** for God's name

III. **Cursing** God's name

... I, the Lord your God, will punish anyone who misuses My name.

Exodus 20:7b (GNT)

Why do otherwise intelligent people profane God's name?

- They are spiritually uninformed
- They are spiritually undisciplined
- They are spiritually dead

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is the most precious and important human being in your life? What comes to your mind when you say their name?

2. How would you feel about others dragging the name you wrote above through the mud? Untrue statements, unfair criticism, being the butt of coarse jesting?

3. Why does God put such a high priority on the use of His name? What's behind how we talk, think, and act with regard to God's name?

4. Where do you need to "shore up" how you use God's name? How will this likely impact your relationship with Him?