

“THE RENOWN OF HIS NAME”

The Third Commandment

Servants’ Guide

INTRODUCTION

The first commandment tells us we need to have the right God on the throne of our lives. The second commandment counsels us to make sure we really are worshipping Him, and not just a shadow of who He is. The third commandment now tells us that even His name is to be held in honor and respect. Every time we utter God’s name, or sing it, we must do so thoughtfully. We should never use His name frivolously or mechanically, and it goes without saying that we should never use it profanely.

Tim Vandebos, the director of our church camp, used to have a German shepherd names Jesse, which he bought while serving in the Army overseas. Stationed in a guard tower for long stretches of time without human companionship, Tim developed a warm relationship with his dog. Naturally, the dog developed an intense loyalty to Tim.

Years later, at our camp in upper Michigan, Jesse still followed Tim everywhere. They separated only when Tim had to go down the river for supplies. Then Jesse would lie on the dock, ears drooping and sick at heart, to await Tim’s return. Some of the camp workers who knew of Tim’s relationship with his dog occasionally walked down to the beach to have a little fun.

“Hey, Jesse,” they would taunt, “where’s Ralph?” Jesse would not respond.

“Hey, Jesse,” they would try again, “where’s Joe?” Still no response.

“Hey, Jesse, where’s Tim?” At that point, Jesse would go wild! His ears would perk up, his tail would wag, and he’d start running back and forth along the beach, hoping to hear the sound of Tim’s returning boat. The mere mention of Tim’s name awakened Jesse’s feelings of affection for him. A single word brought his master to mind.

So it is when we hear, speak, or sing the name of God. Immediately, the truths we know about the One behind that name come into our minds. The third commandment tells us that when such thoughts occur, we’d better be prepared to worship—for the Being who comes to mind is the intrinsically worthy God who created and sustains us, and who gives us hope for the future.

-Bill Hybels, Engraved On Your Heart

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share about a time when you did something that embarrassed your parents.
2. What are some ways that we tend to use God’s name carelessly in our culture today?
 - Phrases are heard everyday such as “I swear to God”; “Oh my God!”; “God bless you”; etc.
 - People use God’s name in the context of profanity giving God and Jesus inappropriate last names. ☺
 - God is referred to casually without reverence in music, movies, literature, etc.
3. What is the significance of a name in the bible?
 - Great importance in names in the Scripture. A name often would represent the nature of the person.
 - Consider these name changes: Abram to Abraham; Simon to Peter, and Saul to Paul. Changing of their names was a changing of their identities.
 - God’s name was considered sacred and priests would only speak it once a year on the Day of Atonement. Scribes would cleanse themselves ceremonially before even writing the Hebrew letters that spell Yahweh.
 - Even today in Jewish circles, the name is Yahweh is never read but it pronounced as Adonnai.
 - Although names are not given with as much meaning today, you often hear people saying things like, “You look like a John.”
4. Read the opening words of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9. Also read Matthew 5:33-37. What is our role in the honoring of God’s name?
 - Our identity as that we are adopted as children of God the Father. Thus, we represent the Father in everything that we say and do. His name is at stake for we are his children.
 - We are ambassadors of Christ to this world. The world looks to us see who God is. We often form their view of God by our lifestyle.
 - There must be truth and integrity in our interactions and vows to other people. We can dishonor God because everything we do as believers in this covenant relationship with God represents Him and His renown.
 - We need to strive everyday to become more like our Father so we can uphold his renown.
5. Read Psalm 96. What is the theme of this psalm? What are some practical ways in which you need to heed the call of this psalm more in your life?
 - The verses in this psalm call on God’s people to praise his name and to invite the nations to do so.
 - Even the natural world is called upon to praise the creator.
 - The psalm ends discussing his future coming to judge the world. When He comes will he find us honoring his name?
6. Share some of the convictions that you received today.

“Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.”

