

Lesson 3

Do Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain

Bible Lesson

When you were born, your parents gave you a name. Your name is special because it now describes who you are. Today, we are going to learn about God's name and how special it is. We will be talking about the 3rd commandment.

Let us turn to Exodus 20:7.

"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

God's word is very clear about how we are to treat His name. In fact, it is a direct commandment. The verse also continues to warn us that if we misuse God's name, we will be guilty. This is very serious.

Today, we can hardly watch a movie or TV show without hearing God or Jesus' name misused. Sometimes even when we go to the store with our parents, we will hear people using Jesus' name as a curse word. For example, people will use God's name to just tell people about how hot the weather is. Sometimes, when something good happens to people, they will cover their mouths in shock and use God's name to emphasize their triumph. Our government leaders have also been heard to use God's name when expressing their unhappiness. Misusing God's name is so common that even our best friends and teachers might have uttered God's name in vain when they were expressing their surprise or disbelief.

There is a special word for when we misuse God's name. This word is called, **Blasphemy**. Blasphemy is the use of God's name in *any* other way than to glorify Him alone. Our tongue is very powerful. This organ is so small compared to the rest of our bodies, but it is quite powerful. Let's turn to James 3:7-12.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

We must be careful with what we say. If we are Christians, we cannot both praise God and say bad things at the same time. The name of God is powerful. In fact, Jesus came in the Father's name (*John 5:43*), Jesus performed miracles in the Father's name (*John 10:25*), we can ask anything in His name (*John 14:13*), we are kept safe in His name (*John 17:11*), there is no other name that we can be saved (*Acts 4:12*), and at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (*Philippians 2:10*).

As you can see, God's name is powerful and should be treated with respect. When we blaspheme God's name, we are discrediting Him. We are saying, "God, you are not who you say you are."

You are a joke.” We are like the bullies at the cross of Jesus, making fun of him. When we blaspheme, we are partnering with Satan himself by opposing God and spreading a lie that Jesus is not important and deserves to be spit on. Blasphemy is very serious because it shows what is truly in our heart – it shows people whether or not you truly love God. In Matthew 12:34, Jesus says that whatever is in our heart will determine what we say. We may mess up sometimes, but it’s ok. Jesus will forgive us if we confess to him that we messed up and try to change our behavior.

Did you know that God had a personal name? Just like we have a real name, God does too. We may be called many names, like Mommy, Sis/Bro, Mrs/Mr. so-and-so, but we have our real name. God’s real name is Yahweh (pronounced Yah-way). In fact, God’s real name is hidden in our Bibles! Whenever we read our Bibles and we see the word, LORD, written in all capital letters, it is actually referring to God’s personal name, Yahweh.

In ancient times, there were no copy machines. In order to make copies of the scriptures, the scribes had to handwrite copies of the scriptures word for word. Whenever they got to the part where they needed to write God’s name, they would stop what they were doing, wash their hands, return to write God’s name, then go wash their hands again. God’s name is used over 6,800 times in the Old Testament. That is a lot of hand washing!! The priests respected God’s name so much that they were even fearful of writing his whole name. In the Bible’s original language, they just wrote the consonants of God’s name Y-W-H and omitted the vowels because they felt so unworthy of writing his complete name.

Unfortunately, we do not hold God’s name in such high regard these days. But as Christians, we must treat God’s name with respect. God’s name is like a special treasure that we must respect. We disrespect God when we swear and misuse his name, or pretend to be Christians when we really are not. We show God that we love and respect Him when we praise Him, turn to His name for safety, trust in His name, and call on His name to be saved. When we trust in God’s name and call on Him, He will save us from our sins and we can spend all of forever with Him.

Indoor Activity

Paper Chains with God (Yahweh’s) Attributes Craft

Materials needed: Strips of colored construction paper, tape, and a marker.

For our closing activity, we will be making a paper chain. On each slip of paper, you will write one characteristic of Yahweh. We will read Psalm 103 together, and you will dig through this passage to seek out the characteristics of Yahweh. Remember, when you see LORD all in capital letters, this refers to God’s name, Yahweh.

You will make links out of these strips of paper by bending them into circles and taping the ends. You will interlock your circles to make a chain. As you do this, remember, circles have no beginning and no end, just like God.

Psalm 103:1-13 NLT – *(the bolded words are examples of what can be written on the chain links.)*

¹ Let all that I am praise the Lord;

with my whole heart, I will praise his **holy** name.

² Let all that I am praise the Lord;

may I never forget the **good** things he does for me.

³ He **forgives** all my sins

and **heals** all my diseases.

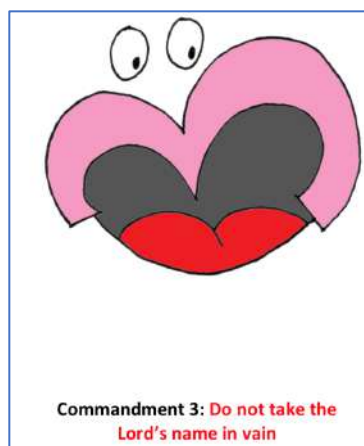
- ⁴ He **redeems** me from death
and **crowns me with love** and tender mercies.
- ⁵ He **fills my life** with good things.
My youth is renewed like the eagle's!
- ⁶ The Lord gives **righteousness**
and **justice** to all who are treated unfairly.
- ⁷ He revealed his character to Moses
and his deeds to the people of Israel.
- ⁸ The Lord is **compassionate** and **merciful**,
slow to get angry and filled with **unfailing love**.
- ⁹ He will **not constantly accuse** us,
nor remain angry forever.
- ¹⁰ He **does not punish** us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.
- ¹¹ For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.
- ¹² He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.
- ¹³ The Lord is like a **father** to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

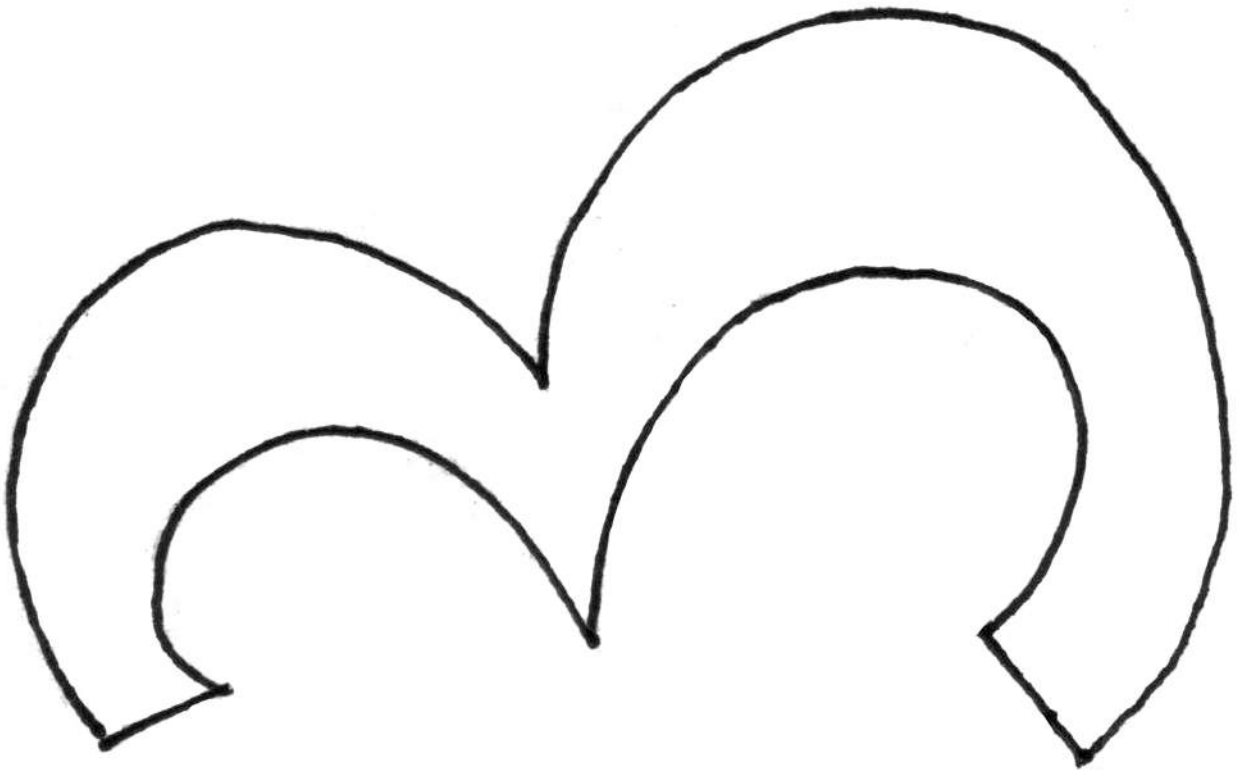
Conclusion

Today, we learned that we should not misuse God's name. When we act differently from the way a Christian should act, or say things that a Christian shouldn't say, people will not believe that we love God, and when we try to tell them about God's love, they might not listen or believe us. God is good and worthy to be praised. Our chain links will remind us of who God is. Each day, you should read through your chain links to remind yourself of who God is and how much God loves you. When we truly believe who God is in our hearts, God's goodness will overflow from our mouths.

Here is a silly picture to help us remember the 3rd commandment. On your coloring sheet, do the following:

For #3, make your number 3 look like a pair of lips. Copy the commandment into the blank space.





Commandment 3: _____
