

who thinks the third commandment is not a big deal should remember Herod and know that *the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain* (Isaiah 20:7).

Discussion Questions

- Does it bother you when you hear other people misuse God's name?
- Have you ever said anything about it? Why or why not?

Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Throughout history, God has revealed Himself to mankind with increasing clarity. As Hebrews says, *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature* (Hebrews 1:1–2). In John, we see a similar description of God's revelation to man through the person of Jesus Christ. *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known* (John 1:14, 18). God is making Himself known. We should not be making Him "unknown." That is, we ought not to do or say anything that would obscure the revelation that God has given to man about Himself. Instead, our words and tone should affirm all that we know to be true of God. He is almighty, all knowing, perfectly just, and lovingly merciful. He is worthy of our most reverent praise and we are forbidden to give Him anything less than that.

Discussion Questions

- Do your words or actions ever contradict what you know to be true about God?
- Pray that God would make you an accurate witness to His character for the people around you.

Baptist Catechism

Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, November 3rd, 2024)

Baptist Catechism Question #60

Q: What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A: *The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.*

Suggested Memory Verse

Malachi 1:6–7 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ [7] By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the LORD’s table may be despised. (ESV)

Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

As we explore the 10 commandments given to us in God’s Word, you may begin to wonder how we can talk about so many things based on just one command. Remember that the Ten Commandments are a summary of God’s moral law. Much like an outline, each specific command can be thought of as a category heading that encompasses a much broader principle. So, while the third commandment specifically forbids taking God’s name in vain, it points to the need for reverence and respect toward anything that signifies or reveals who God is. This week’s answer says it “forbiddeth all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.” So how does God make himself known? Through creation, through his spoken word, through his written word, through His action, through His Son, through the Spirit, and through prayer. We have already looked at reverencing God’s names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works. As we live our lives, creatures created by God, living in His created world, we should be in constant praise and thanksgiving. Hebrews 13:15 *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.* God is worthy of all honor, all praise.... not misuse, not vain and empty words, feelings, or actions.

Discussion Questions

- When you hear a rule or a command, do you tend to focus on the specific details? Or do you look for the principle behind the rule?
- Why is it important that we realize the third commandment is not just about “saying bad words”?

Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

As we think about not profaning or abusing God’s name, person or works, we should see that the standard is higher than we might first think. Let’s have a pretend conversation about a man named George to illustrate. What do you think about George? Well, there are three different ways we can speak about others or act toward them: positively, negatively, or neutrally. We could say George is a great guy. That is a positive statement and communicates that he is someone praiseworthy. Or, we could say George is a mean and evil guy. That is a negative statement for sure, but what if we said George is hmmm...okay? That is a neutral statement that does not speak ill of George but does not praise him, either. When we talk about other people, neutral statements are fine, but not when we talk about God. If we talk about Him in positive terms, then He is to be praised. If we talk about Him in negative terms, this is abusing His name rather than praising Him. What about neutral talk? It does not lead to praise, and that is actually what it means to profane His name. To treat it as common, or neutral. Anything short of reverent praise is forbidden by the third commandment. Look at David’s words in Psalm 145:1-3... *“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.”*

Discussion Questions

- Do you tend to think about God in positive, negative, or neutral terms?
- Why could it be considered an insult to speak about God in a neutral way?

Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Abusing or profaning God’s name is clearly forbidden in the third commandment. What might this look like? Perhaps the most obvious example would be when people use God’s name as a curse word, but scripture gives us more to consider. Let’s start at the beginning, in Genesis. When Satan approached Eve in the garden, He did not speak of God and His Word with reverence. By asking the woman, “Did God really say...?” he cast doubt on both the truth of God’s Word and the nature of His character. With a simple question, one that may have even seemed neutral on the surface, Satan disparaged the God of the universe. He did not go unpunished, either. His profanity led to the fall of mankind, and for that he would face eternal judgment. Revelation 20:10 describes his fate this way: *...and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* If we are to live in a way that is pleasing to God, we must not be like the father of lies. We are forbidden to speak in a way that discredits God or tempts others to think less of Him.

Discussion Questions

- On average, are your words more likely to convince people to praise God? Or tempt them to think less of Him?
- If you are a Christian, explain how Jesus gives us hope when we fail Him in this way.

Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Today let’s go to the New Testament for another example of someone breaking the third commandment in a way that may not seem obvious. In Acts 12, king Herod *laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.* Later in that chapter, Herod is struck down by God, but not for persecuting Christians. His downfall comes when he passively accepts the blasphemy of others. *On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a man!” Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last* (Acts 12:21-23). In a technical sense, Herod is not the one who spoke lightly of God. That was the crowd. But, Herod heard them using God’s name as flattery and rather than correct them, he accepted the praise that belonged to God alone. For THIS, an angel of the Lord struck Him down. For THIS, he was eaten by worms. Part of profaning God’s name is sitting by passively while others misuse it. When we are unbothered by sayings and expressions that make light of God, we actually contribute to the profanity. Our passivity allows others to obscure who God is, all because we do not step in and “give God the glory.” Anyone