

# Ten Values That Build Strong Families: Taking God Seriously

Rev. Perry J. Fruhling, St. Mark's Faith & Life Center, 8 June 2008

Grace and peace...We're in part two today on Ten Values that Build Strong Families. We're looking at the Ten Commandments in this series. The second commandment can be summarized in one sentence: God says, "Take My name seriously". Paul Dickinson has written a book called Names. He has a hobby of collecting strange and unusual names. He says sometimes names seem to be prophetic. In 1941 there were two men who were executed in the electric chair in the Florida state penitentiary and their names were Will Burn and Frizzle. Recently there was a Montreal window washer who died by accident, falling as he was washing windows. His name was Will Drop. Others, he says, seem destined for certain occupations. Joe Bunt became a baseball coach. Dan Druff became a barber. Jeff Treadwell became a podiatrist. Goforth and Ketchum, two guys, became police officers and partners. O'Neill and Pray became partners in church equipment.

What's in a name? God says there's a lot in a name when it's His name. In the third command in **Exodus 20:7** He says, "**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**" Why is God so sensitive about His name? God says that your name represents three things: reputation, character, and authority.

- 1) It represents your **reputation**. You've heard people say, "He's making a name for himself." When somebody has a good reputation they say "He's got a good name." When he's got a bad reputation, "He's got a bad name." When I say a name you automatically think of his reputation: Hitler, Martin Luther King, Elvis.
- 2) A name represents your **character**. What you are cannot be separated from what your name is once it's identified together. In the Bible they would often name children after certain character qualities like Honest, Justice ... so that it would represent their character. Many times in the Bible when somebody changed their character, their life was changed, God gave them a new name. Abram became Abraham, Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter. God would change their names because He said it represents your character.
- 3) Your name represents **authority**. When a policeman stops you he says, "Stop in the name of Bugs Bunny!" No, he says "Stop in the name of the law." Why? Because there is authority behind that name. If you received a call from a George Brown while you were eating dinner you might have him call back later. But if his name were George W. Bush you would probably take the call right there. Names have a representation of authority. God says when you misuse My name it's no little deal. It's a big deal because you're defaming My reputation, My character and My authority and you are using it flippantly. When we think about misusing God's name we usually think about swearing. But there are many, many other ways you can misuse God's name besides just swearing.

**1. YOU CAN USE GOD'S NAME TO INSULT.** This is when you use profanity or swearing to express irritation. Somebody said if cussing and cheating are crimes then golf should be illegal. I heard about a farmer who was late home

to dinner. His wife said, "Did the wagon break down?" The farmer said, "No, on the way home I offered a ride to the minister and from that point on the mules didn't understand a thing I said."

America is the most foul-mouthed nation in the world and becoming more so. Today a movie will not sell if it doesn't have any cussing in it. It's a G rating and nobody wants to go see it. They intentionally add profanity to movies in order to get an "R" because they want it to be a hit. Books and magazines and TV are filled with profanity. Even records now have labels on them warning of explicit sexual language, etc.

**2. USING GOD'S NAME TO INTIMIDATE** - Some people are pros at this. They say "God told me what you should do." "God told me what's wrong with you." "God told me you're supposed to lend me money." God says that's misusing My name. Parents do this all the time. When you're frustrated and you've tried restriction and tried taking away their allowance, spanking. Finally you pull out the big stick and say, "If you keep doing that God is going to get you!" That's intimidation. Spouses can do this in a marriage. "I've prayed about this and I know God wants us to buy this Jaguar." How are you going to argue with God? Intimidation. In the world they call that forgery. Forgery is when you use somebody else's name to get what you want. There are a lot of spiritual forgers in the world who misuse God's name by saying, "God told me..." and you're supposed to say, "It must be true then". It may not be. I would warn you about being careful about speaking for God.

**3. BY TRYING TO IMPRESS** - Insecure believers do this a lot. They often try to prove how spiritual they are by their jargon, by using continuous religious phrases, spiritual cliches. I feel like the more I use the name Jesus in a sentence then the more spiritual I must be. Oftentimes, I've met people who were really trying to impress me. "Bless God, that was a great sermon, Hallelujah, thank you Jesus..." Talk doesn't impress me, life style does. **Titus 1:16 "They claim to know God, but they deny Him by the way they live."** We take God's name in vain when we claim to be committed to Him but we don't back it up with our life style. A guy says "I love the Lord, He's number one in my life!" Are you involved in any kind of ministry? "No." Are you meeting with Him every day, reading the Bible, daily quiet time? "No." Tithing? "No." What does He mean to you then? Just words. God says "These people worship me with their lips but their hearts are far from me." And he says, "When you pray don't use a lot of meaningless words..." Have you ever heard a prayer like this? "Dear Jesus, we want to thank you, God, for the nice day, dear Lord. And Father, we thank you, God, for all you do, O Lord." You're using the name of God every other word in a prayer. If my kids came home to me and talked to me as their father this way, I'd think they needed to see the doctor. I can't image my son saying, "Dear dad, I want to thank you, Perry, for the great allowance you've given me, O Father, that you give to us, dear daddy." Huh? You don't have to use my name every other word. You can just talk to me directly. It sounds more spiritual to throw all of those in and when you're trying to think of what to say next in a prayer. You can just stop. God understands silence. He says, "When you pray don't use a lot of meaningless

words." Why do people swear? They lack emotional control but the main reason is they do it to impress others. As a little kid the first time you swore you thought you were hot stuff, but the fact is weak people have to use big words, strong words to impress others. It takes no intellect, no IQ, no education. I can teach a three year old to swear, a chimpanzee to swear, a parrot to swear. It doesn't show your maturity, your manliness or your liberation. It doesn't change anything. But we do it. It takes maturity to discipline your speech, especially when you're angry -- you stub your toe, you hit your thumb, a guy cuts you off in traffic. It takes discipline to not swear.

**4. USING GOD'S NAME IMPULSIVELY** - This is one many of us fall into as a trap. When you use God's name as a convenient expression of fear or anger or joy or amazement or surprise. "I just caught a 10-pound fish! O My God!" "Suzy's pregnant! O, my God!" "I just split my pants, O My God!" You're reducing God to a level of a "Wow!" or an "Awesome!" Don't make God an exclamation point. God says when you use my name, you take it seriously. Impulsive means without thinking. Did you know you can even worship impulsively? Have you ever sung a song about Jesus Christ and you didn't think about the words, your mind was a million miles away? Your heart's not there. You're just doing the motions. Half-hearted. Routine.

George Barnard did a survey and found that 66% of all Americans admit having taken the Lord's name in vain. But every body, including me, is guilty of breaking this command. There are many, many ways that we misuse the Lord's name other than swearing. God is deadly serious about this. Here are the top 10 commandments, the ten most important things in life, and number two is "Don't misuse My name." God says, "Don't mess with My name. It represents My reputation, My character, My authority." When you laugh at somebody who's misusing it, you're partaking in their sins. God says treat it with awe.

How can I use God's name correctly? God promises blessing when you use His name correctly. There are literally hundreds of verses in the Bible that talk about the name of God. And God promises: "If you honor and reverence My name I will bless you. *Luther said, "we should not use God's name superstitiously, or to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, but call on him in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving..."*

**1. REVERENCE GOD'S NAME CONTINUALLY** - Treat it with the utmost respect. Use it carefully. Use it lovingly. Use it as an act of worship. Don't just let it slip out flippantly. When you say "God", mean it in your heart. **Ps. 29:2 "Give honor to the Lord for the glory of His name."** Honor God's name. That is why Marlys and I don't go see R movies. Not only the sex scenes and stuff (those bother me, too) but really the greater offence is the taking of God's name, the Creator of the Universe, for whatever purpose. It's like a computer: garbage in, garbage out. Whatever goes in your mind will eventually come out in your lifestyle. People say "It doesn't bother me." It bothers God and it ought to bother us. People say "I just tune it out. I don't let it bother me." Then you really don't love God very much. That's the bottom line. If my wife's name were taken in vain, I would not say, "I just don't let it bother me" and

tune it out. No, love demands action. I'd have to do something about it. If somebody ridiculed or made fun of your mother, you'd protest it. You wouldn't set in silence. But many believers say nothing when Jesus' name is blasphemed all the time. I want to challenge you to speak up when somebody close to you is using God's name. You can't do this with strangers, obviously. But I'm talking about the people who are around you, who are close to you, that you could confront about this issue. You've got to do it tactfully because your goal is not to condemn them but to influence them.

What has this to do with building strong families? One of the number one places we need to work on our mouths is in our home. We probably say more unkind things at home than anywhere else. Verbal abuse is rampant in families today causing irreparable damage to relationships. Work on this in your home. My kids know that there are some words that don't belong in our family. If they do they not only incur the wrath of God, they incur the wrath of daddy. I know one family who decided to work on this together. They made a swearing jar. Anytime anybody cussed they put a dollar in it. They all held each other accountable. Good idea.

You need to reverence God's name continually. Reverence involves not only protecting God's name but knowing it. **Ps. 9:10 "Those who know your name will trust in you..."** God has many names, well over 100 names of God in the Bible, each one of them reveal a different aspect of God's character -- love, justice, holiness, the things he's promised to care for. The way you get to know God is to get to know the names of God. The better you know them, the better you're going to trust Him and the better you're going to love Him.

**2. REPRESENT GOD'S NAME CLEARLY - II Timothy 2:19 "Those who claim to know the Lord must turn away from all wickedness."** Our lifestyle can misuse the name of God. If you're going to call yourself a Christian don't drag Christ's name through the gutter by your lifestyle. Your walk needs to match your talk. If you're a believer you represent God. There are two reasons why many people never come to Christ. First, they've never met a Christian. Second, they met one and it was a Christian in name only who claimed to be a Christian but there was no difference in their lifestyle. If you claim to be a believer, a Christian, and use God's name and aren't any different you're a bad advertisement. Mahatma Ghandi once said, "I'd become a Christian, if it weren't for the Christians." We represent God's name clearly. The truth is that there are people all around you that are watching and evaluating your speech and your actions and they're checking to see how you're different and how you're different in your life style. So guard your mouth, guard your actions.

**3. RELY ON GOD'S NAME COMPLETELY. Ps. 33:21 "In him our hearts rejoice, for we are trusting in his holy name."** There are 100's of verses in the Bible that say that God has made a number of promises to those who honor His name. Whatever you do you should do it in the name of the Lord, trusting and relying on His name. Jesus said, "If you ask anything in My name I will do it." Why do we pray "In Jesus' name"? Because you don't have any right to come to God on your own. Only a perfect person can come into His presence.

Through Christ I can. He's the bridge. And Jesus said, we're to pray in His name. The bad news is this: You and I are going to be judged one day for every idle word you've ever said. It says that in Matthew. We will give an account for every idle word. I dislike that verse more than any other verse in the Bible. The good news is: By trusting in the name of Jesus Christ, we won't come under judgment. He will forgive you in advance of that day. **Acts 4:12** **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."** The name of Jesus Christ is the way you bypass that judgment. You can pass from death to life, from judgment to forgiveness in His name. We've all broken this command and it means we're all doomed unless we get a Savior and that's what Jesus is.

How many of you when you were kids because you used a cuss word got your mouth washed out with soap? I had my mouth washed out. It doesn't work. The problem is not in the mouth but in the heart. Whatever is inside of you is what's going to come out when the world puts on pressure. If I'm filled with anxiety and tension and turmoil and fear and anger and bitterness, when the world puts on pressure that's what is going to come out. When I'm filled with love and peace and the world puts on pressure that is what's going to come out. Swearing is simply a symptom that there is turmoil in my heart and that there is so much turmoil it can spill over real easily if enough pressures is put on.

Allowing Christ to fill our heart is the first step to allowing love to fill our lives. Maybe you've really struggled with this commandment...The first thing you need to do is tell God you're sorry for misusing His name. And you need to ask his forgiveness. Then you commit that problem and your life to God, give Him the whole thing. "Jesus Christ, come in and give me that new heart and tongue."