

10 HABITS of Highly Healthy Homes



Habit 3: Take God Seriously

Sunday, June 11, 2000

*You are cordially invited to join us for **The Re-Wedding** on Sunday Evening, July 30 at 6:30, as dozens of couples renew their marriage vows in the biggest wedding in the history of Saint John.*

Ten Habits of Highly Healthy Homes

**Examine Your
Priorities**

**Avoid The
Counterfeits**

Take God Seriously

**Renew Your
Relationships**

**Respect Your
Heritage**

**Value The
Individual**

**Protect Your
Marriage**

**Maintain Your
Integrity**

Speak The Truth

**Discover Real
Contentment**

Exodus 20:7 (NLT) ⁷ Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

- Paul Dickinson has written a book called "Names." He has a hobby of collecting unusual names. Sometimes names seem to be prophetic:
 - Two men executed in Florida's electric chair were named WILL BURN and FRIZZLE.
 - A Montreal window washer who fell to his death was named WILL DROP.
 - JOE BUNT became a baseball coach.
 - JEFF TREADWELL became a podiatrist.
 - DAN DRUFF became a barber.
 - Two police officers who became partners were named GOFORTH and KETCHUM.
 - O'NEILL and PRAY became partners in a church equipment business.
 - A plaster contractor was named WILL CRUMBLE.
 - A urologist was named P.P. PETERS.
- What's in a name? A lot when it's the name of God! Why is God so sensitive about His name? Because your name represents three things:
 - 1. Your reputation**
 - That's why we say, "he's making a name for himself," or "he's got a good name," or "he's got a bad name."
 - When we say a name we automatically think of a reputation: Adolf Hitler, Elvis Presley, Queen Elizabeth, Bill Clinton.
 - 2. Your character**
 - What you are cannot be separated from what your name is once they are identified together.
 - In the Bible, when somebody changed their character, God often gave them a new name (Abram, Jacob, Sarai, Simon).
 - 3. Your authority**
 - When a police officer stops you, he says, "Stop in the name of the law" – it's the law's authority that stops you, not the man.
 - If John Smith called while you were eating dinner, you might return the call later; but if Jean Cretien called, you would most likely take the call immediately – names represent authority.
- When you misuse God's name, you defame His reputation, His character and His authority, because you are using His name flippantly. And there are many other ways to misuse His name besides just swearing!

HOW DO WE KNOW THE NAME OF GOD? FROM GOD'S WORD!

- **In the Old Testament**, God used several names to refer to Himself – let's mention the two most important ones. God first revealed His name to Moses at Mount Horeb when he called him to be Israel's deliverer from Egypt. **I AM THAT I AM** (Eyeh-Asher-Eyeh) was the original form spoken to Moses. It refers to God being the Eternal and Self-Existent One, who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient. It is also a Hebrew idiom meaning, "When you get there, I will be there." God encouraged Moses that "I will always be what you need Me to be, and I will always be there before you get there." One country preacher said, "I AM means God ain't ever short, and He ain't ever late!" Another preacher said God meant, "I AM ... everything you need!"
- Another important Old Testament name for God was **YHWH**, which came from four consonants (YOD, HEH, VAV, HEH) in Hebrew, and was thus called the TETRAGRAMMATON. To actually translate this name into English, we would probably say, "The Eternal." (i.e. Moffat Translation) The closest we can come in pronouncing this name would be **YAHWEH/YAH** (or in its English form, **JEHOVAH/JAH**).
- The Jews had such reverence for the name of God that they would not pronounce it as it was written. Instead, they called it "Shem Ha Meforash" or the "Ineffable Name," and would substitute the word "Adonai" (Lord) or "HaShem" (the Name) when referring to it.
- **But God's commandment was not against pronouncing His name! It was a prohibition against misusing His name!**
- **In the New Testament**, God accompanied the revelation of Himself in flesh with a new name. That name is Jesus, which includes and supersedes Yahweh and all the Old Testament names. Jesus is the redemptive name of God in the New Testament. It is the name of supreme power and authority, the only saving name, the name given for remission of sins, and the highest name ever revealed.
- **JESUS is the Greek form of JOSHUA (YAH-SHUA), which means "YAHWEH IS SALVATION."**
- Suddenly, a carpenter from Nazareth is casually using the unutterable name of God to describe Himself! **But Jesus had a right to use God's name because HE WAS GOD!** The Jewish religious leaders were outraged – they understood who Jesus was claiming to be!
- The phrase "I Am" (Greek: "Ego Eimi"), appearing to us as just another pronoun and verb, identified Him to them as YAHWEH!
 - **John 6:35** I AM the bread of life
 - **John 8:12** I AM the light of the world
 - **John 10:9** I AM the door
 - **John 10:11** I AM the good shepherd
 - **John 11:25** I AM the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live
 - **John 14:6** I AM the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me
 - **John 8:24** If ye believe not that I AM (he), ye shall die in your sins
 - **John 8:58** Before Abraham was, I AM
 - **John 18:5-6** (TO THE SOLDIERS ARRESTING HIM) Jesus saith unto them, I AM (he) ... As soon then as he had said unto them, I AM (he), they went backward, and fell to the ground
 - **Mark 14:62** (TO THE HIGH PRIEST AT HIS TRIAL) And Jesus said, I AM: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.
- Enraged, the Sanhedrin rushes their prisoner to Pilate and forces him to carry out an execution through political pressure. Pilate is powerless to save the Nazarene, even though he wants to. But in an unusual move, Pilate himself writes an inscription and has it placed on the cross.
- **John 19:19-22** ¹⁹And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. ²¹Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. ²²Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.
- In three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) it says: "**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.**" Just another epitaph to the Greeks and Romans. But as "many of the Jews" begin to gather and read the inscription, the Chief Priests see that they have a problem.
- Literally, Pilate says, "What I have written, I will not change one bit!" What was the problem that so upset these scholars of the Law?
- Much Old Testament poetic literature was written in ACROSTIC form; this made it easier to memorize. In **Psalms 119**, each of the 22 sections is labeled by one letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each of the 8 verses in that section starts with that letter. In the book of **Lamentations**, each of the chapters is a poem with a similar pattern.
- Written over Jesus' head was, "**Yeshua HaNazarei v-Melech HaYehudim.**" All the Jewish leaders could see was a condemning acrostic, as the first letter of each word (YOD, HEH, VAV, HEH) spelled out "**YHVH**" for all to see! **It was not a carpenter's blood that was being shed that day, but Yahweh's blood!**
- **GOD'S NAME IS JESUS! WE WORSHIP THE NAME OF JESUS!**

FIVE WAYS THAT WE MISUSE GOD'S NAME:

1. We use God's name to INSULT

- This is when you use profanity or swearing to express irritation at a situation or to demean someone else.
- The US and Canada are the most foul-mouthed nations in the world and becoming more so. The most well known garbage mouths in our society are the comedians, who are paid to take the Lord's name in vain hundreds of times every night.
- People who swear lack emotional control and maturity. Swearing takes no intellect; you can teach a three-year-old or a parrot to swear. It takes maturity to discipline your speech.
- **Illustration:** A farmer was late getting home for dinner. His wife asked, "Did the wagon break down?" The farmer said, "No, but 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."

2. We use God's name to INDULGE

- This is when we excuse our actions by blaming God for them, instead of taking personal responsibility.
- These people always say, "I felt led ..." or "I didn't feel led ..." but what they're really feeling is LEAD – in the seat of their pants!
- These people say things like, "God will let me know if He wants me (doesn't want me) to do that," when God's will is already spelled out in His Word! Your feelings must be subject to God's Word!
- ***Leviticus 19:12 (GN)*** *Do not make a promise in my name if you do not intend to keep it. That brings disgrace on my name.*
- When we claim God's approval on something that is clearly not His will, we are breaking the third commandment!
- **Illustration:** The Foundry United Methodist Church in Washinton, DC, became famous when First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton chose it to be the First Family's Washington church home. Boasting that they are a "reconciling congregation," Pastor J. Phillip Wogaman welcomes practicing homosexuals into all aspects of the church's life without offering them any help in forsaking their sin. PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), an organization that promotes the acceptance of homosexual behavior, has a chapter that meets there. The infamous Bishop of the Newark, NJ, Diocese of the Episcopal Church once spoke at Foundry, suggesting that Jesus could have been a drag queen, that the apostle Paul may have been a "self-loathing gay man," and that the Ten Commandments are immoral because they treat women as property. On "Reconciling Sunday," banners incorporating symbols of militant homosexual political movements blended with crosses and doves hang in front of the altar area.

- This attempt to co-opt God's blessing and apply it to behavior clearly condemned in both the Old and New Testaments is an abuse of His name! It is Divine character assassination!

3. We use God's name to INTIMIDATE

- This is when we claim God's direction for something that is of our own making. (Dishonest TV evangelists do this all the time!)
- In Hebrew, the third commandment says, "No lifting up of the Lord's name (as an endorsement)," or "You are not to take up the name of YHWH your God for emptiness." We would say, "No stealing the Lord's name."
- HOW DO WE STEAL GOD'S NAME? By applying it to places it doesn't belong. Any time that we misrepresent God, we are taking His name in vain.
- Some people try to do this with their spouse or their kids: "I've prayed about this, and God wants me/us to ..."
- Other people try to use this on their pastor – they come for "counseling" when their mind is already made up. All they are really hoping for is an "endorsement" from God!
- In the world, they call this 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 say, "God told me ..."
- Be careful about speaking for God!

4. We use God's name to IMPRESS

- This is when we try to prove how spiritual we are with religious jargon and clichés. Insecure believers do this a lot.
- TALK DOESN'T IMPRESS GOD – LIFESTYLE DOES!
- Don't turn God into a cliché! We take God's name in vain when we claim to be committed to Him but we don't back it up with our lifestyle. It's just words!
- ***Titus 1:16 (NLT)*** *Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are despicable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.*

5. We use God's name IMPULSIVELY

- This is when we use God's name without thinking, as a convenient expression of fear or anger or joy or amazement or surprise. We reduce God to a level of a "Wow!" or a "Far out!"
- God says to use His name seriously! "Impulsively" means "without thinking." Did you know that you can even worship impulsively?
- You take the Lord's name in vain when you are in church singing a song about Him and you're just going through the motions, or when you pray in His name and your mind is a million miles away.

- **Isaiah 29:13 (NLT)** *And so the Lord says, "These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away. And their worship of me amounts to nothing more than human laws learned by rote."*
- **Matthew 6:7 (NLT)** *When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again.*
- **Illustration:** "Dear dad, I want to thank you, dad, for the great allowance you've given me, oh dad." Just talk to me directly!
- When you can't think of what to say next in a prayer, STOP! God understands silence! You don't have to impress anyone!
- George Barna found that 66% of North Americans admit to having taken the Lord's name in vain. But EVERYONE is guilty of breaking the third commandment in this way!
- **Exodus 20:7 (NLT)** *Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.*

HOW DO I USE GOD'S NAME CORRECTLY?

- **Psalms 61:5 (LB)** *You have given me the blessings you reserve for those who reverence your name.*
- There are many verses in the Bible that promise God's blessings on our lives if we honor His name. How do we do that?

1. Reverence God's name continually.

- We must treat God's name with the utmost respect, using it carefully and lovingly, as an act of worship.
- **Psalms 29:2 (CEV)** *Honor the wonderful name of the Lord, and worship the Lord most holy and glorious.*
- We can't just sit by and let the Lord's name be blasphemed in what we listen to, watch and participate in. LOVE DEMANDS ACTION!
- What does this have to do with building healthy homes? Verbal abuse is rampant in families today, but you can't truly honor the name of the Lord and be verbally abusive at the same time!

2. Represent God's name clearly.

- Our lifestyle can either lift up the Lord's name or drag it through the gutter. Our walk needs to match our talk! If you're a Christian, then you represent Christ – do it well!
- **2 Timothy 2:19 (LB)** *A person who calls himself a Christian should not be doing things that are wrong.*

- There are two reasons why many people never come to Christ:
 - They've never met a Christian.
 - They met one who was Christian in name only!

3. Rely on God's name completely.

- Why do we pray "in Jesus' name"? Because we don't have any right to pray in our own merit!
- **Colossians 3:17** *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*
- Someday, we will be judged for every idle word that we speak. This is one of the most frightening verses in the Bible!
- **Matthew 12:36 (CEV)** *I promise you that on the day of judgment, everyone will have to account for every careless word they have spoken.*
- People who swear and misuse the name of the Lord show that they have a heart problem, but people who worship (with their mouth AND with their life) show that God is truly in control.
- **Luke 6:45 (GN)** *The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*