

No Name Shame  
Exodus 20:7  
The Laurel Center  
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**Main Idea:** Taking God's name in vain violates his character instead of worshiping his name.

**Introduction**

We live in the world that is constantly using God's name in vain. Everywhere you turn people are talking about God in unholy ways. Everything from using Jesus' name as a curse to irreverent talking about him happens in typical conversation. People no longer respect God or his representatives. The biggest problem about this is that even Christians get used to this backdrop and do not call people out when they violate this simple respect. Even worse it's possible that Christian may even disrespect God's name or take his name in vain themselves! We are called through this commandment to respect God's name at all costs.

**Exodus 20:7**

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him in guiltless who takes his name in vain.

**I.** Negative – Don't take God's name in vain

**A** What does "in vain" mean?

- 1 When we use God's name in vain we treat it with disrespect and use his holy name in an unholy way.
- 2 The name of the Lord considered here is the four letter word YHWH. There are a lot of other names for God as well. Many of them occur by combining the word for God or Lord with other words that describe his character.
- 3 Many of God's names come from the experiences people have with him in real life. They give God a name compounded that reminds them of his character in their experience with him.

**B** How was this command understood?

- 1 Rabbis taught that using God's name at all would be using it in vain.
- 2 The four letters of his name were never spoken by rabbis or anyone in Israel. Instead different vowels were substituted from another word that also means Lord.
- 3 As a result to this day we still do not know the proper way to say the four letter name of God.

- 4 Even the phrase “the name” became a sacred phrase in Israel. Because it referred to God’s name it also enjoyed the same rights as God’s actual name.
- 5 When scholars came up with the way to make vowels appear in the text of Scripture they applied the vowels for the other word for Lord. Vowels were expressed through pointings in, under and around the letters.

## **II. Positive – Worship God with his names**

### **A God has many names.**

- 1 God’s names reveal his character to the people who call upon him for help.
- 2 These names can be based on how he reacts to those people and on what he does for them.
- 3 Both God and the people who call for his help can give him his names. Moses asks God what his name is in Exodus 3. Hagar calls him “the God who sees me” when he rescues her and Ishmael in the wilderness.

### **B God’s names represent his reputation.**

- 1 God’s character, the traits that make him respond the way he does, and his reputation are part of what goes into his names. These names are usually created as ways to worship God for what he does and who he is.
- 2 Rather than taking his name in vain we can use these names to worship him and glorify him.
- 3 God’s names can become personal to us as we go through our own trials and own problems and see him come through for us. They can be ways to praise his name and worship him even while we go through difficult times.

## **Conclusion**

Praising God’s name rather than taking it in vain is the best way to use his name. He much prefers that we worship him rather than abuse his name. Just as we would not make fun of someone else’s name taking God’s name in vain is a form of making fun of his name. God gives us his name so that we can call on him and see him demonstrate his power in our need. Because God has entrusted us with his name we must respect and revere him when we use it.