

D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle
of discipleship.



Keeping it Real
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

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PROTECTING GOD'S HONOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS "PURITY OF SPEECH"

Exodus 20:7 NKJV

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. NKJV

A. THE MEANING OF THE COMMANDMENT

1. **The Meaning of "Name."** Today, a name is mostly a label to identify a person and to distinguish him or her from other people. We do not often think of it as describing the character of the person. But in the Bible, the "name" of a person often has to do with the person's character or reputation.
2. **The Meaning of "Take....in Vain."** The phrase translated "take....in vain" represents a combination of two Hebrew words, the ordinary word *nasa*, meaning "to lift up, to carry," and the word *shawe'*, meaning "emptiness, nothingness, vanity." In an extremely literal sense, the command could be translated, "You shall not lift up the name of the Lord you God to worthlessness (or emptiness, vanity)."
3. **The Command Forbids Foolish or Worthless Uses of God's Name.** Therefore, this command in its most basic meaning forbids using God's name (or any of God's names, such as "God," "the Lord," "Jesus," or "Christ") in a careless or irreverent way.

The way in which a society uses God's name is one reflection of the way the society thinks about God. The more a society strays from God, the more

common it is to hear people using his name simply as a curse or as an expression of surprise, frustration, or disgust. (Ps. 111:9 KJV)

4. **In a Broader Sense. This Command Covers All of Life.** When the Bible says that God created us “in his own image” (Gen. 1:27), it means that he made us to be like him and also to represent him on the earth. This implies that our whole life “proclaims” something about our Creator, even when we don’t say it in specific words. This is why God wants us to imitate his moral character in our lives.

B. CATEGORIES OF OFFENSIVE SPEECH

1. **Taking God’s Name in Vain.** Any use of God’s name in an irreverent or dishonorable way, as explained above.
2. **Cursing.** Words in this category include wishes or expressions of condemnation of God’s judgement on a person. In anger, someone might say, “D---- you!” or something even stronger, expressing a destination to which the speaker wishes the person would go. The New Testament authors are quite clear that such curses on other people should have no place in a Christian’s speech. (Rom. 12:14; James 3:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:21-23; Prov. 26:2)
3. **Using Obscene or Unclean Language.** This category includes a set of words that a society generally finds to be offensive. These are words that many people avoid using because most hearers will think the words are obscene or “dirty”. (Eph. 5:4; Eph. 4:29; Phil. 4:8)

C. DRAMA OR FILMS: THE QUESTION OF QUOTING OR PORTRAYING UNBELIEVERS

1. **The Bible Quotes Unbelievers at Times.**
2. **There Is a Difference between Pretending to Do an Action and Actually Doing the Action.**

An actor on stage or in a movie can pretend to kill someone with a sword or a gun, but the other actor doesn’t die---it’s just a pretended murder. Similarly, an actor can pretend to be a lying auto mechanic who cheats a customer, but

in reality, he is just “lying” to another actor. Both actors understand that it is a pretended action.

But the question of an actor taking God’s name in vain seems to me to fall into a different category. It is not like pretending to murder someone. Rather, it is actually taking God’s name in vain. It is speaking of God or using his name in a deeply dishonoring and irreverent manner.

3. **There Is a Difference between Watching a Movie or Play and Acting in It.** There is also a significant difference between doing something wrong and watching somebody else do something wrong. Many of Jesus’s followers watched the most evil deed in history, the crucifixion of Christ, but they did not themselves do wrong by watching it.

On the other hand, that does not mean it is always right to watch every movie or play that portrays evil. In this case, the primary ethical consideration can be identified by asking what results will come from watching, for example, a particular movie. Will it make you more callous and insensitive to misuse of God’s name? Will it trouble your heart, as Paul found that “his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city [Athens] was full of idols” (Acts 17:16; cf. 2 Peter 2:7-8, concerning Lot)? Will it have a positive or negative effect on your personal character?

D. OATHS

1. **Definition.** An oath is an appeal for God’s punishment if your statement is untruthful. When a person swears an oath, it is as if he were saying, *“If I am not telling the truth, I call on God himself to punish me for it.”*
2. **Oaths in the Bible.** (2 Cor. 1:23; Rom. 1:9-10; Phil 1:8; Gal. 1:20; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10)
3. **It Is Morally Acceptable for Christians to Take Oaths.**

E. VOWS

1. **Definition.** A vow is a promise made to God to perform a certain action or behave in a certain way.
2. **Vows in the Bible.** As with oaths, vows are found frequently in Scripture. (1 Sam. 1:11; Gen. 28:20-22; Gen. 31:13;)

3. **Vows Made to God Should Be Kept.** The Biblical law about vows is quite explicit in saying that people do not have to make vows to God, but if they do, they should fulfill them. (Deut. 23:21-23; Num. 30:2; Eccles. 5:4-5)
4. **Vows to Do Something Sinful Should Not Be Kept.**
5. **Sometimes a Vow Can Be Nullified by a Human Authority.**
6. **Wedding Vows**

F. HUMOR

1. **Laughter in Scripture.** (Ps. 126:2; Eccles. 3:4; Eccles. 10:19; Luke 6:21)
2. **Humor in Scripture.**
3. **Some Cautions about Humor.** While Scripture generally views laughter and humor positively, there are also some warnings: (Eph. 5:4). This verse does not forbid all humor, but it does forbid the kind that causes offense to other people or that encourages thoughts of immoral behavior (Eph. 5:5)