

## COMMANDMENT #3: ONLY WORDS?

Written by David Feddes

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Read Matthew 12:33-37

**"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God." Exodus 20:7**



I sometimes meet people who misuse God's name. When they learn I'm a preacher, they may blush and say: "I didn't know--sorry if I offended you." They should worry less about what I think and more about what God thinks: "The Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (Exodus 20:7).

God's name is misused in many ways. One way is outright contempt for God's name: deliberately mocking or directly attacking the honor and name and reputation of God. Perhaps more common is carelessn  
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God's name: saying "O my God" or "Good Lord" not as the start of a prayer but as a way of expressing surprise; using "God Almighty" and "Jesus Christ" not to invoke the Lord of heaven and earth but to show emotion; or simply using the word "God" every sentence or two for punctuation, almost like a spoken comma or period. Another way of violating God's name is cursing

: using words like "damn" and "hell" casually. We have no business uttering such solemn, dreadful curses; only God can damn someone to the everlasting sorrow of hell.

You might object: "Lighten up! I don't mean anything by it. It's only words." Exactly! When you talk as if God's solemn judgments are only words, and as though "God" and "Jesus" are only words, you are taking God lightly and offending him terribly. Only words? "Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken" (Matthew 12:36).

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PRAYER--Holy Father, forgive our dreadful misuse of your name. Help us to speak of you only with awe and reverence and praise you in all we say. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.