



## BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus & Thompsons Roads, LWR TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107  
03 9850 9633 / www.bulleenbaptist.org.au

**SERIES : "10 DUMB WAYS TO MESS UP OUR LIVES"**

**October 30, 2005 Study 3 "Not Taking God Seriously"**

### INTRODUCTION

#### TO THE SERIES

10 Dumb Ways To Mess Up Our Lives .... a fresh look at the 10 Commandments (See Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) Note that they are not the Ten Suggestions! They are not arbitrary religious rules. They are not outdated curiosities that belong to an ancient and less sophisticated society. Whilst their introduction has a specific context, the 10 Commandments are not bound to a particular culture or time or nation.

They continue as the basic moral laws of creation for all people. If followed, they produce a healthy society by fostering proper relationships with God and with others. If ignored, they produce a mess in both our individual lives and our society as a whole.

Our task in this series is to understand what they mean and how to follow them in our lives and circumstances.

#### TO TODAY'S STUDY

*"Thou shall not take the LORD's name in vain" (Ex20:7 KJV)*

*"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God" (NIV)*

(Clip from the film "Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade": Doctor Jones Snr. disciplining Dr Jones Jnr.)

Command No3 is simple! Even Hollywood can understand it. It means that we shouldn't use God's name as a swear word. .... Well, actually, not quite so simple.

Like all the Commands expressed in the negative there is a corresponding positive response to be encouraged. For example, and obviously, "Do not lie" means "tell the truth!"

Then there is the original context to consider. It throws a different light on its meaning .... and also a much more subtle (and dangerous) aspect of the 3rd Command to consider.

But first, lets look at the relationship between the first three commands and why the "Name" of God is to be honoured.

### **A. THE FIRST THREE COMMANDS TOGETHER**

The first commandment deals with WHO we worship : the Creator and Redeemer to whom alone belongs our supreme loyalty.

The second commandment covers the WAY we worship : in "spirit and truth." (Jn4:23) To make an "image of God" is to reduce God to less than he is.

The third commandment stresses the QUALITY of our worship : Glorifying God in everything ... which suggests the wider understanding of this command.

### **B. WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT GOD'S NAME?**

In the ancient world a personal name was:

1. A Revelation of CHARACTER (See Gen27:36 & 1Sam25:25)

*Then the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him (Moses), and proclaimed the name of the LORD ..... "The LORD , the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, .... forgiving wickedness, rebellion an sin ... Moses fell immediately to the ground and worshipped." Ex 34:5-8*

## 2. An invitation to INTIMACY

Not that long ago the use of someone's first name was very restricted. Even a married couple would rarely use their spouse's first name in public. To know and use a first name was evidence of a close, personal relationship. Moses asked God for his personal name and God granted his request :

*I Am Who I Am. Say to the Israelites, "I AM" has me to you" (YAHWEH) .... this is my name by which I am to be remembered ..."* Ex3:13-15

*Those who know your name will put their trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.* Ps9:10

*"My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, will I seek.* Ps27:8

John Calvin wrote of the positive side of this commandment : *"O, what high thoughts we ought to entertain of such a Being! In what holy awe should we stand of him! The end of this Precept is that the Lord will have the majesty of his name to be held inviolably sacred by us. Whatever we think and whatever we say of him should savour of his excellency, correspond to the sacred sublimity of his name, and tend to the exaltation of his magnificence".*

Astonishing, the NT uses the familial "Abba" (DADDY) to address God (Mk14:36; Rom8:15, Gal4:6). This is indeed an invitation to the closest possible relationship with God.

*Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.* Psalm 34:1

## C. THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT

When the Ten Commandments were first given, contemporary idol worship understood that the name of a god used in worship was to have power over that god in order to manipulate the god for the worshipper's purposes.

Misusing God's name includes regarding him as our own personal GENIE or INSURANCE policy. This is the sense of Isaiah 48:1 ....

*"Listen to this O house of Jacob .... who take oaths in the name of the LORD and invoke the God of Israel, but not in truth or righteousness."*

## D. SUBTLE ASPECT

How is the third commandment broken? Profanity? Yes. This includes the use of God's name without thought or intent to honour him. But also by HYPOCRISY .....

*These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men* Is29:13

*Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and do not do the things I say?* Lk6:46

*If you rely on the Law and brag about your relationship with God .... you who preach against stealing, do you steal? ... As it is written, God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."* Rom2:17-24

Misusing God's name by swearing, constantly reducing his name to a figure of speech (Oh, my God!), or claiming to serve him, but falsely, has the effect of TRIVIALISING God's name.

And if God's name is thus reduced we tend to think very little of his character or of his claims on our lives. ... a real tragedy, because ....

Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. Acts4:12