

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 51

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 53: *Which is the third commandment?*

ANSWER: The third commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

QUESTION 54: *What is required in the third commandment?*

ANSWER: The third commandment requireth the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 8B

Scripture: Read Psalm 113:1-9

Key Thought: *The 3rd commandment concerns our use of God's names and titles.*

Questions:

- ☞ How do the first three commandments compliment one another?
- ☞ What is the purpose of a name?
- ☞ By what names does God reveal Himself to us?
- ☞ By what titles does God make Himself known to us?
- ☞ What do these names and titles teach us about God?

Prayer

Notes: The 1st commandment concerns the object of worship, requiring us to worship Him in all that we do and forbidding us to worship any other than God. The 2nd commandment concerns the means of worship, requiring us to approach God according to the ordinances He has prescribed and forbidding us to offer any worship not commanded by Him. The 3rd commandment concerns the manner of worship, requiring us to approach God with all due reverence and awe and forbidding all carelessness and profanity in our the things that pertain to His glory. The focus of this commandment is especially upon the name of God, since a name is what most particularly identifies a person. In actuality, God does not need a name to distinguish Himself from the created world. His infinite and self-sufficient Being and the perfection of His nature set Him apart. But He has graciously made Himself known to us through a variety of names and titles, each designed to communicate certain aspects of His nature and works to His people. There is a distinction between the names of God (such as Yahweh, Elohim, Adonai, etc.) and the titles

of God (such as God of Abraham, Holy One of Israel, Father of mercies, etc.). Each name and title, however, shows us more of the excellencies of God.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 8B

Scripture: Read Psalm 68:1-35

Key Thought: *The 3rd commandment concerns our response to God's attributes, ordinances, word, and works.*

Questions:

- ☞ What are the attributes of God? Give examples.
- ☞ What are the ordinances of God? Give examples.
- ☞ Where do we find the word of God?
- ☞ What are the works of God?
- ☞ What is meant by a "holy and reverend" use of these things?

Prayer

Notes: It is a mistake to reduce the implications of the 3rd commandment to the mere prohibition of turning God's name into an expletive. As with all the commandments, there is far more intended than what is on the surface. The 6th commandment is not kept merely by refraining from murdering one's neighbor, but by actively and whole-heartedly seeking that neighbor's good. Likewise, the 3rd commandment requires a response of awe and reverence, not only to the formal names and titles of God, but "whatsoever else there is whereby He makes Himself known" (*Westminster Larger Catechism*, Question 112). God makes Himself known by His attributes (Rom. 1:20), ordinances (Deut. 4:5-8), word (John 1:14; Rom. 16:25-27), and works (Ps. 104:24). In all of these things the name of the Lord is to be exalted. An important aspect of keeping the 3rd commandment, therefore, is found in the conscious acknowledgment of the glory and wonder of God as it is revealed in every part of His creation. We are to stand in awe of His perfections, to approach His commandments with fear and humble obedience, to stand before His word with deep reverence, and to acknowledge the power of His works. At the heart of the 3rd commandment is the acknowledgment of the Creator/creature distinction, which the sinful heart of man is ever inclined to eradicate and ignore.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 8B

Scripture: Read Malachi 3:16-18; Romans 12:1-3; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Key Thought: *The 3rd commandment requires us to reverence God in our thoughts.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does it mean to "think upon the name of the Lord"?

- ☞ When should we “think upon the name of the Lord”?
- ☞ Are our minds naturally inclined to think upon the name of God?
- ☞ How are we to get our minds renewed?
- ☞ What attitudes should our thoughts about God produce in us?

Prayer

Notes: Once more we are reminded that the commandments of God do not end with outward behavior, but pierce through to the heart. The holy and reverend use of God’s name begins with a holy fear of God in the heart and mind. If God’s name is not revered in the heart, it will never be exalted and honored with the tongue. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45). Therefore the prophet Malachi commends those who “thought upon the name of the Lord.” What is indicated here is far more than an occasional spiritual thought in the midst of an otherwise worldly existence. To “think upon the name of the Lord” is to have one’s thoughts fixed and centered upon Him and to see God as the beginning and end of all knowledge. It is “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Such God-centered thinking is impossible for the unbeliever, whose mind is darkened and whose thoughts are futile (Rom. 1:21). The ability to reverence the name of the Lord in our thoughts is a by-product of regeneration. We must be born of God’s Spirit, and then begins the process of sanctification, by which we are enabled more and more to think God’s thoughts after Him. As we grow in Christ, our minds are cleansed of worldly thinking and the study of His word renews our minds. Thinking upon the name of the Lord should produce in us a growing sense of humility, awe, thankfulness, zeal, faith, and love for God.

THURSDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 8B

Scripture: Read Colossians 3:16-17

Key Thought: *The 3rd commandment requires us to reverence God in our words.*

Questions:

- ☞ Where do words come from?
- ☞ What does the way that we speak (or don’t speak) about God tell us about our hearts?
- ☞ What are some of the ways that God’s name is to be honored in our words?

Prayer

Notes: The most obvious application of the 3rd commandment is to the words that we speak. The prohibition against taking the name of the Lord our God in vain also implies a duty to honor and esteem the name of God in all our verbal interactions. God’s name is to be praised (Ps. 113:3), called upon (Gen. 4:26),

blessed (Deut. 10:8), acknowledged and exalted (Deut. 32:3). According to Deuteronomy 11:18-19 the words and works of God are to be the constant theme of conversation among His people. The natural outflow of a redeemed heart is a tongue that is compelled to speak of God's glory. This precludes a contrived or mechanical use of so-called spiritual words and phrases in order to appear godly in the eyes of men. Such empty words, unsupported by a transformed life, are truly vain and dishonoring to God in the highest degree. The true servant of the Lord, because of his love and esteem for his Redeemer, speaks often of Christ and always with a conscious honor and holy reverence in his heart.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 8B

Scripture: Read Philippians 1:27-28; 2 Corinthians 5:20

Key Thought: *The 3rd commandment requires us to reverence God in our deeds.*

Questions:

- ☞ Can a person bring disgrace upon someone else's name? How?
- ☞ How do the actions of Christians affect people's view of Christ?
- ☞ What sorts of actions does Paul identify as "conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ"?
- ☞ What does it mean to be an "ambassador" of Christ?

Prayer

Notes: To "take the name of the Lord" means more than taking it upon our lips. We take the name of the Lord upon ourselves when we identify with Him before a watching world. When we read that "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26), we are confronted with the fact that the actions of the followers of Christ reflect upon the world's view of Christ Himself. In this sense, "taking the Lord's name in vain" means professing to be a disciple of Christ, but living a life that brings disgrace upon Him. Paul exhorted the Philippians, "let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ." He identifies such things as perseverance, unity, zeal, faithfulness, and boldness as characteristics worthy of the gospel. We must remember that if we profess to follow Christ, we bear His name and walk in the world as His ambassadors. Let us, therefore, determine to "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.