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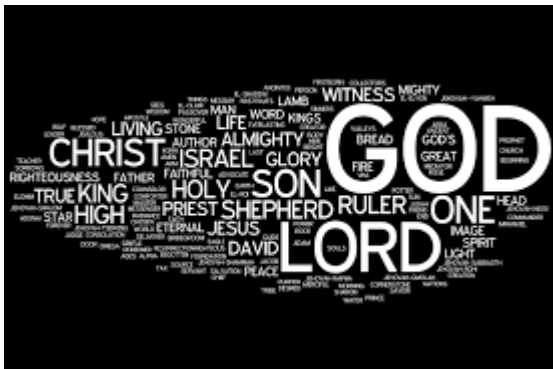
# Do Not Misuse God's Name

# 5: 11

**DIG: This mitzvah has to do with reverence. What is the most common way of misusing God's name in the modern world? How is God's name trivialized in commercialized religion? How can people who are even involved in organized religion subtly misuse ADONAI's name?**

**REFLECT: Do I use God's name in contexts other than prayer, worship, teaching or evangelism? This mitzvah doesn't say not to mention God's name, but when you do, do it with respect. Has ADONAI's name become separated from His person in my everyday life?**

**YHVH prohibits His children from making use of His Name, a substitute for God Himself, for ends that stand opposed to His purposes.**



**You must not take the name of ADONAI your God in vain, literally, *You must not lift up the name of YHVH your God as worthlessness, for ADONAI will not leave unpunished anyone who takes His Name in vain (Deuteronomy 5:11).*** In the modern world, the most common misuse of **God's** name is in its trivialization used in blasphemy, in common speech, and in the media. A secularized society feels free to use the personal **names** of **God** and **Messiah** with no concern for who **they** belong to. Then there is the equally trivialized use of **God's** name in the commercialization of religion, whether by the overt forces of money, or the more subtle damaging forces of organized religious empires, the

“televangelists” and other latter-day Tetzels (Tetzel was the man whose blatant selling of indulgences sparked Martin Luther’s protest, which in turn launched the Reformation) with their prosperity gospel and unscrupulous marketing of hopes and promises. By “giving **God** a bad name,” by blatantly using **His** name out of their own selfishness, power, or pride – they are, in principle, breaking the third mitzvah.<sup>152</sup>

**You shall not misuse the name of ADONAI your God, for ADONAI will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name (Exodus 20:7).**

**This, then, is how you should pray. “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name” (Matthew 6:9).**

What’s in a **name**? Plenty! **God’s name** is comprised of the four Hebrew letters that in English are **YHVH**. It was this **name** that was explained to Moses at the burning bush (**3:13-22**). The Jewish scribes would take extraordinary precautions when writing **His name**. They would never dip their pen in the ink in the middle of writing **His name**. If even the king spoke to them while writing the name of **YHVH**, the scribe would ignore him. In fact, the Jews took this **mitzvah** so seriously that they refused to pronounce **God’s name** so they wouldn’t accidentally **misuse the name of YHVH**. For that very reason, the exact pronunciation of God’s **name** has been lost. Even today, many Jews make no attempt to use or even pronounce the **name**, referring to **God** simply as **Ha’Shem**, Hebrew for **The Name**, or **ADONAI**, like **Abba**.<sup>153</sup>

Some view this third **mitzvah** as merely a prohibition against using **God’s name** as a swear word. **The Israelites themselves** took it as such. **Leviticus 19:12** says: **Do not swear falsely by My name and so profane the name of your God. I am ADONAI**. But there is a lot more to this **mitzvah** than that. The word **profane** comes from the Latin word *pro*, which means *in front of*, and *fane*, which means *the temple*. Those who **profane the name of God** have taken the holy out of *the temple* and permitted their hearts, minds and mouths to be put in the gutter out *in front of* it. Do you know anyone who loves **God** and is close to **Him** that thinks **His** last **name** is damn? Of course not. **God** will hold us responsible if we profanely use **His name**.

On another level, this third **mitzvah** is a ban against dishonesty of speech, perjury, false promises and the breaking of our word. Early in human history people came to lie so often that no one could trust a person’s common word. In order to be believed one had to call upon god to witness to the truth. We think the cover-ups and evasions going on today in the political arena and elsewhere are modern phenomena, but the problem is really as old as civilization. The idea also surfaced that if you didn’t **swear by God**, then you didn’t have to

tell the truth. But slowly people became such liars that even that didn't help. People felt that unless they took a certain elaborate oath they were not required to tell the truth.

By the time **Yeshua** was born the situation was much worse. People used many different kinds of oaths but still lied. It became impossible to tell if they were telling the truth or not, even though they used **God's name** in an oath. That's why **Yeshua** said: **Do not swear at all, simply let your "Yes" be "Yes" and your "No" be "No"** (Matthew 5:34 and 37). **His** point was that we shouldn't have to use **God's name** to be believed. As believers, our lives should be our witness. We are united in **Messiah (Ephesians Chapter 1)**, meaning we belong to **Him**. We take **His name** as our **name** and we should never **profane** it by breaking our word, or using **His** name for selfish or evil purposes (**Psalm 139:20; Deuteronomy 5:11**).<sup>154</sup> Not that we are perfect, but honoring **God** all the time including all we say, should be the desire of our hearts.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, **You** are holy and awesome! Praise you that every word that **You** speak can be trusted and totally counted on. Praise **You** for **Your** love that is forever for those who revere **You** (**Psalms 103:17**). We, **Your** children, respect **You** and desire to show **You** our love by being truthful in all we say and do. Our time on earth to show **You** our love is short, for you will soon return to rapture those who love **You** (**First Thessalonians 4:15-17, First Corinthians 15:51-57**) Then we will live forever in great joy and peace (**Revelation 21:4**) in heaven in the home **Yeshua** is preparing for us (**John 14:1-3**). We love **You**! In the holy name of **Your Son** and **His** power of the resurrection. Amen*

This third **mitzvah** has an even deeper meaning. The third **mitzvah** also warns us against the misuse of **God's** power. In both the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah a person's **name** was thought to be an extension of their character. Similarly, throughout the Bible **ADONAI's** name represents the nature and character of **God Himself**. So, to speak for **ADONAI** is to speak in **His name** (**Deuteronomy 18:19-20**). To praise **God** is to praise **His name** (**Psalm 96:2, 100:4**). To worship **God** is to call upon the name of **ADONAI** (**Genesis 4:26; Isaiah 55:6**). To serve **God** is to love **His name** (**Psalm 5:11**). The Temple of **God** was the place **ADONAI** chose . . . to put **His Name** (**Deuteronomy 12:5**). The Bible teaches that **those who know ADONAI's name will trust in Him** (**Psalm 9:10**). Therefore, to know the name of **ADONAI** is in some way to know the **power of God**.

**Acts 4:7** tells how the religious leaders questioned **Peter** and **John** about their healing of a lame man, asking: **By what power or what name did you do this?** And **Peter** answered: **It is by the name of Yeshua ha-Mashiach of Nazareth . . .** (**Acts 4:10**). Eventually the high court angrily let them go, warning the apostles **not to speak or teach at all in the**

**name of Jesus** (see the commentary on [Acts](#), to see link click [Ar](#) - **Peter and John Stand before the Sanhedrin**). You see, **God's name** includes **His** character, **His** will, and **His** power. That's why we are to pray in the **name** of **Messiah** and why **God's name** has special **power** and meaning for us. It is as if the third **mitzvah** is saying, "Be very careful. Don't use the **name** of **God** for your own selfish ends. Don't attempt to use **God's power** for your own will and your own ways. Don't try to cosign **God's name** to a lot of things in your life that are totally unworthy of **His name**."<sup>155</sup> In this age of grace, the believer is encouraged *not* to swear by any oath. Echoing what **Yeshua** had said earlier, **James** said: **Above all, my brothers, do not swear, not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No" be no, or you will be condemned (James 5:12)**. We need to exhibit truth on all occasions and should not need the name of **God** to verify our lifestyle of telling the truth.<sup>156</sup>

What's in a **name**? Everything. Does your life **profane** His **name** or honor **His** name? Can **God** sign **His name** to your body? How about your money? Does **ADONAI** co-sign **His** holy **name** to your checkbook? What about your home, your habits, your mood, your manners, your work, your disposition? Can **God** sign **His** name to your life? If so, you are keeping the third **mitzvah**.<sup>157</sup>