

SERMON QUESTIONS: DON'T MISUSE GOD'S NAME

Exodus 20:1-11

1. Talk about your name. Did you like your name when you were growing up as a child? Do you know what your name means or where it comes from?
2. If you could have any other name besides the one you have, what name would you pick for yourself?
3. In ancient times, a person's name was very important. It was considered a reflection of his/her character. A "good name" was essential for building a strong family and a prosperous community. In what ways is this still true today?
4. Pastor Mark points out that the commandment about not misusing God's name is about more than just avoiding using God's name as a curse word. But it does include that. Why do you think it is important for Christians to be careful about how they use words? Why is it inappropriate for a Christian to habitually use profanity?
5. Pastor Mark also suggests that we take God's name in vain when we describe God in a flippant manner, such as "the Man Upstairs" or "The Big Man" or "The Big Guy in the Sky." Why might these and other casual descriptions of God be inappropriate?
6. Another way we misuse God's name is when we claim that "God told me." While God does communicate with us and sometimes that communication seems very clear, why is it more appropriate to say "I believe that God might be leading me" rather than "God told me"?

7. Another way we misuse God's name is when we fail to balance God's grace with God's expectations that we pursue righteousness and holiness. In what ways can people get so focused on God's grace, forgiveness and acceptance that they ignore the call to devotion, sacrifice and the pursuit of personal holiness?
8. In what ways can people get so caught up in God's righteous demands on our lives that they become judgmental or legalistic, missing out on God's grace, forgiveness and acceptance?
9. Pastor Mark points out that on any given Sunday in worship, there are many types of people who show up, but there are two types that need special attention. One type of person feels beat up, discouraged and perhaps a bit ashamed. Another other type of person feels self-satisfied, good enough, and not highly committed to growing deeper in devotion. The first type of person needs a hug and a reminder that God loves them and forgives them. The second type of person needs a push and a challenge to get beyond their comfort zone. Of these two types, who do you tend to be?
10. How do we make sense of the fact that Jesus talked about the love and grace and mercy of God, but also spoke very frankly and seriously about God's high expectations and a day of Judgment?