

# Biblical Topics

## Ten Commandments - Second Commandment

### You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

What is God's name?

The name of a person is all we know about him. It is what he is and what he has done including his reputation. God's name is every name by which God has made Himself known, such as God, Lord, Almighty, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit. It is everything we know of Him from the Bible. This includes His essence, His attributes, His works, His commandments and His promises.

- Isaiah 42:8: I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.
- Jeremiah 23:6: In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.
- Exodus 20:24: Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.
- Matthew 1:21: She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

What does God forbid in the Second Commandment?

God forbids us to use His name in vain. In *vain* means to use His name uselessly or carelessly ("My God," "Good Lord," "Jesus Christ," etc.).

- Exodus 20:7: You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

God forbids cursing, swearing, using satanic arts, lying or deceiving by His name. *Cursing* means blaspheming God by speaking evil of Him or mocking Him as well as calling down the anger and punishment of God upon any person or thing. To curse is the opposite of to bless. It means to call upon God that He should hurt, harm, punish, and damn someone.

- Matthew 27:39-43: The Jews reviled Jesus when He was hanging on the cross.
- Matthew 27:25: The Jews cursed themselves and their children.
- 1 Samuel 17:43: Goliath cursed David.
- Matthew 26:74: Peter cursed.
- James 3:9-10: <sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

*Swearing* is taking an oath in which we call upon God to witness the truth of what we say or promise and to punish us if we lie or break our promise.

- 2 Corinthians 1:23: call God as my witness.

*Swearing* is permitted/required swearing is when we are called upon by the government or courts to tell the truth in matter. OR, it is permitted when is necessary for the glory of God or the welfare of our neighbor.

- Matthew 26:63-64: Jesus permitted Himself to be put under an oath by the government.
- Romans 13:1: Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

*Swearing* is sinful when done falsely, thoughtlessly, or in sinful uncertain or unimportant matters.

- Matthew 26:72: Peter swore falsely and committed perjury.
- Acts 23:12: Certain Jews swore to kill Paul.
- Matthew 14:6-9: Herod swore in an unknown and unimportant matter.
- Matthew 5:33-37: <sup>33</sup> “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ <sup>34</sup> But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. <sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.
- Leviticus 19:12: Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

Using *satanic arts* is when we use God’s name in order to perform supernatural things with the help of the devil. Examples might be fortunetelling and consulting the dead, or seeking the aid of people who practice these arts.

- Deuteronomy 18:10-12: <sup>10</sup> Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, <sup>11</sup> or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. <sup>12</sup> Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.
- Leviticus 19:31: Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.
- 1 Samuel 28: King Saul sought the help of the witch of Endor.

*Lying and deceiving* by God’s name is teaching false doctrine and saying that it is God’s Word, OR, it is covering up an unbelieving heart or a sinful life by a show of piety.

- Matthew 15:9: They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.
- Jeremiah 23:31: Yes,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, ‘The LORD declares.’

- Deuteronomy 12:32: See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.
- Matthew 15:8: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
- Matthew 7:21: Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
- Acts 5:1-11: Ananias and Sapphira were hypocrites.

What does God require of us in the Second Commandment?

*There are two things to know before going into this part of each commandment:*

*First, one of the best ways to move away from wrong behavior or habits is to do the very opposite actions. Each of the commandments asks the question: What does this mean? Following that question and near the end of the explanation, Luther offers positive behaviors that would aid in doing a better task of following God's direction in this commandment. Work at practicing these.*

*Second, right after the question comes the statement, "we should fear and love God." In the commandments to "fear God" means to "stand in awe of Him," to revere, respect, esteem, and honor Him. We are NOT to shake in our boots from fright.*

God requires that we should call upon His name in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

- Psalm 50:15: and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."
- Matthew 7:7: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
- Psalm 103:1: Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- Psalm 118:1: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

The above information is taken from: "Luther's Small Catechism" annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.