

HC 100-102 – 3 Practical Principles for Keeping Law 3

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: So far we are looked at the two principles in studying the 3rd command: Prohibitions of Law 3 and Prescriptions of law 3. But throughout history there have always been some difficulties applying this 3rd command to the lives of Christians, so the writers of the Catechism took the time to address 3 of the main difficulties in applying law.

Our headings are:

How far should you go to stop the abuse of God's Name?

Should you be afraid to use God's name in oaths?

Is it proper to swear by other things?

Our goals are: That as covenant children bought with the blood of the Lamb, that **you will properly understand and obey the 3rd command so that God is properly revered and worshipped.**

How far should you go to stop the abuse of God's name?

100 Q. IS BLASPHEMY 褻瀆 OF GOD'S NAME BY SWEARING AND CURSING REALLY SUCH SERIOUS SIN THAT GOD IS ANGRY ALSO WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT DO ALL THEY CAN TO HELP PREVENT IT AND FORBID IT?

A. Yes, indeed. No sin is greater, no sin makes God angrier than blaspheming his name. That is why he commanded the death penalty for it.

1. You have an obligation to rebuke any person who misuses God's name.

Leviticus 5:1 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter —if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.'

Let me illustrate: If John knew that Peter was taking an oath before God and was lying in that oath, and John remained silent, John would be guilty – guilty of abusing of God's name, just as Peter who was falsely swearing. You can extrapolate 推断 from Leviticus 5, that those who hear any abuse of God's name and say nothing about it, are also guilty of abusing God's name.

You have an obligation to protect your earthly father's name – with his weakness and all, but which child would not want to protect his heavenly Father's good name?

2. But there is an important question: Should you try to stop others anywhere and any time who abuse God's name? No. The context of Leviticus 5 was in a legal situation. There are times when you have no right to speak. Examples:

a. You must not try to regulate speech in your boss' work place. You might sit away from those who misuse God's name, and if they ask you why you are sitting away from them, explain. Or you may nicely talk to someone who abuses God's name, but you must not force others, outside of your area of sovereignty, to obey God.

b. You can, and must, regulate speech in your own house, but not in parliament. This means teach your children!

c. You may have to leave someone's house or company (sometimes even a job) if God's name is constantly abused, but you can use that as opportunity to tell them why. Remember the requirement from Q99: You must not "share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders 看热闹的人.

3. Are there other things can you do to stop others from misusing (blaspheming) God's name?

a. Live holily before the Lord so that there will be no question how highly you respect and honor the Lord.

Romans 2: 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

The Jews lived lives of hypocrisy...pretending to be good by their speech but not matching it with their actions. This caused Gentiles to blaspheme God's name – to think lowly of him. So when you say: "Oh, my God," let it be in the form of prayer. Let people see how highly you think of your God.

Psalm 22:2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent.

b. Don't blaspheme against God's name yourself. Speak the truth. Don't curse.

1Timothy 6:1 - Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

The church may pronounce judgment on the wicked...even your enemies, but it is not for you to condemn others. And remember, the phrase "God Damn You," is the worst possible curse you can curse.

Should you be afraid to use God's name in oaths?

101 Q. BUT MAY WE SWEAR AN OATH IN GOD'S NAME IF WE DO IT REVERENTLY?

A. Yes, when the government demands it, or when necessity requires it, in order to maintain and promote truth and trustworthiness 确实性 for God's glory and our neighbor's good. Such oaths are approved in God's Word¹ and were rightly used by Old and New Testament believers.²

1. The Lord, Jehovah, God of the Universe, holy, omniscient 无所不知, and all-powerful, does not want you to be afraid to properly use his name in worship or in oaths. He wants you to call him to witness to the truth that you speak so he would bless you when you speak truth.

Deuteronomy 6: 13 "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and **shall take oaths in His name.**

Jeremiah 4: 1 "If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations 可憎的事物 out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved. **2 And you shall swear, 'The LORD lives,' In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness...**

Hebrews 6:16 For **men indeed swear by the greater**, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute 争论.

2. Let us consider some examples of proper swearing – men who were not afraid to swear:

a. Jacob swore an oath – an oath that protected him and his family from Laban.

Genesis 31:51 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52 "This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 "The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And **Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.**

b. Saul asked David to swear that he would not kill Saul's family when he became king. David was right to swear.

1Samuel 24: 21 "**Therefore swear now to me by the LORD** that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." 22 So **David swore to Saul..**

3. So you may properly swear an oath in all serious occasions 场合. Examples:

- a. A soldier in time of war swears to defend his country and to take orders from his superiors.
- b. In giving testimony in court or in other legal civil situations to add weight to what you are saying.
- c. In marriage (called a vow) you swear to do this most important duty to your spouse.
- d. In church membership vows you promise to serve the Lord and submit to your elders.

You must keep those vows when you have made them. Some Baptists and Charismatics 有神授超凡能力的人, who refuse to take any oaths, believing oaths to be sinful, are sinning against the Lord by refusing to honor his name. May you not refuse to honor the Lord's name.

And because oaths require understanding, children and mentally 精神上 handicapped 残疾人 people should not be given, nor should they take oaths.

Is it proper to swear by other things?

102 Q. MAY WE SWEAR BY SAINTS OR OTHER CREATURES?

A. No. A legitimate 合法的 oath means calling upon God as the one who knows my heart to witness to my truthfulness and to punish me if I swear falsely. No creature is worthy of such honor.

1. You may only swear by Jehovah God. You may not swear by anything or anyone else.

2. The Apostle Paul had the opportunity to swear by one of the deceased saints when he wanted to make an extremely strong statement. But instead of swearing by James, for instance, Paul called God to witness. This means he swore by God.

2Corinthians 1: 23 Moreover **I call God as witness against** my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.

3. Consider how even God swears by himself. There was no other person by whom he could swear. Only he has the power to do or not do. To him all men shall bow...to him all men shall swear.

Isaiah 45:23 **I have sworn by Myself**; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.

4. Consider how Jesus explicitly 明确地 warned against making oaths for minor things and especially against using God's name for minor things. Let's read first and then we will examine the context.

Matthew 5: 33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' 34 "**But I say to you, do not swear at all**: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 "**But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'** For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

The Jewish leaders had developed a whole system of "oaths"- some kind of oaths for important things and other oaths for things that were not so important. For the Jews, for lesser important things you could swear by lesser important things. For example, you could swear by the temple (and give the appearance of seriousness 看起来认真) if you promised to help your friend move. But you didn't have to keep that oath. Or you could swear by the gold in the temple (still giving the appearance of greater seriousness) and you have to keep that oath. For the Jews, simply making an oath in God's name for very serious occasions, as God required, was substituted by swearing by other things. So in these verses Jesus was not forbidding the use of oaths. He was guarding against the abuse of oaths.

5. There are many modern examples of swearing oaths today for minor things...and therefore swearing by things other than the Lord: I swear by the sun above me. I swear on my mother's grave. I swear by the breath in my body. I swear by my head. I swear by this cathedral大教堂. These are bad! No creature is worthy to be used in the taking of oaths. No saint can independently fulfill what you promise. No dead mother can do anything you promise. No place makes an oath more powerful or useful. Jesus rebukes this type of swearing.

Matthew 23:16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to 不得不 perform it.' 17 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' 19

"Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?
20 "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21
"He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. 22 "And
he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

Conclusion:

You must do whatever is in your power to stop those who are misusing God's name...in a place where you have the right to speak or in a place of your dominion. You must not be afraid to make oaths in God's name for things that are substantive 真实的 in nature. You are not to swear for minor things. And you must only swear by God's name. God may not immediately judge those who misuse his name, but he will judge. He swore by himself that he would.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. God is now your Heavenly Father because Jesus Christ redeemed from the claws of the Devil. You now have a new name.

2. Based on your new relations, do you have the courage to stop a brother or sister in Christ and say: Please don't misuse God's name? Do you have the courage to walk out of someone's house because they abuse your Father's name? I hope you do.

2. Do you have the confidence to take proper oaths in your Father's name, and so honor him?

Finally, you can never use God's name rightly unless you are God's child. You would not have the proper respect as to who God is and what he has done for you unless you experience his regenerating work in your heart. Therefore, in order to obey this command, one that all men are bound to obey, you need to ask God to make you his child. Ask him to take away your sins because Jesus took the punishment for them. God has obligated himself to do so if you sincerely ask.