

**OCF Small Groups:** *passionately pursuing God, healthy relationships with each other, and people who don't know Jesus, as part of a Gospel Community.*

## **Exodus 20:7**

(Sunday, October 1)

You shall not lift up/carry the name of Yahweh, your God, in vain, for Yahweh will not acquit one who lifts up/carries his name in vain.

1. What have you been taught (or have you thought) this commandment meant? Do you think it is wrong to say, "Oh my G##?" Why or why not? How about using Jesus' name like this?
2. "Take ...in vain" in KJV and NASB. This includes taking an oath to do something in the LORD's name and not doing it, swearing false testimony in His name, profanity, and flippant use of the "the LORD told me..." According to Dr. Carmen Imes, this is an "elliptical" (i.e., focusing on the "lift up"/swearing an oath) understanding of the translation and something that looks like this:

"You shall not lift up [. . .] the name of Yahweh [. . .] in vain"

= You shall not lift up [your hand] to the name

i.e., swear an oath

= You shall not lift up the name [on your lips]

i.e., use lightly, say, or call upon

If the "elliptical" understanding is the correct way to interpret this verse, then what are ways we can misuse the name of the LORD?

Why do you think people use God's name in this way?

3. Dr. Imes asks, "What if the name command (Exod. 20:7) is not elliptical? She suggests emphasis not on the idea of "lift up", rather on the idea of "carry" and "carries". Maybe a better word is "bears". She suggests, "Israel **bears** YHWH's name and thereby **represents** YHWH among the nations. The point of the name command is the proper representation of YHWH by his people."

How do we properly bear the name of Jesus and represent him among those who don't know Jesus? What does it mean for us to represent Jesus?

4. Another way to read the first part of Exodus 20:7 is this: "Don't misrepresent YHWH." What would it look like for us to misrepresent Jesus as bearers of his name?

Have you observed religious people claim that they know, precisely in this moment of time, what the will or intent of Jesus is, and what a person or a community or a group of people should do based on that knowledge of the will of Jesus? Where is the possible danger in misrepresenting Jesus with this type of claim about his will?

What would you do to discern if their claim above is right? In other words, how would you discern that they are not misrepresenting Jesus in such a claim about his will?

5. The second part of Exodus 20:7 says, "The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain", or who misrepresents him. What are we guilty of when we misrepresent Jesus? What's really at stake?

What are the consequences for you and others when we misrepresent Jesus?

6. How do you view Jesus? And how does your view of Jesus inform the way you properly represent him?
7. Psalm 23:3b says, "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." What are paths of righteousness?

How do we allow Jesus to lead us in paths of righteousness for the proper representation of his name?

Describe a time or a situation where you were led by Jesus on a path of righteousness and his name was represented well.