

THE TEN PLEASURES

MATTHEW 6:9

THE PLEASURE OF LIFTING GOD UP



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I started going to the gym after many years of relying on just general fitness. Being a man, I didn't need a trainer, of course. Just watched a few YouTube videos and was confident I'd soon look like Mark Walburg. Unfortunately that's not quite what happened. Over the first couple of months, I got injury after injury. I'd exercise for a couple of days, then I was out for a couple of weeks. And so it went on.

I was about to give up when one of my students, a trainer at the Y, asked why I always looked like I was in agony. I explained what was happening and he offered to come to the gym the next day to see if he could help me.

I went to do my first exercise, when he said, "Stop! Are you not going to warm up first?" I said I didn't usually have enough time to do that and wanted to just get into the body-building. He insisted I do 8-10 mins on an exercise bike. After finally getting to the barbell, I started lifting but only got about halfway, when he put his hands under the bar and said, "Let's just put this gently down on the floor again. Your form is terrible." "What's form?" I asked. He then spent about five minutes teaching me how to lift in the correct way.

We went through this humbling process with every exercise. He was not so interested in what I was lifting but in how I was lifting. After many weeks of learning the right forms for each exercise, I was lifting less than before, but I wasn't injuring myself any longer and I actually was beginning to enjoy it more and more.

Today we are going to learn how to lift God's name up in a way that does us more good than harm. **How do we lift God up safely, profitably, and enjoyably?**

BACKGROUND

We can sum up the first four commandments as: We worship (1) the right God; (2) in the right way; (3) in the right direction (4); at the right time.



What's so dangerous about lifting up God's name in the wrong way?



1. BAD LIFTING HARMS US

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain (7).

The Hebrew of the verb behind 'take' means 'to lift, carry, or bear.' In Hebrew culture, 'Name' means 'character.' 'Vain' means 'empty, worthless, nothing, unreal.' The commandment is **forbidding lifting up or carrying God's character in a way that empties it of weight so as to become worthless.** Here's a collated summary of the Shorter (55), Larger (113), and Heidelberg Catechisms' (99) teaching about what the Third Commandment forbids:

- all **profaning** (removing from holy use to common use)
- or **abusing** of (trampling underfoot or using too much)
- **anything by which God makes himself known:** (names, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and works)

BY

- **Desecrating God's name:** blasphemy, cursing
- **Vandalizing God's name:** perjury, violation of oaths and vows (Matt. 5:33-37_)
- **Wanting more than God's name:** murmuring at or curious prying into God's decrees and providences
- **Teaching wrongly in God's name:** misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word
- **Joking about God's name:** profane jests
- **Sidelining God's name:** curious or unprofitable questions
- **Shrinking God's name:** maligning, scorning, reviling, or opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways
- **Pretending with God's name:** professing of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister selfish ends (hollow)
- **Hiding God's name:** being ashamed of religion
- **Misrepresenting name:** or a shame to it
- **Ignoring abuse of God's name:** to share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders
- **Repeating God's name** using God's name as a comma in prayer

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Take God's name seriously: God does (Lev. 24:16). Jen Wilkins explains how in the Gospels and most of Acts, 'Jesus' is used to identify the historical person as they tell the story of the incarnation. "But those who interact with him in the Gospel narratives always refer to him as 'teacher' or 'Lord.' But, in all twenty-one of the Epistles, he is referred to only twenty-eight times simply as 'Jesus,' and 484 times by the title 'Lord' or 'Christ.' A staggering 95 percent of the times he is mentioned, he is referred to by a title of respect."

If God sued you for defamation of character, who would win?

BAD FORM
REFLECTS BAD FAITH



If this kind of lifting is mad and miserable, how should I lift God's name?



2. GOOD LIFTING HELPS US

Like all the other commandments, this one also has a positive side. It doesn't only forbid, but also requires. Again, putting together the Shorter (54) and Larger (112) Catechisms, the Third Commandment requires:

- The holy and reverent use

OF

- God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works,
- and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known

IN

- thought
- meditation
- word
- and writing

BY

- an holy profession
- and answerable conversation (lifestyle)

TO

- the glory of God
- and the good of ourselves
- and others

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

God gets joy in being lifted up: He's given us lots of names and titles to lift up (@950), has called us to do so, and does it himself (Ps. 138:2) indicating how much he enjoys his name being lifted up.

We get joy from God being lifted up (Ps. 8:1,9): Think of how much joy you get when you learn how to lift weights and begin to lift more and more higher and higher. Name-lifting is far more strengthening and pleasure-giving than weight-lifting. 950 names and titles to strengthen and delight different parts of our souls.

LIFTING GOD'S WEIGHTY NAMES
STRENGTHENS OUR WEAK SOULS



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



SUMMARY



A NEW CHAPTER

- **Gospel:** 'Jesus' is the only name that saves (Acts 4:12), therefore call on that name and be saved (Rom. 10:13). Call on his name to remove all charges against your name for abusing his.
- **Worship:** How excellent is God's name in all the earth! (Ps. 8:1). "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds, in a believer's ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear." "O, praise the name of the Lord our God. Praise his name for evermore." What a beautiful, wonderful, powerful name it is. Alistair Begg's church has Ps 138:2 chiseled over the entrance.
- **Promises:** Do not make vows at Confession of Faith, Baptism, or Marriage that you do not intend to keep.
- **Monday:** Walk in the name of the Lord our God (Mal. 4:5), do everything in the name of Jesus (Col. 3:17), and witness to and out of that name (1 Pet. 3:15).
- **Anxiety:** The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and is safe (Prov. 18:10)
- **Prayer:** Write out a prayer that reflects this sermon, or use this one: "Most High God, train me to lift you as high as I can to give you and me the highest pleasure."
- **Heaven:** Heaven's residents are stunned that more do not lift up God's name (Rev 15:3-4). But one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess Christ's name (Phil. 2:10-11)
- **Jesus:** "No one ever spoke like this man" not about God or to God or as God (John 7:46; 17:6)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. There are twelve ways in which we take God's name in vain. Can you suggest examples of each of these in your own life or in society?
2. What other ways do we take God's name in vain?
3. What is a holy profession and answerable conversation (second point)?
4. Why do you get so much joy from lifting up God's name?
5. How has lifting up God's name strengthened you?
6. How can you better keep the vows you have made?