

A STUDY OF  
**LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM**

---

---

**THE SECOND COMMANDMENT — “YOU SHALL NOT MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.”**

*WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?*

WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT USE HIS NAME TO CURSE, SWEAR, LIE, OR DECEIVE, OR USE WITCHCRAFT, BUT CALL UPON GOD'S NAME IN EVERY TROUBLE, PRAY, PRAISE, AND GIVE THANKS.

- **The aim of the First Commandment is to point out the right relationship of the heart to God. What is the aim of the second?**

- ❖ *“As the First Commandment inwardly instructs the heart and teaches faith, so this commandment leads outward, and directs the speech of lips and tongue into a right relationship to God. The first thing that breaks forth out of the heart and come into the open are words.” - Martin Luther*

- **What can we say is God's name?**

- ❖ Genesis 17:1— When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.
- ❖ Isaiah 42:8— <sup>8</sup> “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.
- ❖ Matthew 1:21— <sup>21</sup> 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.”
- ❖ Exodus 34:5-7— <sup>5</sup> Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. <sup>6</sup> And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

- **Based on Luther's explanation to the Second Commandment above, how do we break this command?**

- ❖ *“You now understand what it means to misuse the name of God. To repeat it very briefly, it means to use God’s name as a cover for lying—for presenting something as true though it is not—or for cursing, swearing, engaging in occult practices, in short, for wickedness of any kind.” - Martin Luther*
- **Lying is indeed a sin (we will cover this when we get to the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment), but how, with reference to this commandment, can we actually make this sin worse?**
  - ❖ *“For lying and deceiving are in themselves grave sins, but they become much more serious when one tries to justify oneself by dragging in God’s name to back them up, using His name as a cover-up for evil, with the result that the original lie is doubled, yes, compounded into a multitude of lies.” - Martin Luther*
- **If Luther tells you that swearing is a sin, in what circumstances can swearing be considered just and right?**
  - ❖ *“One is not to swear in support of evil (that is, to a falsehood) or when it is not necessary or not beneficial; but in a good cause and for the benefit of one’s neighbor one should swear. This kind of swearing is a really good work through which God is honored, truth and justice are established, lies are refuted, people are reconciled, obedience is rendered, and strife is ended.” - Martin Luther*
- **Luther wrote, “Since we are forbidden to use God’s name for falsehood or wrongdoing, it follows of itself that we are conversely commanded to use it in support of the truth and all that is good.” What are some examples of using God’s name “in support of the truth and all that is good?” Use Scripture references below to help answer.**
  - ❖ Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor me.” (Psalm 50:15)
  - ❖ <sup>16</sup> Be joyful always; <sup>17</sup> pray continually; <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
  - ❖ <sup>10</sup> All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you. <sup>11</sup> They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, <sup>12</sup> so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. (Psalm 145:10-12)
  - ❖ <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)
  - ❖ <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Psalm 118:1)

➤ **In what ways can we impart the importance of this commandment to our children?**

❖ *“We should also constantly urge and encourage children to honor God’s name and to have it constantly on their lips no matter what they meet up with in their experience. For truly to honor God’s name means looking to Him and praying to Him for all consolation; as we have heard before, first the heart by faith gives God the honor that belongs to Him, and then the lips do so by confessing His name.” - Martin Luther*

➤ **On training our children, Luther wrote, “Those who can only be forced by means of rods and blows come to no good; for even if they seem to make improvement, they will stay good only as long as the rod is on their backs.” Explain what he means.**

➤ **What blessings can you see that God will give to us when we use his name properly?**

❖ *“This is also a blessed, useful practice, and a powerfully effective one, against the devil, who is always lurking around trying to bring us into sin and shame, misery and trouble. He has a very strong distaste for the name of God and cannot stay around long where anyone utters and calls upon God’s name from the heart. Many a frightful, horrible disaster would strike us if God did not preserve us at our calling upon His name. I myself have personally tried it out and have found that often some great sudden accident was averted when I called upon God’s name. To spite the devil we should, I say, always have God’s name on our lips, so that our foe cannot harm us as he would like to do.” - Martin Luther*