

Trinity Home Teams

Sermon Notes / May 17, 2026

Psalm 139:17-20,23-24 *For the Sake of His Name: The Central Motivation of God's Actions / Part I*

1. Read **Phil. 2:9-11**. How does this fit into your theology about the name of God?
2. **Ex. 20:7** is a negative command. What's a positive injunction regarding God's name?
3. How do you read, understand, apply **1 Chron. 16:29**?

We hold graduation ceremonies and funeral services primarily because people desire to hear their name *honored*. What will be *said* when your name is *read*? What will be the summary of your achievements attached to the formal, public reading of your name? Will your name be used profanely? Will your name be used in vain?

"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." – **Exodus 20:7**

If you think that boils down to "don't swear," you need look more closely. The essence is translated "don't take God's name in vain" in the KJV, RSV, ESV. But scholars see this command as more than a *prohibition to swear*.

Do not use the Lord your God's name as if it were of no significance; the Lord won't forgive anyone who uses his name that way. – **Exodus 20:7** (Common English Bible)

Properly translated, taking or carrying God's name in vain is *every single action that offends God* and what He loves. John Piper: *"God's ultimate passion is for the glory of His name."*

The Westminster Larger Catechism teaches that the third commandment requires: reverent speech about God, proper worship, truthful oaths, faithful doctrine and holy living. It forbids: hypocrisy, false teaching, irreverent worship, careless vows, invoking God for selfish purposes, and bringing reproach on God through ungodly conduct

"The worst misuse of God's name is to say you belong to Him while living in a way that makes Him look worthless." – John Piper

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – **Phil. 2:9-11**

People look at Psalm 139 to attack abortion. That's not wrong. But the foolish human reading of this passage makes this it almost entirely man-centered. What's really precious here is God and his magnificent thoughts – filled with understanding and compassion, wisdom and truth, righteousness and justice, condescending to save His own.

So, merely avoiding the negative – *profaning God's name* – is just the start. How do we positively advance the *hallowing of God's precious Name*?

Honoring God's name begins with understanding His character:

Infinite Wisdom

Psalm 147:5 *"Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit."*

Romans 11:33 *"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"*

Isaiah 40:28 *"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."*

Proverbs 3:19 *"By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place."*

Jeremiah 10:12 *"But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding."*

Job 37:16 *"Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge?"*

Supreme ownership

Psalm 14:1 *"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."*

Deuteronomy 10:14 *"To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it."*

1 Chronicles 29:11 *"Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."*

Unparalleled majesty

Psalm 104:1 *"Praise the Lord, my soul. Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty."*

1 Chronicles 16:27 "Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place."

Psalm 145:5 "They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty — and I will meditate on your wonderful works."

Psalm 8:1 "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens."

Psalm 93:1-2 "The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength. Indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity."

Sovereign power

Daniel 4:35 "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'"

Psalm 135:6 "The Lord does whatever pleases him, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all their depths."

Romans 9:20-21 "But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? 'Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?"' Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?"

Uncontested authority

Psalm 115:3 "Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him."

Job 42:2 "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

Hebrews 1:3 "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

Creative genius

Isaiah 40:26 "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Eternal and Unchallenged Agency

Colossians 1:16-17 "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him

and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Divine nature

Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

Infinite and eternal glory

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Isaiah 6:3 "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Hebrews 1:3 "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

Perfect Holiness

Isaiah 6:3 And one (Angel) called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

1 Samuel 2:2 "There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God."

Truly God is separate from every created *one* and every created *thing*. His glory is so great, supernatural, transcendent that in Exodus 33, Moses said to God, "Show me your ways." God told Moses, "I will proclaim before you my name 'Yahweh.'"

The word "holy" itself means "set apart." So separate and uncommon and supernatural is Yahweh that we are called in scripture to honor Him in these three distinct ways:

1 Chronicles 16:29 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.