

For Further Study March 26-April 1



THE THIRD COMMANDMENT Exodus 20:7

"You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name."

Read Matthew 5:33-37

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Where do we see oaths and vows used in our society today?

What vows have you made?

Why do you think Jesus said "do not swear an oath at all"?

Catechism Q&A 101 and 102

Q. 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 for God's glory and our neighbor's good.*

Such oaths are approved by God's Word and were rightly used by Old and New Testament believers.

Q. May we swear by saints or other creatures?

A. *No. A legitimate 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.*

How do you think Jesus' instruction in Matthew 5 support or challenge these statements?

Read Ecclesiastes 5:4-7

What do these verses encourage us to do in regard to vows?

Jesus teaching pushes us not to be trustworthy in the "promises" we make but in all that we say. What difference can this make in what you say?

Thought to ponder: We should speak with such honesty and transparency that our word needs no other support.