

TAKING THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN

"You shall not take the Lord's name in vain."

Taking the Lord's name in vain means to use His name without thought or care. Many people choose not to do this because they want to follow the Lord's commandments. It is a difficult commandment to follow because it can be interpreted in different ways. Also, the common usage of such exclamations as "Oh, my God!" and "Good Lord!" by people all around us—friends, family, neighbors—makes it hard not to join in. But when we determine not to use such terms, we can develop the habit of using other words when we express strong emotions.

Did you know that some of the common phrases we use instead of "Oh, my God" and other direct usage of the Lord's names come from those terms? Think of the things you say when you are upset or really amazed. Maybe you have exclaimed, "Good Grief" or "Gosh". Respectively, these are substitutes for "Good God" and "God".

See if you can complete the chart below.

Common Term	Substitute For
Jeez!	
Golly!	
Lands Sake!	
Oh My Goodness!	
Good Gracious	

It would be very hard to give up these words and phrases, wouldn't it? However, if we know they are substitutes for the Lord's name, why not give it a try? Can you think of other terms people could use when they want to exclaim about something? Examples might be "Wow!", "Imagine that!", or "Oh really!"

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The Lord is very aware of how difficult it is to give up bad habits. He knows that the things we learn as children become almost a part of us. However, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could respect and honor the Lord our God enough that we would change our habits for His sake? Try using some of the words you wrote above the next time you are excited or upset.