

Don't Lose Weight

Dr. Brent Taylor

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Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

Good morning, friends. I'm so glad to be here. I'm honored to be here. I love the people of God no matter where they are. I pastor in Carrollton, outside of Dallas, but it is good to come and be a part of what God is doing at Champion Forest.

This church is legendary for many, many reasons. I've pastored the church that I pastor for 27 years, and I know that Pastor Shook pastored that long as part of this congregation. Of course, I have been friends with David Fleming for a number of years, and Jarrett and I get in trouble on a number of occasions in a lot of different places, so we won't say much about that.

I'm grateful for Jeff. I've been friends with the Youngs for a long, long time. Our kids have grown up together. At 5:40 this morning, Emory Coffin sent me a text to let me know he was praying for me. I thought, "Well, why don't you wait till 6:00, when I get up?" But he had already started. So God bless you, buddy. I didn't think you were old enough to be old yet, but apparently you are.

It is great to be with you.

Do you remember what you were talking about on March 28, 2022? Well, probably not. Everybody was talking about the same thing that day, though. It was what happened on March 27, 2022, that turned everybody's attention.

We were watching the Academy Awards, and it wasn't because we were all interested in the Best Documentary Film. What happened that night was shocking. Actor Will Smith walked on the stage and slapped comedian Chris Rock into next week.

What happened afterward was just as telling because Will Smith returned to his seat and shouted words defending his wife's honor: "Keep my wife's name out of your mouth," plus a whole bunch of other stuff I'm not going to say right now.

It was a moment that reminded the world of something very powerful, and that is this: Names matter. Names matter.

A name represents identity, dignity, and relationship. When someone misuses a name, it feels personal. The reason it feels personal is because it's personal. A name is personal. That raw, regrettable outburst came from a very deep human instinct: "Don't you dare take lightly a name that means the most to me."

In the Bible, God has something to say about that. I want to invite you to open your Bibles to Exodus chapter

20.

I also want to invite you to do something today that is fantastic: Don't lose weight. Isn't that great news? You've been told the opposite your whole life.

We have so much pressure when it comes to that issue of weight in our culture. We've got doctors' orders. We've got societal pressure. Every time you turn on the television, there are commercials for weight-loss drugs. You have probably been told at one point in your life by a doctor that you need to lose a little weight. If your doctor is telling you that, please, please, please listen to your doctor, because your doctor cares about your physical health.

But what I want to encourage you about today is your spiritual health, and I want to encourage you not to lose weight. I want you to find the freedom that comes from not losing weight.

This year we had a celebration, and we celebrated the birthday of our nation turning 250 years old. One of the aspects of America that is great is, of course, our freedom. We've become the envy of the world because of all the freedoms we have, including the freedom to gather on a Sunday morning at 11:00 and sing about Jesus.

But freedom is ultimately given to us by the author of freedom, and that is God Himself. Jesus tells us, "He who the Son sets free is free indeed."

Today's passage takes us back not to what Jesus had to say in John, but all the way back to the Ten Commandments. Most people view the Ten Commandments as a list of rules or chains that bind us up and keep us from really finding freedom. But the Ten Commandments are filled with freedom. In fact, all of the Ten Commandments are about you having freedom in your life.

We think of freedom as the ability to do anything we want to do, but actually, having boundaries in place in our lives is what offers the most freedom. The Ten Commandments offer us a kind of freedom that we all need, and today's message teaches us about the freedom that comes from not losing weight.

We're not going to look at all the commandments today. We don't have time to do that. Instead, our focus is on one, and it is a weighty commandment. Exodus 20:7:

"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."

Do you believe the Word of God, church family?

Well, then we've got to look at that verse pretty seriously, don't we? If we believe the Word of God, and the Word of God says what that verse says, we've got to take it very seriously.

Most people will read the Ten Commandments, come to this one, and say, "Okay, I'm good on this one. I'm good on this one because I don't say those things. I don't take the Lord's name in vain."

We think we've disciplined ourselves to do that. Maybe we feel like we've gotten our tongues under

control and don't say those things we hear people say at work, that some friends say, or that we hear in movies or television entertainment.

But I want to invite everybody to hear these words with fresh ears today, to hear this commandment from God with fresh ears, because it's very weighty and very important.

The Weight of a Name

Names matter. Shakespeare said in **Romeo and Juliet**, "What's in a name?" Well, if you've ever had a baby, you know there's a lot in a name.

When you're planning to have a baby, you spend a lot of time thinking about the baby's name. What are we going to name the baby?

If you're expecting a baby, if you're in that stage of life right now, we are expecting our second grandchild. So we no longer care about our kids. We only care about grandchildren right now. Amen? Yeah, it is not overrated. It's awesome.

But if you're in that stage of life or you're about to have a baby, can I offer some name suggestions for you? The first one I would offer is Brent. I think that's a fantastic name that you should consider.

You say, "But we're having a girl."

That's fine. Taylor is an option as well.

A lot of people go to the Bible when they're looking for baby names. There are some great ones in the Bible that you might want to consider. Nabal is in the Bible. That means "fool." You probably won't have any other kids in class named Nabal.

There's also Peter, which means "rock," or Ichabod, "the glory is gone." Save that for your last child. The last one's going to be Ichabod. The glory is gone.

Joshua means "the Lord saves."

Names carry meaning, and God's name carries meaning. Scripture gives us many names for God, and each one reveals more about who He is and what He does. The meaning of God's name can be very significant in your life. It is worthy of your time, energy, and effort to study the names of God, understand their meaning, and apply them in your life.

Names carry weight, and that is never truer than it is for God Himself.

A name is not just a word. It's a witness. If I were to say the name Abraham Lincoln, that's going to provoke an image in your mind. The same is true of Albert Einstein, J.J. Watt, Vincent van Gogh, or Osama bin Laden. When you hear names, you think of something about that person.

Names are not just identification markers. They testify about us.

God demands that His name be honored and not misused in vain. That's because when we call on the name of our God, we are speaking about the reputation of God.

David said in Psalm 9:10, "Those who know Your name will trust in You."

David is saying, "People know Your name, O God, and because they know Your name, they know Your reputation. Because they know Your reputation, they know they can trust in You, because You are always faithful."

Even praising the name of God is declaring the reputation of God. We just sang about Jesus. We sang about His name and the name of God. We were singing to God, we were singing to each other, and we were singing to ourselves to remind us of the name we were lifting up.

The psalmist said, "We declare Your majesty." When we do, we are speaking of God's reputation, and He takes His reputation seriously.

A name is your moral credit score. When we were in the process of naming our three kids, we would try to think of names, and we were going through all the lists. What I would always do is suggest to my wife the names of girls I dated before I dated my wife.

That was super funny, and it also terribly hurt my credit at the Bank of Allison. She had very strong opinions about those names.

Your name is your moral credit score with people. A credit score speaks of your financial reputation. A name is a moral credit score for your personal reputation.

There are some people you know who, for various reasons, you don't trust at all. Their name reminds you that you don't trust them when you hear it. Their credit score is low in your bank.

Everybody wants to have a good name. Proverbs 22:1 says, "A good name is more desirable than great riches."

It's hard to replace your good name. I'm not talking about going to the courthouse and changing your name. I'm talking about the honor associated with your name.

When we invoke the name of God, we are speaking of His reputation. We are speaking of His honor, and we always have to be careful when we're handling the reputation of God. His name is to be handled in a very sincere and serious manner.

God's name speaks of who God is. It represents His moral credit score, which is perfection. God takes it so seriously that He puts it in His commandments.

A name also turns identity into intimacy. You can know people but not know people at all.

We feel like we know the royal family in England: Charles and Camilla, William and Kate and the kids, Harry and Meghan, and Andrew. Just reading those names provokes images in your mind and maybe some really strong opinions.

Even though we broke away 250 years ago, plenty of Americans still can't get enough of the royals. But here's the funny thing: We feel like we know them, but probably most of us in the room will never meet them.

When you actually know someone, their name carries a reputation and a relationship that you have with them.

We're known by our family names. At our house, we're the Taylors. That implies there's a relationship among all of us in our home and in our family. It gives identity. Your family has a name, and there is relationship that is part of that.

Previous generations called their relatives their "relations." We don't use that term very much anymore, but relationships imply intimacy and knowing a person.

In the name of God, His relationship is revealed to us. Remember what the angel told Joseph to name Jesus: Immanuel, "God with us." Just by letting us know His name, God is opening the door for us to walk into relationship.

The apostle Paul spoke in Athens to all the wise men:

"Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown, I'm going to proclaim to you."

God lets us know who He is. He's not unknown. He wants a relationship with us. That's why He reveals Himself to us.

His holy name is a treasure. Do you hear that? God's holy name is a treasure. It is not something that is to be dropped or forgotten.

When my kids were teenagers, they would walk around with their phones, and they would drop their phones. I'd say, "Hey, it's no big deal. It's just \$1,000 of your dad's money that you just dropped on the ground right there."

If we feel that way about a phone, how much more should we care about the name of God? How we handle the name of God is very important. It should be handled with care because it's more than just a name. It reveals His willingness to be in a personal relationship with each one of us.

The ancient Jewish scribes wouldn't even write God's name on paper, believing that His name was so holy that writing it with human hands would diminish its holiness. These were people who took the name of God seriously.

There is a weight to God's name, and we do not want to lose it. Psalm 111:9 says, "Holy and awesome is Your name."

In other words, don't lose that weight.

How God's Name Is Misused

His name is so important that God puts it in the top ten list, as we might call it. It's a commandment in the Ten Commandments.

We've seen the importance of God's name, so how do we fall into this bondage of misusing the name of God? I want us to look at the obvious answers, and I want us to look at the ones that are not so obvious.

The first obvious answer is profanity.

Let's start with a definition of profanity. It's language considered offensive because it trivializes something sacred or involves blasphemy.

Think about the root word of the word *profanity*. It's the word *profane*. In art, people talk about the sacred and the profane. The sacred is the art that points to God and to the heavens. The profane is that which is common or everyday, not holy. It is outside of the sacred space.

To profane something is to debase that which is holy. It reduces something holy down to our level. It's making God nothing more than we already are.

We usually associate profanity with curse words. When you use God's name or Jesus' name as a curse word, you're dragging Him down to a level that is much beneath Him. You are seeking to debase God through your language.

That's what we typically think of when we think of profanity, but there are softer derivatives of that rather than just using those harsh words we recognize immediately. There are softer versions of that, and I've got to be honest with you: They get into the middle of our business a little bit. All right? So just be prepared. It may get into the middle of your business a little bit.

Did you know that texting "OMG" is taking the Lord's name in vain? Texting "OMG" is something that grieves the heart of God, no matter how deeply woven into our culture it has become. Whether it is written or spoken, it is a serious violation of this commandment.

There are softer versions of all these things. Phrases like "geez" and "gosh" didn't just come up in the English language. They are examples of the same idea.

You say, "Well, that sounds really extreme."

Okay, that's fine. Each person can draw the line in the place they choose to draw the line. That's between you and the Lord.

But when you say you're going to have a "come-to-Jesus meeting" with somebody, you're using Jesus' name lightly and carelessly. While it's funny to a lot of people in our culture today, I don't know that it's funny to the Lord.

I mention it because I don't want us to be fooled. I don't want us to be blind and miss where these words originate, where these expressions come from, or how important it is to God that we use His name properly and guard God's name on our lips.

If you use God's name as an expression of frustration, anger, or surprise, we're grieving the heart of God. We're insulting His name and His character. We're tossing His holy name onto a trash heap of language.

The Bible teaches us, in a very frightening verse, that our language and our words are things for which we will be held accountable. God does not take lightly the careless use of His name.

Look again at the second half of the commandment:

"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."

If we're going to take a verse of Scripture seriously, then we've got to take a verse of Scripture seriously. The second half of that verse seems pretty serious to me.

Profanity is a serious offense against the use of the name of God.

A second way we misuse the name of God is through dishonesty. There are several ways we are dishonest or disingenuous with the name of God.

The first is just straight-up lying while invoking His name. When people lie in a court of law after they've sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help them God, that is a misuse of the name of God. Promising to be truthful and then lying is a misuse of His name. We're not being true, right, or genuine in our words.

Most of us in the room today are probably not going to have to give an oath like that to testify in court, but we can still fall into the same bondage, just not in the courtroom. We do it in the casual nature of life.

We might say, "I swear that's what happened," "Honest to God," or, "As God is my witness, I'll do such and such."

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount not to talk that way. We need to have the moral credit in who we are and in what we say without having to drag God's name into the conversation. We should not use His name frivolously to lend credibility to our commitments.

When we're asked to do something and try to invoke God's name to get out of it, that's a misuse of God's name.

We may be asked, "Would you be willing to serve in the nursery?"

We say, "Well, I feel like God told me not to do that. God wants me to do something else instead."

Those times can be sincere. They can be times when we have sought the Lord. But they can also be words spoken by somebody who's never prayed about that request, who never genuinely asked, "God, what do You want me to do?" Instead, we just blame God. We use His name to get out of something we didn't want to do in the first place.

That's a misuse. That's being dishonest.

Sometimes people will use the name of God to come at you. Sometimes people will say, "God told me to tell you." Have you ever had that?

"God wants you to do this for me. God doesn't like your choice or your decision. God has revealed something to me that I'm supposed to tell you."

I'm always cautious when I hear that. I really believe in the Holy Spirit, and I think He does well.

Anytime we invoke the name of God and seek to speak for God, we'd better be very careful and very sure that what we're saying is not dishonest. We walk a fine line of misuse when we invoke God's name while speaking to someone else.

We need to always remember that God's name is never a power play. Using it in such a way is dishonest and disingenuous. It's a violation of the commandment.

Then there is insincerity.

Sometimes we use God's name or invoke God's name to make people think we're more spiritual than we really are. Again, this is a very fine line. It cannot be delineated for somebody else. This is between you and the Lord.

But there are those times when somebody says something and we say, "Well, praise the Lord."

Do we really praise the Lord, or are we just trying to sound spiritual?

We say, "Yes, Lord," while somebody is praying, but we're not even listening. We're thinking about what we have to get at the grocery store on the way home after church.

Sometimes we want people to hear us say spiritual things, and we invoke God's name in the process. That is spiritual grandstanding. It's using the Lord's name in an improper manner. The goal becomes to bring spiritual glory to ourselves, and God just calls that vanity.

Then there is inconsistency.

Every time you and I call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ and then live the way we want to live, walk the way we want to walk, and give ourselves over to sin, we're violating the name with which we identify. Our very lives become a misuse of the name of God.

When we proclaim the name of God and then live like the devil, we're misusing His name.

Jesus said in Matthew 15, "This people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

I love what Jen Wilkin said: "We misuse the name of the Lord by speaking hallowed words while living hollow lives."

When you carry the name Christian, you are a representative. You are Christ's ambassador. That is something we must not only preach but also practice, to really be who He says we are and to bear His name.

There are more ways to violate this commandment than we'd like to admit. That's because we read it when we come to Exodus 20, which for many people is usually early February if you do the read-through-the-Bible-in-a-year plan, and we just plow right past this verse. We never think about it again because we think, "Oh, I don't say that, so I'm good on this one."

But we have to be reminded that the devil and sin are nefarious, and they sneak into our lives in ways we often don't even realize. Our culture so often sweeps us up, and what has become normal in the culture grieves the heart of God.

How to Honor God's Name

How do we honor God's name? How can we revere Him? How can we not just avoid violating the commandment, but raise up the name of Jesus in our lives?

Here are some boxes you can check that will help you.

First of all, take the commandment to heart.

A commandment that's aimed only at the tongue can be kept by watching your words. But a commandment that is aimed at the heart requires seriousness, determination, and focus.

Don't just be serious about the "do not murder" verse of Scripture. Be serious about this one.

We can grow flippant about how we use or misuse the name of God. God is focused on your heart, and He knows that what comes out of the bucket of our mouth has originated and is sourced in the well of our heart.

If we're going to honor the Lord, we need to take this command seriously. We need to take it to heart.

Second, study and claim the names of God. Claim them in your life.

Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide.

El Shaddai, the Almighty God.

Jehovah Rohi, the Lord is my shepherd.

Jehovah Rapha, the God who heals.

He is our rock and our refuge, our fortress, our shield, our King, our Judge, our Shepherd, and our Comforter. He is the beginning and the end.

Study the names of God. Seek to live out and apply the names of God in your life. When you do so, you are honoring God by claiming them in your life, over your life, and over your family. That is exactly the kind of proper use of His holy name.

Third, ask God to use you to make His name known.

Isaiah 26:8 says, "Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts."

Hosea 12:5 says, "The Lord God Almighty, the Lord is His name of renown."

Increase His renown. Make His name known.

I want to give you a way that you can make known the name of God. It's very simple, and everybody in the room can do this.

Tomorrow, when you go to work, go to school, go out into your neighborhood, or go out with friends, wherever you may be, you can say something like this: "Hey, can I tell you a story?"

Nobody is going to say, "Nope. Never been interested in stories." Nobody's going to say that.

They're going to say, "Yeah, that'd be great."

Then you can just tell a story. It doesn't have to be dramatic. It doesn't have to be over the top. But you can tell a story about how God did something in your life.

What happens is that you are making His name known just by telling a simple story about something God has done in your life. Maybe it's the way He provided for your family. Maybe it's a need He met. Maybe it was an answered prayer.

It doesn't have to be something so over the top that they'd make a movie about it. You can simply speak a good word about God to a friend.

What does the Bible tell us to do? Tell of His excellent greatness.

We tend to tell only people who already agree with us about that. We tell other church people about it. Yet you can go to someone you know who doesn't know Christ and tell of His excellent greatness. You can speak highly of the One who reigns on high.

So often, we hear people take the Lord's name in vain, and we feel like we've got to somehow step into that situation and police it by telling them that what they've done has offended us. Well, I understand that, but people who do not know Christ as Savior cannot be expected to live their lives as if they know Christ as Savior.

Correcting them oftentimes makes no difference. Instead, you can speak up and say, "Hey, you just said the name of Jesus. Can I tell you something Jesus has done in my life?"

That's a way to take a negative and make it a positive as you tell of His excellent greatness. You make His name known.

Here's the last one: Form your life to represent the name that you bear.

Our lives can take the Lord's name in vain just as easily as our lips. We want to honor the Lord, and we need to do so by representing Him well in all aspects of our lives and living out our faith every day.

If you only live out your faith on Sundays, you're following what I call American Christianity. But if you want to follow biblical Christianity, it means living out your faith every day of your life and blending it into your life, into your heart, in your home, in your church, and out in the world.

That is what we're called to do: to make His name known, not just on Sundays among our church friends, but to make His name known by showing and sharing the love of Christ with others. Doing so honors the name of our God.

"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."

If the name of his wife was that important to Will Smith, how much more important should the name of the Lord our God be to us?

May we honor the name of the Lord and not misuse it.

So don't lose weight this year. Don't lose weight. Let the heaviness and the weight of the name of our God rest upon our hearts.

May what was said of Jesus be true of us as well:

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."