

The first subject in the study of theology is the Being of God. It is probably the most difficult subject because, while God is knowable (He has revealed Himself to us), He is also incomprehensible (Rom. 11:33, "How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.") Nevertheless, God's Being is important for us to study. Why? Because everything that happens in this world flows out of the character of God (who He is and what He is like) – He has brought everything into being for His own pleasure and eternal glory – and thus to understand the world, or even who we are and our purpose here, we have to begin with God Himself.

The 3rd commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...", is about the Being of God, about how we are to take His precious name to our lips, particularly, because the name of anyone is synonymous with the person who bears that name. And so, to speak of the name of the Lord is to speak of the Lord Himself – they are one and the same – and this is not to be done lightly. Someone may say, 'OMG!', or something similar, and then try to defend himself with, "Oh, but I don't mean anything by it." Yet that is precisely what it is to take the Lord's name in vain – it is to say His name when one does not mean anything by it!

The 3rd commandment is stated negatively, but, as with all the commandments, we need to see also the positive side. Ps. 34:3, "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!" It is not that we are to refrain from using the Lord's name, but let us use that sacred name and swear by it in a way that honours Him. We are to honour Him in our words (Matt. 10:32), in our works (1 Cor. 10:31), and we are to do so from the heart (Mark 7:6).

Let us seek, then, to know the Lord and to know as much about Him as we possibly can. To fill our hearts with Him, we have to begin by filling our minds with Him. This means reading His Word, meditating upon it and letting it dwell richly within us. "Let him who glories glory in this," says the Lord, "that he understands and knows Me" (Jer. 9:23). This is what the Lord desires of us, and it is what will give us the greatest pleasure, too.

Where shall we begin our study of God in the Bible? We might start by studying the several names of God, and then also His attributes (how He distinguishes Himself from all His creatures). From there, we can go on to take in the commandments of God and all His promises. Remember, these all tell us of the character of God, and what He should mean therefore to each and every one of us.

We do not make friends with God, beloved, as if it is left to us to do so; He, rather, makes friends with us. What that means is that our knowing and loving the Lord did not begin with us, but is the direct result of His singling us out by grace and revealing His love to us in Christ. "We love Him," says 1 John 4:19, "because He first loved us." What an incentive this should be to every believer to seek to know Him better and to love Him more!