

The Golden State Scroll



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*Equipping you to
change the world . . .*

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*And the things that thou hast
heard of me among many
witnesses, the same commit
thou to faithful men, who shall
be able to teach others also.
(2 Tim. 2:2)*

From the President

Our Declaration Of Dependence

July is *Independence Month* for America. With celebrations dotting the streets and the countryside, Americans enjoy the Declaration of Independence, the blessing of being free, even if they don't begin to grasp what those delegates to the Second Continental Congress established on July 4th, 1776. As Christians, we have had the greatest of opportunities to share our faith. It deeply saddens me to look back over the 66 years of my time and realize how insular and isolated the world has made so many of us feel.

We Christians have our own document, one that is eternal in scope and sequence. It is the *Declaration of Dependence*. It is written for all eternity in Matthew 5:3–12. Yes, I am talking about the Beatitudes. When individual Christians accept the totality of dependence that Jesus asks, living for Christ becomes the “norm.” No longer is it “Wow” in the minds and hearts of others. When bodies of Christians declare their dependence upon the Lord, revival not only begins, it remains as a permanent lifestyle, a regimen, of the Christian walk.

When we accept the Declaration of Dependence, we find that we have a greater independence of mind, heart, and soul than ever before. How can that be? The answer is both consistent with the depths of philosophy and the acceptance a child has for its parents. We *accept* that which comes our way. We are not satisfied with anything, but rather, we are contented in all ways, because we know that He who loves us will neither leave us nor forsake us.

Will *you, today*, accept and begin living within your Declaration of Dependence?.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Paul Graves'.

Dr. Paul Graves

School of Life Long Learning

Dr. Ed Han

I'm passionate about Christian education. Call me "Christian Ed" if you like. I remember summer camp when I was a young adult. The president of a Bible college visited the camp, and his approach to us was very interesting. He asked, "What career choice have you made for your future?" Many kids weren't sure. Others were confident they would pursue fields in engineering, medicine, law enforcement, and business.

His next question was simple: "After completing your education, how many years of your life will you spend in that profession?" Most of us assumed 30, 40, maybe even 50 years in our chosen occupation. He then asked, "How many years do you expect to be a Christian?" The obvious answer was, "The rest their lives." His last question was, "Then should you consider starting your adult life in Christian education?"

That Bible college president posed a convincing argument. Too bad I didn't follow his counsel in my youth. It took me many more years to come to the reality of his sage advice. A career might last a few decades, but serving the Lord is forever. Yet, how seriously do we take the issue of adult Christian education? When entering into a relationship with Christ, I believe that we as believers enroll in a "School of Life Long Learning." One human lifetime is not enough to learn all there is to know about God. But isn't that one of the reasons God has given this one life to us?

"Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ." (Phil. 3:8 NLT)

I have witnessed well meaning Christians, however, who dismiss the value of faithful commitment to Bible study. "Sunday School is what I did as a kid," seems to be their attitude, which also demonstrates another attitude: "I did my time as a kid, so I don't need Bible classes anymore." With or without a degree, we don't graduate from Bible school until resurrection. I am confident that I will take and teach Bible courses for the rest of my life. In my mind, it is a matter of spiritual discipline.

Another deficiency to note is the "dummy down" approach being taken with adults. We need to teach, stretch, and grow our faith by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Given the choice, I would teach all adult Bible classes at a college level. We tend to live with such low expectations of students that we seldom give homework or expect that students will

memorize Scripture verses. You might be surprised at what level students will rise to when challenged and lead.

I have been so pleased with the recent response we have had at our church in launching a school of ministry that I told the pastor if we could get six commitments we should start a two year diploma program. Wonder of wonders! We finished our first session with 27 disciples, four times more than the "fleece" I had laid out. People are hungry for discipleship, thirsty for the knowledge of God, and longing for leadership.

In this day and age we desperately need believers to give God their best effort toward self-discipline to study, learn, and grow. If you are gifted and capable, we need you to step up and teach the Word. If you are a true follower, seek out and find Bible based courses to study. Join the "School of Life Long Learning" today!

Dr. Ed Han
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Facebook: <http://facebook.com/ed.han>

New blog: <http://idgod-realidentity.blogspot.com>

Pray, friends, why should we be afraid of new lights? For why should there be new lights found out in the firmament of the Scripture, as well as the astronomers find out new stars in heaven? Be not afraid to set open your windows for any light that God shall make known unto you.

Puritan William Bridge

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Taking God's Name in Vain

Part 1

Dr. William R. Taylor, Academic Dean

Throughout the world's cultures, man has coined phrases. The world's languages have both scribed and uttered adages and idioms. For the English communicator, such rhetoric is interrogative (i.e., "Is the pope catholic?"), declarative ("Well I'll be a monkey's uncle."), and exclamatory ("Over my dead body!").

A certain collection of expressions, loosely using the Lord's name, has also become all too familiar. These phrases are handled in the same way one would toss trash in the waste basket or change a channel with a remote control. Consider the following: "Oh my G--!", "For C-----sakes!", "O J----!", "G--no!", and the list goes on. Even abbreviations and acronyms, such as OMG, are texted between cell phones. God's name is "taken" in such a "vain" way that we have lost our reverence for not only for His name but even *Him!*

Apathy toward God's name is not only part of the American lexicon, but even that of other cultures. Recently a friend sent me a video of customers being pranked in a waterbed store in Germany. When the "victims" tried out what was simply a water-filled box with a mattress cover, they fell in this mini-pool of water. I noticed the response of a few of the German shoppers: "Oh my G--!"—in English not German! They were not only soaked and pranked, but irreverent as well.

Another example of the cross-cultural adaptation of taking God's name in vain is in the Bollywood film industry. Such Indian-made movies (many that I have seen) are spoken in the local language (i.e., Hindi, Punjab, etc.), yet the mild explicatives used by the stars are in English. When one faces shock or surprise, the words "J---- C-----!" or "Oh my G--!" are used. These actors would not dare use the names of one of their many gods as an object of an earthly oath, but God's name is universally used derogatorily.

In America, we have heard God's name taken vainly on the silver screen for years, but recently our Lord's name has been tossed about on television commercials, magazine headlines, and even the comics page (by a self-proclaimed Christian comic strip writer, in fact).

Politicians are not exempt either. Aside from misusing and misquoting Scripture on the campaign trail (I believe that in a way, this is often a


derogatory use of God's name), they simply say, "O my L---!" or, "L--- yes!" when responding to certain public audiences.

Why should one not use God's name in vain?

First, the Bible, specifically the third of the Ten Commandments, makes it clear: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain . . . (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11). Associated with such a violation is a measure of guilt and penalty. The latter portion of the verse reads, "For the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."

What does that mean? The Amplified Bible elaborates: "You shall not use or repeat the name of the Lord your God in vain [that is, lightly or frivolously, in false affirmations or profanely]; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

Yet, one must ask, "Why?" What is wrong with taking the name of God in a vain or frivolous way? Is not this a simple, harmless expression?

In part 2, we will examine several other reasons that we must guard against the misusing of our Lord's name. 

John Gill on Exodus 20:7

[Do not] make use of the name Lord or God, or any other name and epithet of the divine Being, in a light and trifling way, without any show of reverence of him, and affection to him; whereas the name of God ought never to be mentioned but in a grave and serious manner, and with an awe of the greatness of his majesty upon the mind. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan restrain this to swearing by the name of the Lord; and so the Jewish writers generally interpret it either of swearing lightly, rashly, or falsely; and to this it may very well be extended, though not limited; and so forbids, as all profane oaths; imprecations, and curses by the name of God, which the mouths of wicked men are full of, so swearing by it in matters trivial, and of no importance; for swearing even by the name of the Lord ought not to be used but in matters of moment and consequence, for the confirmation of a thing, and putting an end to strife, and where a matter cannot be determined and decided without an appeal to God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible



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The Back Page: GSST News

GSST-Philippians Update: *Golden State School of Theology-Philippines* has a new Director, Pastor Danny Ravana. Pastor Ravana is a product of GSST-P and is actively involved in various ministries. Besides being the Director of GSST-P, he also pastors Hillview Baptist Church and serves as the Administrator of Agape Home Ministries (orphanage). Pastor Ravana will be receiving his doctoral degree at the graduation exercise in September at Stockton, CA (by proxy via myself). As always, your prayer support of this GSST outreach is appreciated. (Dr. Jim Parker)

GSST New Office Space: We now have office space of our own! We have two 24 x 18 rooms, one for a classroom and meeting room, and the other for office space. In addition, in six months we will acquire another 24 x 18 room—at no extra cost! (Dr. Paul Graves)