

Telling the Truth

WARM-UP

- Tell us something unique about you that people usually point out.
- What's one habit you try to do consistently (e.g. being on time, texting or calling back)?
- Recall a time a friend broke a promise s/he made to you. How did you feel?

WORD

³³*“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all . . . ³⁷Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”*

MATTHEW 5:33,34,37

(Read also **MATTHEW 5:34-36.**)

In the Old Testament, the Law of Moses says, *If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word* (Numbers 30:2). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus redefined this by saying, *Let what you say be simply ‘Yes or No.’* We don't need to make an oath because we should just do what we say we will do. Our integrity as disciples of Jesus should be so complete that others will know that once we have said “Yes,” or “No,” our word can be trusted. The truth is, we will *give an account for every careless word we speak* (Matthew 12:36). In this lesson, we will learn to speak truthfully, keep our word, and honor God with everything we say and do.

1 Speak truthfully.

³³Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.'³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all . . ."

MATTHEW 5:33,34

In society, both past and present, we need to "swear" or make a clear promise that we mean what we say, so that we'll be taken seriously. However, Jesus said, when His disciples speak, an oath is not necessary. What we say should be the truth, and our words should be trustworthy. Because of this, others will notice we always mean what we say. According to Philippians 4:8, what are we supposed to think on? Why do you think truth is the first thing the Apostle Paul mentions?

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2 Keep your word.

"Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil." **MATTHEW 5:37**

Because our words are truthful, our actions should back them up. This should not make us paranoid of speaking or promising anything. This should also not be a justification for our doing something that might be wrong. Instead, it should help us be careful of the words we say, and rely even more on the grace of God to help us fulfill the promises we do make. What does it mean to restrain one's lips (Proverbs 10:19)?

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3 Honor God.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

PSALM 19:14

David says the laws and commandments of the Lord are *perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true* (Psalm 19:7-9). He then ends, *Let the words of my mouth and even the meditation of my heart be acceptable*, aligned to the law of God. When we reflect upon and meditate on His Word and live with integrity, we honor Him. Share a time you honored God by speaking the truth and keeping your word before others, even when it was awkward or difficult.

APPLICATION

- Are you truthful when you speak to others? What is one thing you can do starting today to consistently speak more truthfully?
- When you make a promise or agreement, are you careful to keep your word? How can you align yourself to God's standard of truthfulness in keeping your promises this week?
- How can you grow in your understanding of the importance of a lifestyle of integrity to God and to those you want to preach the gospel to? What is one thing you will do to grow this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the opportunity to honor Him with a lifestyle of integrity. Ask for the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart to be acceptable to Him.
- Ask God for the grace and favor to consistently speak the truth, and fulfill the promises you make.
- Pray that you will reflect God's standard of the truth to your family and friends. Pray that a lifestyle of integrity will open opportunities for you to speak to them about the gospel.

NOTES



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