

# DNA DISCUSSION GUIDE

## SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES 2: THE WAY OF JESUS



### THE WAY OF JESUS: OATHS

Matthew 5:33-37

#### INTRO

We live in a day where truth-telling and vow-keeping is becoming more and more rare. This shouldn't surprise us since the very first sin recorded in the Bible was spurred on through the deceitful tongue of the devil convincing Eve that God is a liar and is not to be trusted. Jesus continues in this passage to confront the deceitful hearts of his hearers.

In that day, there were no legal documents to record people's commitments made to one another. They only had their word to go by. This meant their word should have great authority. However, because people are prone to deceitfulness, they made their vows in the name of a higher authority, making themselves accountable to that authority should they fail to keep the vow. Unfortunately, over time they developed a practice of lessening the weight of their word by making the vow on someone or something of lesser significance. This practice allowed them to make a vow and wriggle themselves out of keeping it since they didn't make the vow in God's name.

Jesus confronts this thinking for what it is - deceitfulness. He tells them if they are going to do this, they should not take oaths at all. He is not forbidding taking oaths. He is forbidding the taking of an oath if you are not planning to keep it anyway. Everything we do and say, we do as people accountable to God. We don't have to say "I promise before God I will do this" to make ourselves accountable to God. We just are. Because the world and everything in it is His. So, Jesus simplifies things: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."

Some have said that the need to give weight to our promise through the addition of another authority (I promise to God I will do this) is evidence that we have already become untrustworthy. Why else would you need to add to your promise? Just say what you will or will not do and then do that. Jesus wants us to be free from any need

to say anything additional because what we say we will do. He wants to help us become truth-tellers and vow-keepers.

Thankfully, Jesus came as the very truth of God to fulfill the requirements of God on our behalf. He kept his word and fulfilled God's promise that He would send one who would die to forgive us from our deceitfulness and lies. And he rose again and presently is representing us before God the Father as one who kept his word on our behalf. He also sends the Spirit of God to dwell in our hearts to enable us to not only speak truthfully but to keep our word as well. Because of this, we are forgiven and free to let our yes be yes and our no be no.

## DISCOVER

1. Read Matthew 5:33-37 and 23:16-23 (for additional insights)
2. What can you learn about God's character in these verses?
3. How does Jesus address this deceitful practice?
4. What kind of people does God want us to be in light of Jesus' teaching?

## NURTURE

1. In what ways do you struggle to be a man or woman of your word (i.e. overcommitting yourself; saying one thing and doing another; presenting different versions of yourself to different people; etc)?
2. Why do you think you struggle to be truthful? What is the sin under the sin (i.e. I am not confident of God's acceptance of me, so I try to gain acceptance through people pleasing)?
3. How might the life, death and resurrection of Jesus enable you to be a truth-teller and vow-keeper?

## ACT

1. In what ways do you believe God's Spirit is leading you to change how and what you speak?
2. How can you help one another grow in truth-telling and vow-keeping?
3. One of the things that greatly undermines the gospel being good news to those who don't yet believe in Jesus is our lack of integrity. What steps will you take to grow in your integrity with those not yet following Jesus?