



Title: Oaths

Text: Matthew 5:31-37

CONTEXT |

The main idea of the Sermon on the Mount found in vv. 17-20. To enter the kingdom, now and for eternity, we must have a righteousness greater than the Scribes and Pharisees. This baffling assertion warranted an explanation, so in this part of the Sermon Jesus explains how the religious teachers' understanding of God's standard was incomplete. He demonstrated how they missed the spirit of the Law even though they tried to keep the letter. In this section of the sermon Jesus gives 6 examples of what it looks like to truly love God and love others. The Law says don't murder, God intends that we not be angry or even cause others to anger. The Law says don't commit adultery, God expects us to not even look at people with selfish, lustful desires—this is certainly not loving. The religious leaders taught that divorce was permissible, Jesus says we should be more concerned about our spouse, children, and the sin that divorce perpetuates than our own comfort. Then he calls us to be truthful always, not just when we promise or take an oath.

MAIN IDEA |

In a dark and deceitful world, a Christian's command to honest character is a light to reflect the Gospel.

KEY VERSE |

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

Matthew 5:37 ESV

DISCUSSION QUESTION IDEAS |

- What is the logical relationship between Jesus' teaching on oaths and divorce?
- How can we be light in the midst of a culture that is full of divorce? How can you still shine if you have been through divorce?
- What are common ways people excuse themselves from truthfulness today?
- Do you have a testimony of being trapped in a lie or breaking a habit of lying that you can share?
- Do you have a testimony about the difficulty of regaining trust after it is broken due to deceit.
- **Pray:** for God to make us deeply concerned about being truthful and honoring our word, even when it is painful to do so. Also, pray for the marriages in your HomeGroup.

EXPLANATION |

People commonly made oaths that were binding to various degrees based on whether they actually intended to keep them. The closer the object of the oath was to God, the more consequential it was if they broke it. Jesus exposes this practice as nothing more than a means of deception. God holds us accountable for all the words of our mouth and every commitment we make. Followers of Christ should not engage in this practice of making oaths to heighten expectations for truthfulness. Instead, we should always keep our word and be men and women of integrity. Jesus wants us to have a reputation as truth tellers that sets us apart as we dwell in a world of liars. This is one of the ways we shine the light of Christ.

If we do not strive for truthfulness, our default will be to go with the flow of the dishonest culture all around us. And, if we are ever dishonest people will not trust us. It is difficult to be a witness to the Truth of the gospel if people are skeptical of our claims. Let's be faithful witnesses in word and deed!