

The Gospel of Matthew

“Kingdom Righteousness”

Matthew 5:33-37

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“Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD’.

But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; and anything beyond these is of evil.”

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

Overview: Oaths & Vows

- *oath* – an invocation of God or some sacred object to undergird the truth of a statement (“swearing”)
- *vow* – solemn promise by means of an oath of an action to be performed

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

1. What did the Law teach?

- swear only by Yahweh; only for special occasions; never falsely (Deut. 6:13; Lev. 19:12)
- vows were taken voluntarily, but once undertaken they were binding (Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21-23)

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

2. What was the scribes/Pharisees practice?

- developed an elaborate system of oath-taking in which oaths were used commonly
- distinguished between oaths that were binding and oaths that were not binding based on what one swore by (Matt. 23:16-22)

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

3. What did Jesus teach?

- A. Do not use oaths in everyday speech
- avoid flippant, common or evasive oath-taking
 - not an absolute prohibition against oaths

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

3. What did Jesus teach?

B. All promises are made in relation to God

- there are no verbal “loopholes”
- all of life (including speech) is lived before God

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

3. What did Jesus teach?

C. Let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no

- truthfulness – mean what you say
- trustworthiness – do what you say

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

Application

- Are you transparently truthful in all your dealings?

“Yes, yes” & “No, no”

Application

- Avoid every form of falsehood:
 - clever deceit
 - half-truths
 - exaggeration
 - cheating
 - not keeping your word