

**THE BIG IDEA: We need to keep our word because we represent a King who keeps His.**

### The Take-Off

In recent studies, as high as 96% of Americans admitted to lying on a regular basis.

Many of these would be considered “white lies” (lies that don’t really mean that much in the whole scheme of things)

The top 3?

“I’m fine” / 92% use that

“I love this present!” / 80%

“I’m sick” / 78% (probably mostly elementary school students!!)

Some of the others were...

“Your baby’s cute”

“I’m on my way”

“I’m leaving in 5 minutes” or my personal favorite ...

“Almost there” which in text-speak means “I’m walking to my car right now”

All of us can relate to this because all of us have done it.

So when Jesus raises the bar in our passage and suggests that we live such truthful lives that we shouldn’t even need to add an oath or swear to the truth, well, that’s a high standard.

(Well, maybe not for 4% of us!)

So let’s read **Matthew 5:33-37 (NIV)** and then take a look at oaths in the time that Jesus was speaking so that we can understand the new Kingdom standard that He is calling us to.

## 1. Oath Making 101

- a. Before we can get to the heart of what Jesus is saying, we’re going to need to take a quick class called **“Oath Making 101”**
- b. We need to understand what oaths were and why Jesus is bringing them up now
- c. Irreverent oaths, broken vows, and light use of the Lord’s name were forbidden in the Mosaic law (the same law that the Pharisees tried so hard to keep)
- d. The point of an oath was believability
- e. **Numbers 30:2 (NIV)** / Vows and oaths were meant to be kept IN FULL
- f. Why was keeping that oath such a big deal? Glad you asked!
- g. **Leviticus 19:12 (NIV)** / NOT keeping the oath actually “profanes” God’s name
- h. Hebrew for “profane” means “to defile, dilute, treat as common”
- i. People of God not keeping their word would reflect badly on God and cheapen His name in their eyes
- j. That’s a problem because we represent the Father.
- k. **We need to keep our word because we represent a King who keeps His.**
- l. The Pharisees had come up with all kinds of loopholes in order to get out of oaths that they were making
- m. In our text, Jesus is busting them on it
- n. They had come up with ways to swear oaths that would be non-binding
- o. They would swear by heaven or by earth or by Jerusalem but not have to keep those oaths since they didn’t swear by Yahweh
- p. Jesus says that everything they were swearing by pointed back to God: heaven is His throne, the earth is His footstool, and Jerusalem is His city
- q. The Pharisees had taken the loopholes and technicalities so far that they believed swearing BY Jerusalem wasn’t binding but swearing TOWARD Jerusalem was
- r. Bottom line? No one knew if what they were being told was true
- s. **[VIDEO / My word is my bond]**
- t. Jesus said that their oath making and oath breaking was cheapening God’s name. Ouch.

## 2. No swearing necessary

- a. What does Jesus propose as a solution to this drift away from truthfulness?
- b. Simply to get back to what God had always intended: living lives in which there is **no swearing necessary**
- c. **Matt. 5:37 (NIV)** / Let your yes be yes and your no be no
- d. In other words, say more by saying less

- e. This kind of truthfulness is what God has always wanted and we see that in [Psalm 51:6 \(NIV\)](#)
  - Surely / there is no doubt about this
  - You desire / this is what God wants for each one of His children
  - Truth / Hebrew word is “emeth” - “faithfulness, sureness, reliability, stability” - do these words describe you? Would others use them to describe you?
  - In the inner parts / Hebrew word is “tuchah” - “the hidden part” - literally means the part of the kidney covered with fat
- f. What God knows is that when we have truth at the core of who we are, we won’t need to add anything to our words to make them more believable
- g. Instead of trying to convince people that we mean what we say, we’ll actually have a track record of meaning (and doing) what we say

## The Landing

Let’s close by asking some “under the fat” questions, okay?

1. Can I be trusted?
2. How much weight do my words carry? [Me and Sydney - “I give you my word”]
3. Do I need to add to my promises in order to make them more believable?
4. Can I deliver what I promised? [Luke 14:28 \(NIV\)](#)
5. Am I partnering with the Father of truth or the father of lies? [John 14:6; John 17:17; John 8:42-44 \(NIV\)](#)

If you’re like me, those questions will cut you to the core, and that’s exactly what God wants to do.

His word - His truth - cuts us and exposes us so that He can plant truth deep within us.

That hurts, but that, friends, is a gift. Truth under the fat - in the inner parts - leads to a life of integrity, stability, reliability, and honesty.

A life of truth in which there is no swearing necessary.

Let’s pray.