

Let's be Honest

Matthew 5: 33 - 37

33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne;

Matthew 5: 33 - 37

35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.
36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

3 OT Passages

(Lev. 19:12) “Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

(Num. 30: 1-2) Moses said to the heads of the tribes of Israel: “This is what the LORD commands: When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

3 OT Passages

(Deut. 23: 21-23) 21 If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. 22 But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. 23 Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.

Vows are between people and God

Oaths are between humans but they
invoke the name of God

Matthew 23: 16-22

16 “Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’

17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? 18 You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’

Matthew 23: 16-22

19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. 22 And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.

Jesus says, “Stop using God to manipulate people. Be honest with each other.”

How does this apply today?

- 1) “Swearing to God” to prove that you are speaking truth.

How does this apply today?

2) Using God's name in meaningless expressions.

Dallas Willard

Jesus goes right to the heart of why people swear oaths. He knew that they do it to impress others with their sincerity and reliability and thus gain acceptance of what they are saying and what they want. It is a method for getting their way. They are declaring some promise or purpose or some point of information or knowledge dear to them.

Dallas Willard

They want their hearers to accept what they say and do what they want. So they say, “By God!” or, “God knows!” to lend weight to their words and presence. It is simply a device of manipulation, designed to override the judgment and will of the ones they are focusing upon, to push them aside, rather than respecting them and leaving their decision and action strictly up to them.

Dallas Willard

The problem with “swearing” or the making of oaths—which was really a huge part of life in Jesus’ world—is not just that it involves taking the name of God in vain, or using it lightly and without love and respect for him. It does that often, no doubt, but not always. The evil of it that he addresses is that it is an inherently wrong approach to other human beings.

How does this apply today?

3) Using God to influence someone's opinion of me.

How does this apply today?

4) Using God to end a conversation.

How does this apply today?

5) Using God to “prove” that I am right.

How does this apply today?

6) Using God to excuse my doing what I want to do.

How does this apply today?

7) Using God for profit.