

Did Jesus Exaggerate?

Series: Why Did God Create Us?

What Does The Bible Say?

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26 “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:25–26 NLT)

Are we to actually hate our family?

Are we to actually carry a cross?

Did Jesus Exaggerate?

Yes and no. Jesus did not exaggerate, but he did use hyperbole.

Hyperbole — exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally, but stress a point.

How Can You Obey?

If taken literally, is the statement impossible?

3 “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye. (Matthew 7:3–5 NLT)

If taken literally, does it conflict with what Jesus says elsewhere?

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9 Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God’s law in order to hold on to your own tradition. 10 For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.’ 11 But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’ 12 In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. 13 And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others.” (Mark 7:9–13 NLT)

Does another gospel writer, in a parallel passage, understand the statement in a non-literal way?

34 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. (Matthew 10:34 NLT)

51 Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. (Luke 12:51 NLT)

Would following the advice still not help the situation?

27 “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. (Matthew 5:27–30 NLT)

When reading the Bible, how would you understand the words if a friend said them to you or if you were reading a book?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Explore:

Much of this Bible Talk was from Robert H. Stein's article on <https://deeperstudy.com/hyperbole-and-overstatement-as-tools-for-deeper/>. In this article, he proposes a number of principles by which we may identify statements of Jesus as exaggerated terminology.

Explore:

Today's Tough Questions segment comes from the book:
McLaughlin, R. (2019). Confronting christianity: 12 hard

questions for the world's largest religion. Wheaton, IL:

Crossway.

Explore:

We must see clearly to help others (vv. 3–5). The purpose of self-judgment is to prepare us to serve others. Christians are obligated to help each other grow in grace. When we do not judge ourselves, we not only hurt ourselves, but we also hurt those to whom we could minister. The Pharisees judged and criticized others to make themselves look good (Luke 18:9–14). But Christians should judge themselves so that they can help others look good. There is a difference!

Let's look at our Lord's illustration of this point. Jesus chose the symbol of the eye because this is one of the most sensitive areas of the human body. The picture of a man with a two-by-four stuck in his eye, trying to remove a speck of dust from another man's eye, is ridiculous indeed! If we do not honestly face up to

our own sins, and confess them, we blind ourselves to ourselves; and then we cannot see clearly enough to help others. The Pharisees saw the sins of other people, but they would not look at their own sins.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, p. 29). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Explore:

Every Jew understood that the Fifth Commandment (to “honor” one’s father and mother) included taking care of them as they aged. But scribal tradition offered a way to get around it, which was simply to say that one’s possessions were “Corban” (given to God). Even more, tradition made a man keep his Corban vow even if it was spoken rashly in a fit of anger, for tradition said that one’s vow to God was more important than keeping the Fifth Commandment.

This amazing twisting of God's Word by people who esteemed it as holy is especially revealing. Those who try to justify themselves by the Law end up modifying it in order to escape its authority. In the same way, those who handle God's Word without submitting to it are in the constant process of conforming it to their self-complacency.

Jesus had the Pharisees reeling, and he was not going to stop. In fact, he made his closing remarks as public as possible. The crowd was probably standing back at a respectful distance as these religious heavy-weights engaged Jesus. Now Jesus motioned them closer.

Hughes, R. K. (1989). *Mark: Jesus, servant and savior* (Vol. 1, p. 166). Westchester, IL: Crossway Books.

Explore:

5:27–30. Jesus drew the command concerning adultery directly from the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:14). Again, however,

we are led to assume that the pharisaical interpretation of adultery was the actual physical act. Jesus expanded our understanding of adultery to include a lustful attitude toward a spouse who is not one's own.

Also, as he did with murder, Jesus acknowledged the higher court of heaven (5:29–30) as the court we should be mindful of, since the thoughts of our hearts are difficult for a human court to judge.

In 5:25–26, Jesus urged the offender to settle an offense quickly at lesser cost, rather than delay and incur the judgment of higher authority. Similarly, in 5:29–30, he urged his students to pay the lesser costs that may be required to halt an adulterous heart early on, rather than allow the sin to develop fully and incur the final judgment of God. Because Jesus repeated this pattern twice, we may take from it another underlying principle: It costs less to address the root of a sin early on than to carry the weight of the

consequences of the sin fully developed as well as the weight of judgment before God. The earlier sin is dealt with, the better.

The exhortation to gouge out one's eye or cut off one's hand is hyperbole, intended to communicate the point, "Do whatever it takes to correct your heart attitude." Some people have missed the figure of speech here—hyperbole. At least one early church leader who struggled with lust thought that castration was the answer. We realize, of course, that lust originates in a person's mind. Mutilating the body will not solve the problem.

Weber, S. K. (2000). Matthew (Vol. 1, pp. 67–68). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Question 1 of 5

Why would it be important to skeptics that the Sargon Birth Legend happened before the Moses story?

Question 2 of 5

Why would Christ tell people who were following after him to hate their family? Should we hate our family?

Question 3 of 5

Why would Jesus use hyperbole?

Question 4 of 5

Why is it important for us to use the Bible to interpret itself?

Question 5 of 5

Why should we read the Bible as if a friend is talking to us?