

Pure Religion

Yes & No – James 5:12

May 20, 2018

But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation—**James 5:12**

I. THE EVIL LURKING BEHIND OATHS

- “But above all” in verse 12 likely is a concluding statement, wrapping up James’s discussion on the tongue and segueing into the conclusion of his letter.
- “Do not swear” is a clear statement. Christ-followers should be trustworthy enough to be taken at their word (2 Kings 12:15; 22:7; Prov. 6:12-19; Luke 8:15).
- James follows Jesus in forbidding rash oaths (Matt. 5:33-37).
- Our words are important. They demonstrate the foundation under the words (Matt. 12:33-37).

II. THE SAD NECESSITY OF OATHS

- Rash oaths bring condemnation. However, in a world of lies, some oaths (that call God as a witness) are necessary to affirm truth (Rom. 1:9; 9:1-2; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8).
- God himself swears by himself (Heb. 6:13-18).
- God is a God of covenants. We are people of covenants. We take vows before the Lord to affirm our dealings with God and people. We must hold to them (Ps. 15:4; 1 Cor. 7:12-13).
- Our tongues are weapons that can be used for good or evil. We are to be men and women of our word (Ps. 63:11; 1 Tim. 1:9-11; Rev. 21:8).

KNOW: We do not control anything in this world, therefore our oaths are relatively meaningless. Our “yes” should be yes and our “no” must be no. We are responsible for the statements we make, and we are bound by our covenant-making oaths.

DO: Speak honestly and be men and women of integrity.

Recommended Reading:

Basic Christianity by John R.W. Stott (LifePoint Library #230 STO)

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read James 5:12

1. What is James’s concern in this passage? Why would he be concerned about such an issue?
2. We talked about Jesus’ views on oaths and swearing. What were those views? (see Matt. 5:33-37 & Matt. 23:16-22)
3. Why is lying so evil in God’s eyes?
4. What did you think about the argument Jym made for taking “official” oaths?
5. Would it be wrong for a Christian to simply say that they will never take an oath in any situation? Why or why not?
6. How does the discussion about lying impact you? Is there a need for repentance in any area of your life? Are there ways to improve in this area of your life?