

## Sermon on the Mount part 7

### Oaths (Matthew 5:-33-37)

#### 1. Communicate without Words Game:

*Have youth get into pairs facing each other. Their assignment is to tell each other how their day went without using words (spoken or written). After letting them try for a couple minutes, bring everyone back together.*

*Ask:*

- How'd it go?
- How would life be different without words?

*Explain:*

- Words are an awesome creation of God.
- But, just like many of God's good creations, words can be misused.
  - Words can be used to make fun of people, lie, etc. (*Maybe ask: "what are other ways?"*)
- We're going to talk about one way they can be misused tonight...

#### 2. Don't Swear:

*Read Matthew 5:33-37 (while youth follow along in Bibles)...*

*Explain:*

- It seems that people in Jesus' time thought a promise made to God or in His name was serious. But, if it wasn't in God's name it wasn't binding, or as binding.
- In other words: "If I make a promise in God's name I better keep it, otherwise I don't have to."
- Basically, it seems like people were making up their own rules about when they had to follow through on a promise and when they didn't.
- But Jesus said people shouldn't swear at all!
- In verses 34-36, Jesus may be saying that even if they did swear by anything else it would still be as binding as if it was in God's name since God's the owner or in control of everything.

#### 3. Be a Person of Your Word:

- Jesus said instead of making an oath, people should say "yes, yes" or "no, no" – this may mean what James 5:12 says: "let your yes be yes and your no, no."
- Instead of making promises, we should just be honest and follow through on our word.

*Ask:*

- What do you think about people who make agreements and then don't keep them because they didn't promise or it wasn't written down in a contract?
- Why is keeping our word important?

*Share any of these answers youth didn't come up with:*

- We need to obey God.
  - Just because many people in the world don't care about being honest and following through on their word, it doesn't mean we shouldn't.
- Keeping your word is good character – Not keeping it makes you dishonest!
- And, not keeping your word is a bad Christian example for others.

*Ask: What if you make an agreement, but it will be hard to keep and mean you have to make a sacrifice?  
(In general, we should follow through on the commitments even if it means making a sacrifice.)*

#### 4. Forgiveness, Getting “Off the Hook,” Etc.:

Here are a few other important things for us to think about:

- Maybe you made a promise to God and broke it. Ask His forgiveness, but still keep it if you can.
- Maybe you made an unwise commitment or you made a commitment and something else came up. Don't just break your word. If you need to get out of a commitment for a good reason, ask the person to let you out of the commitment!
- The only exception to keeping your word might be if you have to break another law of God to keep it.
- One other major question people often have with the Bible's command not to swear is: “Does that mean we shouldn't swear in court?” Many Bible scholars feel the Bible may show that swearing in court is okay, because of biblical examples of swearing (including in the New Testament).

#### 5. Practical Example:

*Ask:* Okay, now let's get really practical. Let's say you told someone you would baby sit for them on Friday night. But then you got invited by your friends to watch a movie you really want to see – and your friend said they would buy the tickets. What should you do?

*(Make sure the answer ends up being something along these lines: Talk to the person you said you'd baby sit for and see if you can get someone else to baby sit for them. If you can't, see if your friend and you can go another time. If you can't, just baby sit even if it means missing the movie. Otherwise, you're breaking your word and making the people you said you'd baby sit for miss out on something.)*

Let's ask God to help us keep our word!!...

#### 6. Closing

One last thing to think about.

- In John 8:44, Jesus said Satan is the Father of Lies. Speaking to some religious leaders of His day, Jesus said “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (*John 8:44, NIV*)
- And, in John 14:6, it says that Jesus is the truth. It says: “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” (NIV).
- Lying is characteristic of Satan and Truth is characteristic of Jesus.
- If your life is characterized by lying, you should examine whether or not you are truly a child of God – God should more and more be at work in your life to make you like Him. If this is you, repent and ask God to forgive you and trust in Him to save you!
- As Christians, pray that God will work in you to make you more and more like Jesus and not following the example of Satan.

#### 7. Closing Prayer:

*References:*

D. A. Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 8, Frank E. Gaebeline, ed. (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1984), 154.

John RW Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), 99-102.