

The Law of God and Your Word

Chapter 14

Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 14



Objective: To understand Jesus' teaching about oaths and truthfulness. (Text: Matthew 5:33-42)



“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”

—Matthew 5:37

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

—Matthew 5:38-39

The religious leaders in Jesus' day had an elaborate system in which some oaths were binding and others were not. It was an absurd, complicated system that did not honor God's command not to bear false witness. Jesus insisted that His disciples be people of the Word and people who keep their word.

The religious leaders were also teaching an Old Testament law in the wrong spirit. “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” was not intended to be a harsh demand for justice but rather a limit to the vengeance an offended person could take. Jesus taught instead that we should not resist an evil person by fighting back. He went beyond justice to the spirit of the Law, which is always mercy.



1. True or false? Jesus was teaching that honesty and integrity were extremely important to Him.
2. True or false? Jesus expected His disciples never to make any commitment at all, in case they weren't able to keep it.
3. True or false? The teaching of the scribes and Pharisees regarding oaths was taken from the Old Testament, but Jesus disagreed with it.
4. True or false? There is no prohibition in the Bible against misleading people by telling only part of the truth.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How would you feel if someone promised you something and then never fulfilled his promise because he didn't really mean it?
 - a. It would not bother me; people do that all the time.
 - b. It would bother me, but I understand. I do the same thing.
 - c. It would bother me because it is dishonest.
 - d. It would bother me because I knew they would do that.
6. Which of the following captures the essence of Jesus' teaching about truthfulness?
 - a. We should be truthful in all that we say and not intentionally mislead someone.
 - b. It is fine with God if we are able to tell the truth and still mislead someone, as long as we have not lied.
 - c. It is acceptable to keep silent and not correct someone's false perception if that keeps us out of trouble.
 - d. We should always say exactly what we think, even if it hurts someone and no one asked our opinion.
7. How does Jesus' teaching apply to people who live in a competitive world?
 - a. It tells us to be just as competitive.
 - b. It tells us to be different by being peacemakers.
 - c. It tells us to seek justice and make everything perfectly fair.
 - d. It tells us to always let evil people have their way.
8. How do you think people would respond to disciples who take this teaching literally? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. They would be amazed, maybe even converted.
 - b. They would laugh.
 - c. They would think we are not very smart.
 - d. They would take advantage of our generosity.
 - e. They would admire us, but think we are impractical.



How does your culture approach dishonesty and vengeance? Are they socially acceptable? If you lived out Jesus' teaching about integrity and mercy, how would it impact the people around you?



Thank God that He is always true to His Word and that He shows us His mercy. Ask Him to help you always be true to your word and to show mercy to others.



Going Deeper

1. In what ways was Jesus' approach to the scripture different from that of the Pharisees? _____

2. How can we be telling the truth while still breaking the commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."? _____

3. In what ways is the Lord asking His disciples to deny their basic instincts and be different from the people of the world? _____

4. Define the word "integrity." _____

5. What excuses does your culture give for lack of truthfulness or integrity in politics? In business? In everyday living? _____

6. If a person in your culture had total honesty and integrity in business, politics, teaching, or the church, what would people say or think about him/her? Would he be more or less popular and influential? _____

7. What is Jesus' position on oaths? _____
