

# The Gospel of Matthew

**Title:** Personal Relationships - Part 4 Credibility of Truth

**Text:** Matthew 5:33-27

**Introduction:** In these personal relationships we see what our Lord is getting too is a matter of the heart. Don't be a murderer. Don't be an adulterer. Take matters of marriage seriously. And now be a man of truth in all that you do and speak. Credibility among men to be truthful is a bit tough to find. Satan is the prince of the world, and the father of lies (John 8:44). Psalms 58:3 *"The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth."* In Psalms 62:4a *"They delight in falsehood."* The weeping prophet Jeremiah laments over Israel, cf. Jeremiah 9:3-5. Truth is so scarce today, it's infected the church as many churches have altered biblical truth to reflect what the culture views as truth. Theories like CRT/I, woke position, biblical standards lowered to be hip and cool.

**Illustration:** If you have ever been to a timeshare presentation, the truth about the cost is hardly ever presented, or any other miracle product.

**Application:** We tend to shade the truth in our lives. We may not be truthful on applications, documents or employment history. In fact, we may exaggerate those to seem more impressive. We have laws called perjury in our legal system. You are suppose to tell the truth "so help you God." You are making an oath by God to be truthful. Postmodernism is *"a philosophy that says absolute truth does not exist."* It was Daniel Webster who said, *"There's nothing more powerful as truth, and often nothing as strange."* The Pharisees were believers in this in principal but not in practice.

## Point 1 - Don't Make False Vows

The real problem was making false vows knowing you had no intention of keeping them. The standard was high in Leviticus 19:12 *"You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord."* Numbers 30:2 *"If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."* Deuteronomy 23:21 *"When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you."* Many prosperity teachers have used the paying of vows text to trick people into giving money. An oath was generally taken to be absolutely true. God provided the taking of oaths by His Name, not because His word isn't good enough but an emphasis on His word.

God provided for making oaths by His name, Genesis 14:22-24 *"Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, I have made Abram rich. I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."* Abraham also made his servant

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Eliezer “swear by the Lord” that he would not take a wife for Isaac from among the pagan Canaanites. David and Jonathan did likewise when they covenanted together. All of these men and others, made oaths calling on God as witnesses to their faithfulness and sincerity. In Genesis 22:16 God swears by Himself, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son.” God doesn’t need a witness to affirm what He says, His word alone is true. But He affirms His word by an oath.

In the NT Jesus uses the words “truly” and “truly, truly”. What this does is emphasize a point. It expresses the importance of a matter. The words of Jesus are true without the expression, but the emphasis is bringing the matter to a greater light. No oath, no matter how strongly it is used, is only as reliable as the one who makes it. Cf. Matthew 26:69-74 (Peter’s swearing was not cursing, it was an oath with special emphasis). The English translates “curse” and “swear” but curse translated means a “calling down” and “swear” is an oath. In Leviticus 5:4-6 a man who made an oath and didn’t keep it or made one carelessly would be required to bring a guilt offering to the Lord.

## Point 2 - The Perversion Of These Principals

There was to be a proper circumstance for making an oath. Virtually making an oath for any circumstance was “ok” as long as it was kept. Oaths had been reduced to frivolous promises that no one took serious. EXAMPLE: Some of you say about someone you know, “You can’t believe a word he says.” Why? Because people make promises they can’t keep or they lie and aren’t serious about what they say. It had become so frivolous people were swearing by the hairs of their head, the temple and any other thing they could to make it seem serious.

As long as they didn’t swear by God’s name, it was assumed okay to break or not keep that oath. It was a technical way out of the promise. Instead of having to keep the promise, it was a way out. In other words, their standard for truth replaced God’s standard for truth. This is the postmodernism of our day. A truth isn’t absolute, and whatever one deems to be true, then that’s the truth. Sadly, many churches have embraced this in order to be accepted by the world.

## Point 3 - Divine Truth

In John 17:16-17 truth is clearly defined, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” I have said this before, it’s not that your word IS true, but your word IS truth. If it’s true, then there’s a standard for which it is accessing, but if it IS truth, then it becomes the standard. God is truth. His word is truth.

Oaths were to be used on important occasions. And they were only to be used in the name of the Lord. The law had been liberalized and became a joke. As folks would make oaths by anything they deemed important, but not the Lord. In reality the swearing of oaths by other things was an

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attack on truth, because it showed you were less likely to keep it. The fact is God made all those things they were making oaths by. Jesus said in the text let your words be yes or no. In other words, be truthful to what you say. Make every intention to honor what you promise.

Christians should not have a reputation of being dishonest. Unfortunately the prosperity false teachers have created a stigma among the unbelieving world. But a believers word should be true. God has never had a standard below absolute truth. Psalms 5:6 “**You destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.**” Proverbs 6:16-19 describe things the Lord hates, “**here are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.**” Proverbs 12:22a “**Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.**” Psalms 58:3-4 “**The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth. They have venom like the venom of a serpent; Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear.**”

Whatever you say should be either yes or no. Don't try to make an oath to prove or to find an out to what you promised. This particular verse has been translated into English texts a few different ways, and that is based upon the opinion of those translating for clarity. But I want to address that so we see the original context and meaning.

The KJV reads “**But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay**” the ESV reads “**Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'**”, the NASB reads, “**But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'**” and the NKJV reads “**But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'**”. None of those are wrong in translations, but the NKJV leaves out the word “logos” which is in the Greek, but one can get the point even without it. The word “logos” is the basic meaning for “word.” Why is that even important? Because the whole point in this passage is around what one says related to truth. If you're not truthful in what you say, then your words are thrown in with untrustworthy people who cannot keep what they say. And if you profess to be a believer, then that reflects on God. In other words, you don't think much of God if you don't bother to be truthful and honest.

In short, let what you say be yes or no. Don't wade in the water, just jump in or get out. Let's speak the truth. Let's be truthful to a world about the gospel, holiness, God, righteousness and truth itself. Don't water down the truth by being one who can't speak or hold to the truth.