



Above All! (James 5:12)

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☑ *“But **above all**, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.” James 5:12 NKJV*

☑ Above all!

☑ Critical Questions!

☑ Why is this such an IMPORTANT teaching?

☑ Why does James complete this area of his letter by referring to his Brother’s teaching in the Sermon on the Mount?

☑ Why does he say, “above all?”

☑ We just learned about the dangers of making riches and wealth an idol. We are again reminded how God

hates complaining. And then James reiterated the significance of patience and perseverance, even invoking the story of Job as an example, possibly the most patient man in history.

- ☑ But, then he exclaims...more than all these, your word is everything. Why?
- ☑ **Because... hypocrisy negates everything that comes before it!**
- ☑ ...“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, **which is hypocrisy.**” Luke 12:1 NKJV
- ☑ “...—but to **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**” Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**” Matthew 16:11-12 NKJV
- ☑ Samples of that “doctrine” (Read all of Matthew 23)
- ☑ **They say and do not do...**
- ☑ “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore **whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do,** but do not do according to their works; **for they say, and do not do.**” Matthew 23:1-3 NKJV

- When you are being taught the Torah, no matter who is teaching, you can trust it is the right thing to do. However, if the one teaching is just giving it lip service, meaning they are not following it themselves, do obey the Torah, but don't ever emulate that type of teacher.
- "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; **but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.**" Matthew 23:4 NKJV
- "My little children, **let us not love in word or in tongue**, but in deed and in truth." I John 3:18 NKJV
- They don't even have the kingdom themselves...**
 - ""But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **shut up the kingdom of heaven against men**; for you **neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.**" Matthew 23:13 NKJV
 - The Kingdom: Christ in you; the fullness of God manifesting in man! Hypocritical teaching prevents Christlikeness!
- They evangelize and turn their targets into worse version of themselves....**

- ☑ ““Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea **to win one proselyte**, and when he is won, you make him **twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.**” Matthew 23:15 NKJV
- ☑ The win converts into their perverted doctrines and their disciples eventually become even worse hypocrites!
- ☑ **Context on swearing... (in Mat. 23)**
- ☑ Do you really think you can swear on things and not keep your word because you are not “swearing on the Lord”?
- ☑ ““Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘**Whoever swears by the temple**, it is nothing; but whoever **swears by the gold** of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.’ Fools and blind! For **which is greater**, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, ‘Whoever **swears by the altar**, it is nothing; but whoever **swears by the gift** that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.’ Fools and blind! For **which is greater**, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. **And he who swears by**

heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.” Matthew 23:16-22 NKJV

☑ Fool! Everything is the Lord’s and anything you commit to is AS IF you are committing it to the Lord. I love how Paul makes that same point!

☑ “And **whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord** and not to men,” Colossians 3:23 NKJV

☑ **Final nail in the coffin!**

☑ In the end, Y’shua accuses the hypocrites of being guilty of murdering the “prophets”, the very legacy from which they claim their pedigree!

☑ ““Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that **you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.**”
Matthew 23:31 NKJV

☑ Then he bangs in that final nail! “Hypocrite, your house is left to you desolate!

☑ ““O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **the one who kills the prophets** and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! **See! Your house is left to you desolate;** for I say to you, **you shall see Me no more till you**

say, **'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!** [from Ps. 118:26]' "" Matthew 23:37-39 NKJV

- ☑ Note: these hypocrites MISSED the fulfillment of this prophecy (how ironic) when Y'shua rode into Jerusalem on what seems to be a day earlier in Matthew 21.
- ☑ "Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! **'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**' Hosanna in the highest!""
Matthew 21:9 NKJV
- ☑ After they missed it, Y'shua, in "stir the pot fashion," proceeds to begin his "separation ministry!" He instigates and teaches in a way that EXPOSES and SEPARATES religion from relationship! (Read Matthew 21-22)
- ☑ He cleanses the Temple: Matthew 21:12-17
- ☑ He withers the fig tree (no fruit): Matthew 21:18-22
- ☑ He provokes them when they ask for His credentials: Matthew 21:23-27
- ☑ The Parable of Two Son (the one who obeys his father's will): Matthew 21:28-32

- ☑ The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (they hijack the landowners fruit and kill his servants): Matthew 21:33-46
- ☑ The Parable of the Wedding Feast (how original invitees don't show up to the wedding and others show up unprepared): Matthew 22:1-14
- ☑ Y'shua is challenged about taxes (he calls them hypocrites!): Matthew 22:15-22
- ☑ Etc...
- ☑ **Let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No!"**
- ☑ What is this all about! Introduction to a teaching called [Vows and Vanity](#) (05/21/21)
- ☑ *It's always something. Week after week, as we dive deeper into the Word of God, we get a glimpse of how far we've strayed from the truth. It's not difficult to completely change the meaning of Y'shua's teachings by strategically leaving out a few words here and there. You think I'm exaggerating? I challenge you; look up Matthew 5:33-34 in any English translation of the Bible and tell me if you don't conclude that you are no longer to swear an oath to God!*
- ☑ Take a look: "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, '**You shall not swear falsely**, but shall

*perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, **do not swear at all...**” Now, notice a completely different message when we add back the original language: “Again you have heard what was said to those of long ago: You shall not swear **by my name** falsely, but you shall return to the Lord your oath. But I say to you not to swear **in vain** in any matter...”*

- Do you see it? Y’shua never instructed us to NO LONGER take oaths to God, but rather to end your futile thinking that you can leave Yahweh’s name out of your promises. That is what Y’shua called “swearing in vain!” Leave out the phrases “by my name” and “in vain” and you have an utterly different message.*
- “You have heard that it was said...” and then Y’shua quotes Leviticus 19:12; “And you shall not **swear by My name falsely**, nor shall you **profane the name** of your God: I am Yahweh.” And the vanity reference was to bring you right back to the third commandment in Exodus 20:7: “You shall not take the name of Yahweh your **God in vain**, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” I’ll let you in on a little secret. Vanity is not a reference to curse words, but rather the devastating practice of forgetting His name,*

*or in other words, leaving His name out of your life!
That is why you are warned to never exclude His name
from an oath!*

- ☑ *It makes more sense now, doesn't it? You see, what they were doing back then is swearing on all sorts of things, while they crossed their fingers behind their backs. No big deal, as long as you leave out God's name. That's how far they had fallen. And we, as the church, just shot all the way to the other end of the deception spectrum. We simply stopped making oaths altogether!*
- ☑ *So, let's make it simple. Just do what you say you will do, as if your entire life is dedicated to Yahweh. I like to say it like this... "Freedom is when you have no other options!" Think about it the next time you make a promise!*

☑ **Excerpt from [Vows and Vanity](#)**

VANITY

1. Forgetting Yahweh's Name

A. Swearing Oaths

(1) Y'shua Forbids Oaths????

- (a) ""Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, **'You shall not swear falsely,** but shall perform your

oaths to the Lord.' **But I say to you, do not swear at all:**
neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the
earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is
the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your
head, because you cannot make one hair white or
black. **But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'**
For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."
Matthew 5:33-37 NKJV

(2) Shem Tob's Hebrew Gospel of Matthew

(a) **Shem Tob's Hebrew Gospel of Matthew** is the oldest surviving [Hebrew](#) version of the [Gospel of Matthew](#). It was included in the 14th-century work *Eben Boḥan* (*The Touchstone*) by the Spanish Jewish Rabbi [Shem-Tov ben Isaac ben Shaprut](#). [George Howard](#)[1] has argued that Shem Tov's Matthew comes from a much earlier Hebrew text that was later translated into Greek and other languages.

1. You may or may not wish to consider this credible, but the one thing that makes this very real to me is that in it, Y'shua's words demonstrate a significantly more accurate reference to the Old Testament verses He is quoting, than do the Greek translations!

B. The issue was not the "swearing"; but the "vanity"!

³³ Again you have heard what was said to those of long ago: You shall not swear by my name falsely, but you shall return to the Lord your oath.
³⁴ But I say to you not to swear in vain in any matter, neither by heaven because it is the throne of God,
³⁵ nor by earth because it is the footstool of his feet, nor by (Jerusalem) because it is the city of God,
³⁶ nor by your head for you are not able to make one hair white or black.
³⁷ But let your words be yes yes or no no. Everything in addition to this is evil.

(1) Almost all English Translations say this...

(a) ““Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, **‘You shall not swear falsely** [*instead of “by my name falsely”*], but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, **do not swear at all** [*instead of “do not swear in vain”*]: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne;”

Matthew 5:33-34 NKJV

1. Not on heaven
2. Not on earth
3. Not on Jerusalem
4. Not on your own head
5. **But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’** For whatever is **more than these is from the evil one.**”

Matthew 5:37 NKJV

* This is what James, the brother of Y’shua is referring to in James 5:12!

(2) But I say to you NOT TO SWEAR IN VAIN in any matter...

(a) “Again you have heard what was said to those of long ago: You shall not swear **by my name** falsely, but you shall return to the Lord your oath. But I say to you not to swear **in vain** in any matter, neither by heaven because it is the throne of God...” Matthew 5:33-34

1. Not on heaven

2. Not on earth

3. Not on Jerusalem

4. Not on your own head

5. But let your word be yes yes or no no. Everything in addition to this is evil. Matthew 5:37

(3) The precedent was well established...

(a) “**You shall** fear Yahweh your God and serve Him, and shall **take oaths in His name.**” Deuteronomy 6:13 NKJV

(4) Quoting Jesus quoting Torah! *(This is what Y’shua was referring to in Matthew 5:33-34. Notice the emphasis on Yahweh’s name and vanity!)*

(a) ““You shall not **take the name of the LORD [Yahweh] your God in vain,** for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7 NKJV (Also Deuteronomy 5:11)

- (b) “And **you shall not swear by My name falsely**, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.”
Leviticus 19:12 NKJV
- (5) Taking His Name in Vain! (What does it really mean?)
- (a) “For they speak against You wickedly; **Your enemies take Your name in vain.**” Psalms 139:20 NKJV
1. What exactly is taking the name of Yahweh in vain?
- (6) **Forgetting the Name of Yahweh!** The **outcome** when you insist on following the dictates of your own heart... [see teaching: [Mindful of the Prophets](#)]
- (a) ““I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ **How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name** by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, **as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.**” Jeremiah 23:25-27 NKJV
1. **Note:** Baal means “the lord”. When you always ONLY refer to Yahweh or Y’shua as “Lord” or even other titles like “God”, and never acknowledge their names...well, if you do that long enough, over enough generations, you just might forget they have

names. Many people love “the lord” and love “god”!
But who is their Lord and God?

2. “And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Ēʾnosh. Then men began to call on **the name of the LORD [Yahweh]**.” Genesis 4:26 NKJV
3. ““You shall not **take the name of the LORD [Yahweh] your God in vain [Strong’s 7723]**, for **the LORD** will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7 NKJV
 - a) **Note:** [Strong's Hebrew 7723: 1) emptiness, vanity, falsehood 1a) emptiness, nothingness, vanity 1b) emptiness of speech, lying 1c) worthlessness (of conduct)]
4. “**I am the LORD [Yahweh], that is My name;** And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.” Isaiah 42:8 NKJV
 - a) “For “**whoever calls on the name of the LORD [Yahweh]** shall be saved.”” Romans 10:13 NKJV (from Joel 2:32)
 - b) **Note:** over 6800 times, the name of Yahweh was removed from your bible and replaced with the all caps word LORD. Why? Could this cause you to forget His Name?

(7) Yes, let your yes be yes and your no be no, all else is evil!

(a) But **above all**, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.” James 5:12 NKJV

1. ““You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Exodus 20:16 NKJV

(8) Which is exactly what Paul did to Stephen!

(a) Again, see content above and read ACTS 6-8!

C. The issue was never the swearing of oaths; it was hypocrisy!

(1) The issues is hypocrisy not Moses (Follow Moses, just don’t follow them!) Again we refer back to Matthew 23:1-5...

(a) ...“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore **whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do...**

(2) If you don’t believe Moses...

(a) “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. **For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” John 5:45-47 NKJV

D. Let your yes be yes and your no be no; or keep your mouth shut!

(1) Better not to vow than to vow and not pay

(a) **“Do not be rash with your mouth,** And let not your heart **utter anything hastily** before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes through much activity, And **a fool’s voice is known by his many words. When you make a vow to God,** do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed— **Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth** cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that **it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse** and destroy the work of your hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words **there is also vanity.** But fear God.” Ecclesiastes 5:2-7
NKJV

(b) Note: See [A Relaxed Voice](#)

1. Joshua and the Israelites got themselves into a bad deal by making an oath they should never have made with the Hivites of Gibeon in Joshua 9. They were compelled to “keep their oath” because God hates broken promises!

2. *“Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, **“We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.”**”*

Joshua 9:19-20 NKJV

(2) Because...in many words there is also vanity!

(a) “Again you have heard what was said to those of long ago: You shall not swear **by my name** falsely, but you shall return to the Lord your oath. But I say to you not to swear **in vain** in any matter, neither by heaven because it is the throne of God...” Matthew 5:33-34

(b) Do you see it now? *“But **above all**, my brethren, do not swear...But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.”* James 5:12 NKJV

NEXT TEACHING

Effective Fervent Prayer (James 5:13-20)