

**I. Introduction.**

- A. What is the most widespread and destructive moral problem of our day? Jer. 9:3
- B. Truth is a significant kingdom issue.
1. God is by nature true and promotes the truth. Titus 1:2 John 14:6
  2. He speaks infallibly in His Word. II Tim. 3:16-17 Heb. 1:1f
  3. Satan is a liar who promotes error. Jn. 8:44 II Co. 11:3 Gen. 3:1f
  4. Your integrity demonstrates whose nature you share, and whose side you are on.
    - a. Liars align themselves with Satan and against God. Rom. 1:25 3:13
    - b. We who have been brought forth by the word of truth should reflect God’s truth in our dealings with others. 1:18,21

**II. Don’t manipulate the truth with deceitful oaths. v. 12a**

- A. When James says not to swear, he is not primarily addressing profanity (cussing).
1. Other passages do forbid filthy speech. Eph. 4:29 5:4
  2. Many blasphemously misuse God’s holy Name. 2:7 Ex. 20:7
- B. What does it mean to swear an oath or to make a vow?
1. An oath is a solemn promise (vow) or sworn testimony. Dt. 21:21-23 Neh. 10:29
  2. An oath invokes God as witness. Ruth 1:17 3:13
  3. The one making the oath puts himself under a curse if the statement is not true. Ge. 15:17ff 1 Sa. 14:44
  4. The purpose is to enhance the credibility of what is vowed or testified. Heb. 6:16 Ex. 22:10-11
- C. Is James forbidding all oaths? Jer. 12:16
1. Some Christians say that we should refuse to swear an oath or take a vow under any circumstances (court, marriage, etc.).
  2. God commanded that the Israelites swear their oaths by His Name. Dt. 6:13 10:20
  3. God Himself swears, putting Himself under oath/obligation. Gen. 22:16-18 Heb. 6:16 Ps. 110:4 132:11 Luke 1:73 Acts 2:30
  4. Jesus allowed Himself to be put under oath. Mt. 26:63-64
  5. Paul frequently calls upon God as his witness. Ro. 1:9 1 Th. 2:5,10 Acts 18:18 21:23-24 2 Cor. 1:23 Gal. 1:20 Phil. 1:8
  6. When might it be appropriate for a Christian to put himself under oath or to make a vow? Ruth 3:13
- D. Which oaths and vows are forbidden by Scripture? Mt. 5:33-36 23:16-22 Dt. 23:21f
1. Broken vows and false testimony. Lev. 19:12 Ecc. 5:4-5 Num. 30:2 Mt. 26:72
  2. Jesus condemns the Jewish practice of manipulating truth by claiming that certain vows don’t count due to technicalities. Mt. 23:16-22
  3. Swearing about frivolous things (taking the Lord’s Name in vain). Ex. 20:7
  4. Proud, rash and foolish oaths. Dt. 23:22 Judges 11:30-31 Mt. 14:6ff Pr. 20:25 1 Sa. 14:24 Josh. 9:16ff Lev. 5:4-6
  5. Is it sometimes better to break a foolish vow? 1 Sam. 25:21ff
- E. People who make lots of oaths and vows typically have a credibility problem.

### III. Make oaths unnecessary by always speaking the truth plainly. v. 12b

#### A. Why do people lie?

1. People lie to protect themselves from the consequences of their sin.
2. People lie to make people think more highly of them.
3. People lie to get something from others.
4. People lie to help a friend.
5. People lie to harm an enemy. Dt. 19:16-21 I Ki. 21:13 Pr. 25:18 Ex. 23:1 Mt 26:60
6. People selfishly break oaths, vows, and promises. Ps. 15:4
7. Lying is a heart issue. Ultimately people lie because they do not fear God.  
Mk. 7:21f Mt. 12:34-37 Num. 32:23

#### B. Lying can be very subtle -- manipulation, misleading, exaggeration, flattery, false teaching, white lies(?). Mt. 23:16-22 5:33-37 Pr. 26:28 29:5 Ps. 12:3 Js. 3:1f 2 Ti. 4:3-4

#### C. Don't be careless with truth -- claiming to know when you can't be sure, accusations without proof, gossip, careless teaching, gullibility. Pr. 16:38 11:13 14:15 Js. 3:1f

#### D. Liars will be judged. v. 12c Pr. 19:5 Mal. 3:5 Zech. 5:3-4 Rev. 21:8

1. You will destroy your own reputation. Pr. 12:13
2. You will harden your own heart. Heb. 3:15 Rom. 1:28
3. You will hurt the people you deceived. Pr. 26:28
4. You will destroy relationships. Eph. 4:25
5. Your lies may tempt others to lie. Pr. 29:12 Luke 17:2
6. Your lies will be punished. Pr. 12:22 15:3 Nu. 32:23 Acts 5:1ff Rev. 21:8 22:15

#### E. Tell the truth. Eph. 4:25

#### F. Keep your commitments, even if it hurts. Ps. 15:4 Pr. 3:28 Josh. 9:1ff

1. Integrity stands out.
2. Be careful what you promise. Mt. 5:33-36 Judges 11:30-31 Dt. 23:22
3. Is it ever possible to be released from a commitment? Pr. 6:3-5
4. You may be providentially hindered from keeping a commitment. Js. 4:13-17

#### G. Integrity takes faith! Pr. 21:6 19:6 Pr. 12:13 29:25 Ps. 51:6 15:2 24:4 Mt. 12:34

### IV. Concluding Applications.

#### A. All of us are born liars.

#### B. Jesus is the Truth Who makes a way for us to come to God and be transformed.

Isa. 53:9 1 Pe. 2:22 Jn. 8:31-32 14:6 Zech. 8:3,16 I Jo. 1:9 Ps. 32:1-5 Col. 3:9-10

#### C. Proclaim the truth of God in Christ. II Tim. 4:1f John 8:32

### Discussion questions

1. Why is truth such an important kingdom issue?
2. What is the biblical meaning of an oath or a vow?
3. What kinds of oaths do Jesus and James forbid?
4. When might it be appropriate for a believer to make an oath?
5. Why do people lie?
6. What are subtle ways in which people are careless with the truth?
7. What should you do if you make a promise you regret?
8. Do you have any commitments you need to keep?
9. Why does integrity require faith?
10. How does this passage point to Christ?