

# Honesty is Still the Best Policy

## Matthew 5:33-37

**“<sup>33</sup>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.’ <sup>34</sup>‘But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup>‘nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>‘Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>‘But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”**

- A simple definition of **Honesty** is – not disposed to cheat or defraud; not deceptive or fraudulent.
- 1. **Honesty** means we are free from guile – our word is our bond.
- 2. **Honesty** means that you say what you mean and you mean what you say.
- 3. **Honesty** – telling the truth under all conditions.
  - a. Your word is worthy of being depended upon.
- 4. **Honesty** – speaking without pretensions – your word is trustworthy, reliable and true

Someone has said, "In our society the plain truth often puts one at a distinct disadvantage."

### I. The **Scripture’s Intention** of Honesty. **Verse 33.**

**“<sup>33</sup>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.”**

- Moses frequently emphasized the evil of false swearing and the duty of keeping oaths. Here are a few examples:

**Exodus 20:7** one of the Ten Commandments, **“<sup>7</sup>You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.”**

**Leviticus 19:12** says, **“<sup>12</sup>And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.”**

**Numbers 30:2** **“<sup>2</sup>‘If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”**

**Deuteronomy 23:21** **“<sup>21</sup>‘When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.”**

**Genesis 22:16-18**, **“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*—<sup>17</sup>‘blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup>‘In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”**

The writer of Hebrews says of this event in **Hebrews 6:13-14**, “<sup>13</sup>For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, <sup>14</sup>saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

Then in verses 17-18 it says, <sup>17</sup>Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise **the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath**, <sup>18</sup>that by two immutable things, in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.”

Deuteronomy 6:13 says, “<sup>13</sup>You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.”

## **II. The Scribe's Interpretation of Honesty. **Verses 34-36****

“But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup>“nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>“Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.”

## **III. Our Savior's Instruction of Honesty **Verse 37**.**

“<sup>37</sup>But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

Jesus said in **Matthew 12:36**, “for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment.”

- Of every person He desires “**truth in the innermost being**” according to **Psalms 51:6**.
  1. Among the things He especially hates is “**a lying tongue**” according to **Proverbs 6:16**.

**Proverbs 12:22** says, “<sup>22</sup>Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal truthfully *are* His delight.”

- Just as God hates lying, so do those who are faithful to Him according to the writer of **Psalms 119:163** which says, “I hate and abhor lying, *But* I love Your law.”

**Revelation 21:8** tells us the destiny of liars is the lake of fire.

“<sup>8</sup>But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”