

HFG Questions for “Radical Truthfulness” (Matthew 5:33-37)

Read Matthew 5:33-37, and remember that the context is one of Jesus exposing hypocrisy in the lives of those who thought they were following all the rules for pleasing God.

1. Truth matters to God. Read Psalm 15:1-5, and write out every phrase that deals in some way with truthfulness.

2. How had the scribes and Pharisees, and the teachings of the Jewish commentary called the Mishnah, succeeded in LOWERING God's standard of absolute truth? How were oaths and vows viewed in Jesus' day (see also Mat. 23:16-22)?

3. Read Leviticus 19:12. What importance did God place on the use of His Name in a vow? What importance did God place on the keeping of vows, whether or not they were specifically made using His Name (Num. 30:2; Eccl. 5:4-5)?

4. As Jesus commented on this issue, did He forbid every kind of oath or appeal to God to validate the truthfulness of one's words (see Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 1:20; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10)?

5. Does God Himself ever take oaths (Heb. 6:13-14, 17; Luke 1:73; Acts 2:30; Psalm 132:11; 95:11)?

6. What is God's view of lying (Num. 23:19; Psa. 51:6a; Prov. 6:16-19; 12:22; Zech. 8:16-17; Rev. 21:8; 21:27; 22:15)?

7. So, with all of that in mind, is it permissible for a believer to speak marriage vows, or to swear in a court of law to speak the truth?

8. In everyday life, should a believer need to attach oaths to his words in order to be believed? Why not? What SHOULD characterize his everyday speech? What does it mean to say, "Our word should be our bond"?

9. What are some ways that we can slip into falsehoods without even meaning to?

10. Is there an area of your life where you have played fast and loose with the truth? Is there a habit of falsehood (like exaggeration) which you need to purge out of your speech?
