

## 7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

**Lesson Plan:** Oaths (Matthew 5:33-37)

**Learning Goals:** Students will examine Jesus' teaching on oath-taking and apply that to the importance of truthfulness in everyday interactions.

**Opening Question:** Opening "Quiz"

### Prayer

Have students get out a piece of paper and write down their answers to the following questions:

- Have you ever told a lie? (yes or no)
- Have you ever cheated? (yes or no)
- In your opinion, how many times a week do teenagers lie?
- In your opinion, what percentage of students cheat on a regular basis?
- In your opinion, what percentage people lie (stretch the truth) in the stuff they post online?
- Do you think lying is a big deal? Why or why not?

Josh McDowell (Right from Wrong)

- 2/3 or American youth admit lying to a parent, teacher, or someone else in the last three months
- 60% admit that they've lied to a friend or peer in the last three months
- about 1/3 admit they have cheated on a test in the last three months

### Importance of Honesty

- Honesty was the assumption for human interactions
- Without the assumption of honesty, trust breaks down into chaos.
- Can you think of some occupations/professions that are built on dishonesty?
  - politics (will say anything to get elected)
  - marketing (the intent is to present things so you will buy them)
  - medicine (for fear of being sued - doctors may not tell you everything, appointment times, etc.)
  - insurance (only telling part of the truth to get claim covered)
  - business world (thrives on "yes" men - telling the boss what they want to hear)
  - salesmen

### Read Matthew 5:33-37

Jesus on Radical Honesty (Antithesis)

- You have heard that it was said . . .
  - Do not break your oath . . .  
*Jesus is summarizing the following passages: Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 6:3-5; 19:12; Numbers 30:2-15; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Psalms 24:4; 50:14; and Ecclesiastes 5:4*
  - Oath-taking in Jesus' day = an honesty or obligation scale (depending on what I "swore" by dictating the extent to which I had to be truthful)
- But I tell you . . .
  - Do not take oaths at all
  - As kingdom people, we are called to be invariably honest (if we do this, oaths will not be necessary - "Let your 'yes' mean yes and your 'no' mean no")  
*Too many times, we tell people what we think they want to hear (false apology, agreeing with no intent on following through ["Sure, I'll be there . . ."], etc.)*

- Simple honesty emerges in concrete ordinary events and not just when we are asked to swear on a Bible in a courtroom.

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**Lesson Summary /Review:**

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Finish this statement, “You have heard it was said you shall not break your oath, but I tell you . . .”