

August 27, 2017

(Unwavering: Living Out a Single Minded Faith Series)

“People of Truth”, James 5:12

Throughout our study, it's evident James considers speech a true measure of genuine faith because it reveals the heart. His careful placement of verse 12 is to call our attention to being consistent and dependable in our words. The result is that we are to be known as trustworthy – people of truth.

MAIN POINT: Christians are to speak and live their lives with such integrity that swearing is

not needed. In a world of dishonest and self-serving claims, to be considered “believable,” we may feel the need to “swear” by our words (i.e. to make a vow or an oath). But, James reminds us a simple yes or no is all we need to be honest and sincere.

Point #1. Swearing must be done cautiously.

Oaths are not to be entered into hastily or flippantly as in “Lord if you give me this, I’ll do this for you.” (As if we could do anything that the Lord himself could not do.) We saw in the example of Jephthah (Judges 11), how a rash vow for selfish gain lead to a grave consequence. We must understand our word is a big deal and we are to use caution in making oaths.

Point #2. All our speech must be truthful.

James’ teaching parallels Jesus’ command on oaths from Matthew 5:33-37. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exposed the short-fall of Jewish teachings that came with an “escape-clause.” People who do not live by truth will always look for ways to avoid being truthful. We do the same today. We may lie to protect ourselves, to avoid exposure, or because of fear. But lies keep us bound when Jesus came for freedom’s sake.

Point #3. Christians are to live lives of truth.

James is calling his readers and us to be people of truth. Oaths and vows (like in court or marriage) have their purpose, but in everyday life, truthful people must say what they mean and mean what they say to have authentic testimony for Him. We can become men and women of truth by: **1)** knowing Jesus – who is truth (John 14:6), **2)** knowing His Word, and **3)** living by His Word (being doers, not just hearers).

And, when we mess up, there is good news: Jesus came to save all sinners, even those of us who speak falsely. As a follower of Him, we will be eternally forgiven, we will find grace (again and again), and He will help us strive to be people of truth – both in word and in deed, Amen!

Discussion Questions:

1. Who in your life has been a model of using speech carefully?
2. When has telling the truth or not telling the truth impacted you and your life?
3. Promises, vows, commitments: As Christians, are there levels, meaning some are more important than others? Explain.

4. How does James 5:12 relate to James 1:19-20. Are we intentional in our speech?
5. If we are not people of truth, how will “the world” believe our gospel message?
6. What would happen in our home, workplace, or community, if we spoke only truth with intentionality, gentleness, and respect?