



Questions for Application for the Week of March 3, 2014
Part 5 - Words Matter. Honor Commitments. - Matthew 5:33-37

1. Read Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2, Exodus 20:7 and Exodus 20:16. In what ways do these passages relate to one another and serve to give background to Jesus' instruction in Matthew 5:33-37? How often have you thought about "oaths" and "vows" and why is an oath or vow that invokes the name of the LORD so serious?

2. Why does Jesus prohibit taking oaths under heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem or even your own head (Mt. 5:34-36)? In what ways does God witness all commitments? How should Psalm 139:1-6 inform your answer?

3. Josephus said of the Essenes, "Any word of theirs has more force than an oath; swearing they avoid, regarding it as worse than perjury, for they say that one who is not believed without an appeal to God stands condemned already." What does the necessity of oaths and promises in interpersonal relationships reveal about the character of the individual making them? Do you find you need to make appeals to something higher than yourself in order to gain the trust of those closest to you? Why is that so?

4. As you reflect upon your own truthfulness, consider the following questions:

- Am I leaving something out?
- Am I adding something in?
- Do I really need to say it?
- Do I mean what I say?

Which of the four (if any) is difficult for you to answer? In what ways are you personally prone to distort the truth or out and out lie and in what kinds of situations are you most tempted to?

5. How do you need to respond to Jesus' instruction in Matthew 5:33-37? Is what you say simply 'yes' or 'no'? Is there any specific action you need to take as a result of his direction in your life and how could others encourage you to be faithful to his leading?