

JAMES 5

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# Stop Swearing

James 5:12

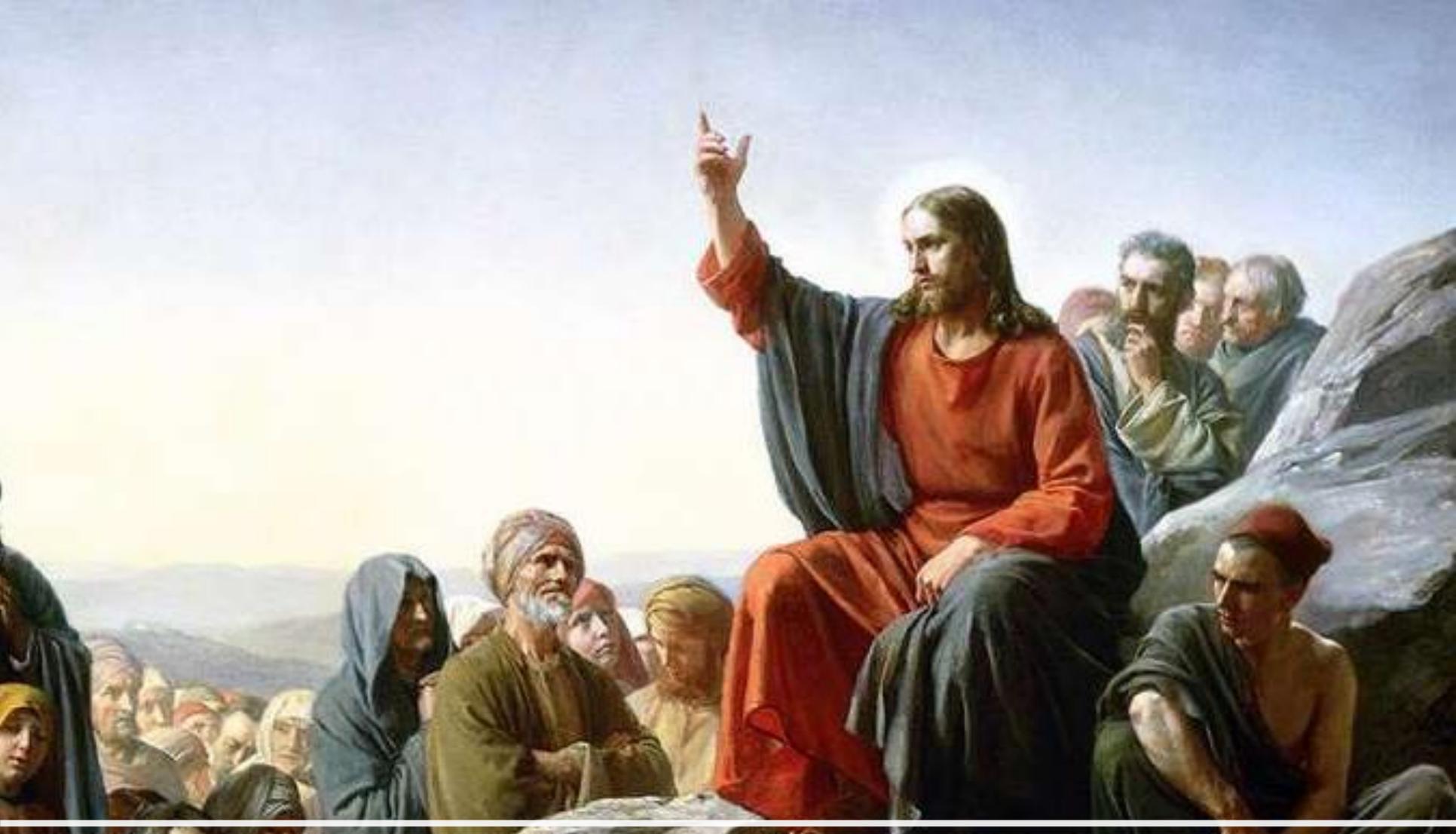




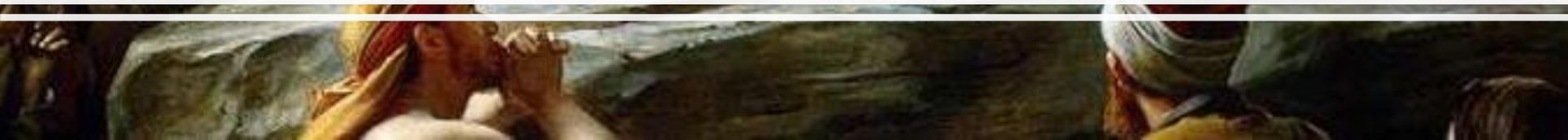
## James 5:12

**12** But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.





**Source – Matthew 5:33-37**



**When Do We Make  
Rash Oaths?**

**And How Does This  
Tie Into Previous  
Verses?**



# “Foxhole Christianity”



## Read the Sinner's Prayer and be Saved

*God, I'm pretty rotten  
I don't want to go to hell  
I want to go to heaven  
So I invite Jesus into my heart  
Thanks for that  
Amen*

Congratulations!



Please email me your testimony

The sinner's prayer has sent  
more people to Hell than  
all the bars in America.

Leonard Ravenhill

# How Important is This?

“above all”

Πρὸ πάντων

- **1 Peter 4:8** – “**Above all**, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”
- **Colossians 1:17** – “He is **before** all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

## The Fact is:

Your conduct is largely determined  
by what you say.

- James 3:5 –

“So also the tongue is a small part  
of the body, and yet it boasts of  
great things. See how great a forest  
is set aflame by such a small fire!”

# “Do Not Swear”

What is James talking about?

Numbers 30 is entirely devoted to the institution and binding nature of oaths.

We see vows frequently in both the Old and New Testaments.

## Leviticus 19:12

**12** You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord.

## Leviticus 5:4

**4** Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty in one of these.

## Hosea 10:4

“They speak mere words,  
With worthless oaths they  
make covenants; And  
judgment sprouts like  
poisonous weeds in the  
furrows of the field.”

## Zechariah 8:17

**17** “Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury [**false oath**]; for all these are what I hate,” declares the Lord.

How Do  
Unprompted Vows  
Usually Work Out  
In Scripture?



**Hannah Prays in 1 Samuel 1**

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER COMES OUT TO MEET HER FATHER  
(Judges 11:34)



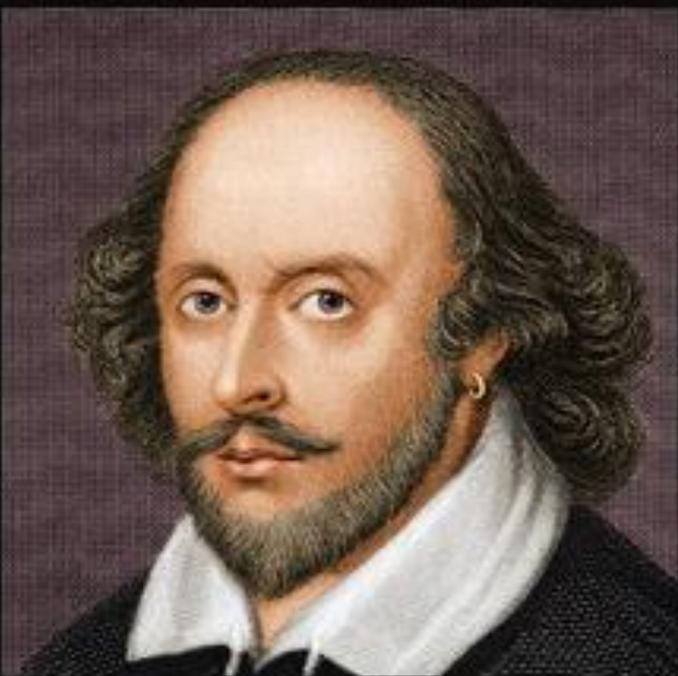
# Judges 11 – Jephthah's Vow

# “Do as I Say, Not as I Do...”

- The Jewish writer Philo says: “Frequent swearing is bound to beget perjury and impiety.”
- **The Rabbis said: “Accustom not yourself to vows, for sooner or later you will swear false oaths.”**
- The Jewish sect of the Essenes forbade all oaths; they held that if an oath was required to make someone tell the truth, that person was already branded as untrustworthy.

## Even the Greeks

Held that the best guarantee of any statement was not an oath but the character of the person who made it, and that the ideal was to make ourselves so respected that no one would ever think of demanding an oath from us because there could be no doubt that we would always speak the truth.



Be not thy tongue thy own  
shame's orator.

~ William Shakespeare

## In James' Time

There was an extraordinary amount of oath-taking.

This in itself was quite wrong; for one thing, the value of an oath depends to a large extent on the fact of it being very seldom necessary to take one.

# Oaths in the Jewish World

- There was a distinction between oaths which were binding and oaths which were not binding.
- Any oath in which the name of God was directly used was considered to be definitely binding, but any oath in which direct mention of the name of God was not made was held not to be binding.

## Ecclesiastes 5:4-7

**4** When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! **5** It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. **6** Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands? **7** For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

## So, the Idea was:

- Once God's name was definitely used, he became an active partner in the transaction, but he did not become a partner unless his name was introduced in this way.
- **The result of this was that it became a matter of skill and sharp practice to find an oath which was not binding.**
- This made a mockery of the whole practice of confirming anything by an oath.



**When oaths become commonplace, they cease to be respected as they ought to be.**

## Furthermore...

The practice of taking frequent oaths is proof that lying and cheating was widespread.

In an honest society, no oath is needed; it is only when people cannot be trusted to tell the truth that they have to be put on oath.

# The New Testament View

Every word is spoken in the presence of God and ought therefore to be true, and it would agree that Christians must be known to be men and women of such honor that it will be quite unnecessary ever to put them on oath.



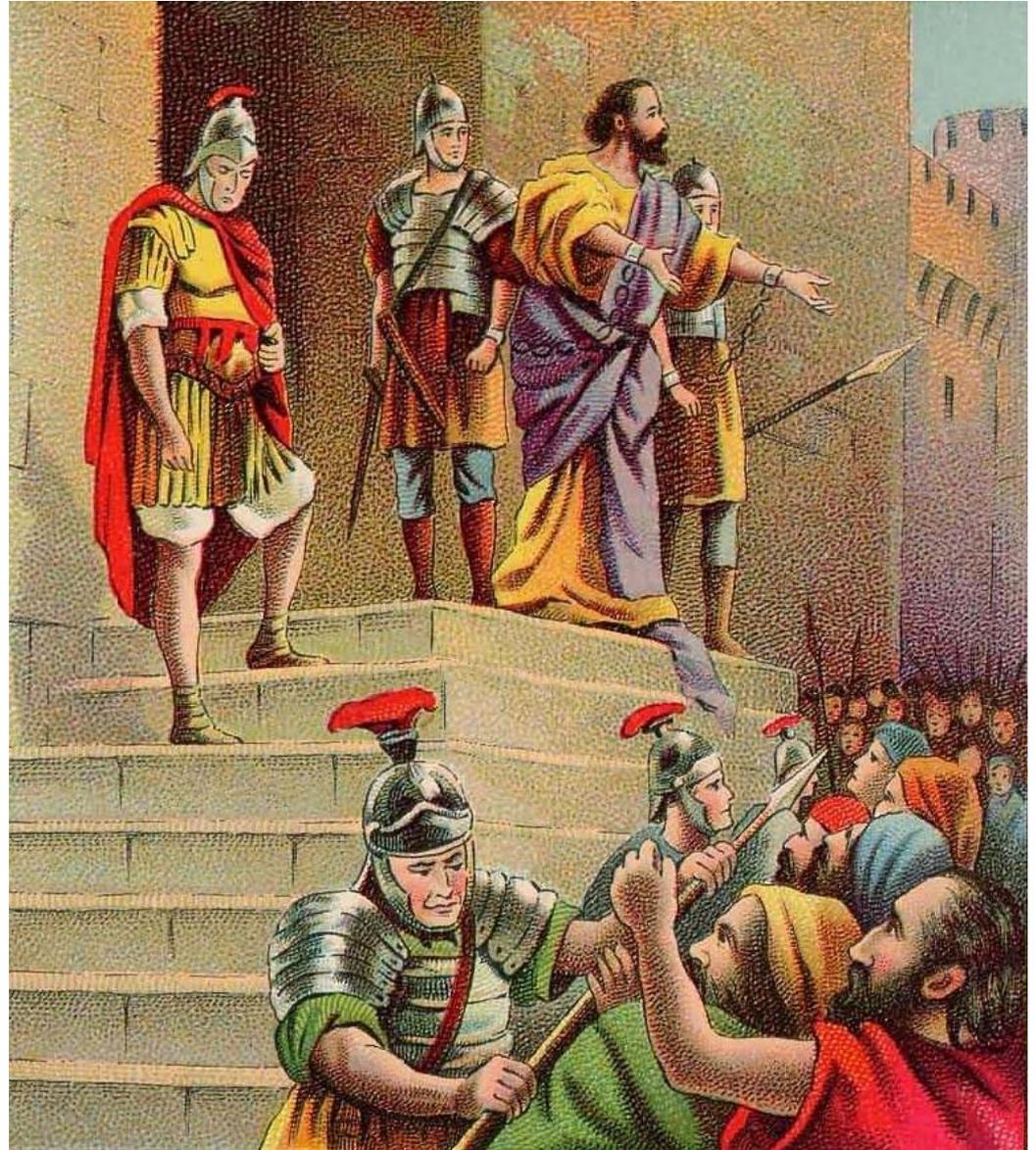
**A Foolish Oath – Matthew 14:6-11**





**A Selfish Oath – Matthew 26:69-75**

A  
Murderous  
Oath –  
Acts  
23:12-14



# James Learned From Jesus

Do Not Swear by:

- **Heaven, it is the throne of God**
- Earth, it is His footstool
- **Jerusalem, it is His holy city**
- Even the hair on our head belongs to Him and therefore cannot be called to accredit claims by a created being!

# Just Like Jesus, James Says:

All you have is your yes and your no;  
use them!

All other claims are false, unverifiable,  
and dangerous.

Evil attaches to the false claims  
entailed in all such oath-taking, and  
James says it leads to judgment.



**2 Corinthians 1:15-20**

**When It Comes To Oaths**

**Are There  
Applications For  
Us Today?**



PAY OFF DEBTS

SAVE MONEY

LOSE WEIGHT

EAT HEALTHY

QUIT SMOKING

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

PHONE PARENTS

GYM

QUIT DRINKING

FINISH

NEW J...

A...

...E





...CY OF GOD IN ALL THINGS FOR THE JOY OF ALL PEOPLES THROUGH THE...

**And Why Do We Do This?**

**“so that you may not fall  
under judgment.”**

**And how much more  
accountable are we since we  
know the truth?**

## James 4:17

“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

# James and Judgment

- **2:13** – “judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy”
- **3:1** – “teachers...incur a stricter judgment”
- **4:12** – “There is only one Lawgiver and Judge”
- **5:9** – “the Judge is standing right at the door”

Look at  
Matthew  
12:33-37



# Oaths are Doomed to Failure

Because they are based on earthly, temporary, and fallible things.

And even if we invoke the name of God in our oaths, we are assuming that the Lord is beholden to us.



## Hebrews 6:13-19



# Where Do You Stand?

The person whose foundation is Jesus Christ, with whom he continually worships in prayer, has no need to strengthen his words.

The follower of Christ speaks the truth because he himself is grounded in Christ.

