

To Glorify and Enjoy God

LESSON 27: GLORIFYING GOD WITH LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

Intro: Oaths are a part of our culture. Taking office, being a witness. The Anabaptists reject the practice based on the words of Jesus. Are they right to do that?

BIG IDEA: God is glorified when we speak truthfully & keep our promises.

³³“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil. **Matthew 5**

- Jesus seems to _____ oaths altogether, & Anabaptists point people to this verse.
- Stott: the Pharisees focused on acceptable _____ for oaths.
- Boice: an entire tractate of the Mishna (Shebuoth) _____ between oaths.
- Jesus qualifies this with “*by heaven ... earth Jerusalem, ... by your heard.*”
- You can’t avoid _____ in your formula since this is God’s _____.
- The formulas are just a means to increase _____, not to invoke sanctions.
- The issue isn’t oaths, but the _____ of the human heart that looks for outs.
- The issue isn’t taking a vow when required, but resorting to oaths to _____.

“... a Christian should be a person whose word can be trusted.” **R.C. Sproul**²⁹⁴

“Life was becoming chaotic because men would not rely upon one another’s words and statements.” **Martyn Lloyd-Jones**²⁹⁵

¹⁶“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁹You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. ²²And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it. **Matthew 23**

- Since they generally didn’t use God’s name, they employed _____.
- They were _____ truth (James _____)

²⁹⁴ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 349.

²⁹⁵ Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans. 1959, pp. 263.

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“The reason we have oaths and vows is that all people are liars. Romans 3:4 says so. As fallen men and women, we have an aversion to truth- not just to receiving the truth of God, but also to speaking the truth.” **R.C. Sproul**²⁹⁶

“The covenants in the Bible are promises made by God.” **R.C. Sproul**²⁹⁷

Oaths vs. Vows

Oaths are between human beings. God is invoked as a _____.

_____ are made to God.

Oaths pertain to the _____ of a statement, or a promise to a person.

Vows pertain to the _____ of _____ duties.

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calls God to witness what he asserts, or promises, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he swears.

- One _____ of religious worship is the making of a _____ oath.
- The oath asks God to _____ the truthfulness of one’s words & act accordingly.
- Oaths recognize God’s omnipresence, omniscience, _____ & sovereignty (Hodge).
- Because we are sinners, we struggle with _____ in various circumstances.

¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19

²If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. **Numbers 30**

“Because we are weak and fallen, and because our words are not inherently trustworthy, God has given us the holy vow and oath, because it makes a difference.” **R.C. Sproul**²⁹⁸

“... one of the ways in which we worship God is by calling upon him to be a witness and the enforcer of the oaths and the vows that we take.” **R.C. Sproul**²⁹⁹

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence. Therefore, to swear vainly, or rashly, by that glorious and dreadful Name; or, to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet, as in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the new testament as well as under the old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.

- We are only to swear by God’s name, and with _____.

²⁹⁶ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 350.

²⁹⁷ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 351.

²⁹⁸ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 352.

²⁹⁹ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 353.

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- We don't swear by _____, as Jesus instructs us.
- Or something or someone who can't bring about _____ for our deceitfulness.
- We aren't to make the oath _____ or in vain (3rd commandment) to cover our _____.
- Some matters are so _____ as to merit an oath.

3. Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth: neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.

- Those who take oaths should make sure they understand the seriousness of the act.
- You are to _____ for nothing but what you _____ to be truth.
- You can't bind yourself to do anything _____ or _____ for someone.

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt. Nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics, or infidels.

- The oath is not to be subject to _____ games, but clear and unambiguous.
- We should not have _____ with regard to the oath.
- If we make a promise that is _____ to us, it is binding (Ps. 15:4).
- An oath is not _____ because it is made to an unbeliever or heretic.

5. A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

- A vow is the _____ to _____ certain duties in the future.
- We should perform the duties promises in _____.

²¹“If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. **Deuteronomy 23**”

6. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want, whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties; or, to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

- We are to _____ make vows, we cannot be forced to make a vow.

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- Vows may be made as an expression of _____.
- Vows may be made as an expression of _____ for mercy we have received.
- Vows may be made to _____ what we want or _____ us to necessary duties.

7. No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God. In which respects, popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

- We cannot vow to do anything _____ in the Scriptures.
- We cannot vow to do anything which would _____ any commands in Scripture.
- We cannot vow to do anything we don't have the _____ to actually do.
- We cannot vow to do anything for which we have no promise of God to _____.
- They rejected _____ vows like poverty, celibacy, obedience to a superior etc.

“As people of the Word, our word should be our bond.” **R.C. Sproul**³⁰⁰

How does this help you to glorify and enjoy God?

Conclusion:

³⁰⁰ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 362.