



KICK OFF

Is the playground saying 'sticks and stones may hurt my bones but names will never hurt me,' true?



KEY VERSE

Matthew 5:37 'let what you say be simply 'yes' or 'no', anything more than this comes from evil.



BIG IDEA

Words are powerful and to be spoken truthfully and lovingly.



INVESTIGATE

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND TO WORDS ARE POWERFUL

Read Matthew 5:33—37

1. What is the biblical background to this passage and what do learn about the power of words from it?
Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 12:14

2. The Bible's teaching about words can be boiled down to two words. What are they? Why is holding these two words together so important?

Ephesians 4:15

TAKING OATHS

3. Who is Jesus talking about in verse 33?
4. Jesus in verses 34—37 is saying, there are no levels of truthfulness for a Christian. Why?



DIG DEEPER

He says there are no levels of truthfulness for a Christian. He says don't swear by heaven because it's God's. Don't swear by the earth because it's God's. Don't swear by your head because it's God's. What he's saying is, don't you realize that whether or not you say something is in God's name, it is? Because you can never get out of the presence of God. Therefore, don't you realize that every single thing you say is as binding as if you did it under oath? Don't you realize that when you say, "Yes, I'll be there. No. Yes," it's an oath? That's what God is saying.

Jesus is saying that when somebody says, "Will you pray for me?" and you say, "Yes," it's an oath that God holds you as accountable to follow through on that as if you swore on a stack of Bibles, "Of course I will pray. I will not fail to pray. I will pray for you." When you tell your child you're going to fix his bike, you have to do it. You're just as bound to honesty there as if you'd sworn on a stack of Bibles. There are no levels of honesty. There are no levels of truthfulness..

JUDGING OTHERS

5. In Matthew 7: 1—5 is Jesus saying, what is often said in our culture: ‘we must never call into question someone else’s religious conviction, it’s a private thing and what’s true for you might not be true for him and what’s true for him might not be true for you?’ Why or why not?

7: 6
7:15

6. What then is Jesus talking about when he says: ‘judge not, that you be not judged.’ And give examples?

Judging is not assessing a position; it’s writing somebody off. It’s dismissing them. It’s saying, “I want you out of my life. I don’t want to have anything more to do with you.” In other words, instead of assessing a position or a belief, you are dismissing and sentencing and condemning a person, and that’s something that only God in his wisdom and in his authority has the right to do. (Tim Keller)



THINK THROUGH FURTHER

7. How do we become people whose words are truthful and loving?

PRAISE GOD that grace, truth and love were exemplified in Jesus Christ.

CONFESS to God that we have been truthful but cold in our love, loving but sentimental in our commitment to truth.

ASK GOD to help us let our yes be yes and no be no.

PRAY ALSO

For the ministry of Scots’ Church in the Melbourne CBD that we would love the city sincerely, and speak truth with integrity and consistently.



Praise God for the challenges raised by God’s Word through this study.

Praying for others in your group:



For next week’s study read Matthew 5: 38—48



How does this passage apply to our daily life?

