



SERIES: FEBRUARY – MARCH FAITH IN REAL LIFE

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Monday, 03/28/2022

Scripture: James 5:12

TITLE: Stop Swearing

An apologist once said, "Integrity is such an admirable quality that even your enemies will trust you if they know you're a man of integrity." This is the power of character in a sea of compromise and disappointment. The truth is today, you can't download an app or attend a show without checking a box agreeing to certain terms and conditions.

What has happened? What is going on? We've lost the ability to discern and maintain character. When this happens, our words can become meaningless. What do I mean? Let's keep listening to James in James 5:12 (CSB).

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "yes" mean "yes," and your "no" mean "no," so that you won't fall under judgment.

If you've been walking with us, this seems kind of out of nowhere. We've covered trials, perseverance, authentic faith, the power of our words, the dangers of wealth, and now a passage on oaths. To be honest, a lot of commentators struggle to know what James is tying it back to. There are several good options. One thing is clear that James is referring to a teaching from His brother, Jesus, from Matthew 5.

But as I alluded to in the introduction, in much of the last century, the American culture has deteriorated. Before World War II, a gentleman's handshake was enough for an agreement. But today, formal contracts are used and quickly broken. Too many societies collapse when people lose their verbal integrity.

Here in James 5:12, the issue isn't making a promise or agreement. The issue is motive and ability or commitment to make good on the promise. Parents, bosses, and friends make promises they can never keep. They offer solutions they do not intend to keep. They do it to keep the peace, to delay a payment, or build some relief in their life. But to commit to something you cannot complete is a sin.

If you want to see this at its finest, just listen to politicians long enough. Campaigning is a mix of cans and cannots built upon the promise of will-do's. Sadly, many things are out of their control or out of their true desires.

Today, James says, "let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no."

So here's my challenge for you today: speak truthfully. As a parent, husband, and ministry leader, I would love to be able to do everything, but I can't. I would love to meet every request of

my kids. I'd love to be able to never disappoint my wife. I'd love to always be there and deliver on all your needs as a pastor. Unfortunately, I can overpromise and underdeliver. A better way to proceed is to be truthful in what I say and can and should do.

So today, carefully evaluate what you can do or will do and then speak truthfully.

When we honor our commitments, we will win the day.