

DENAIR FRIENDS CHURCH

Devotions with Matt

May 20, 2020

INTEGRITY OVER OATHS

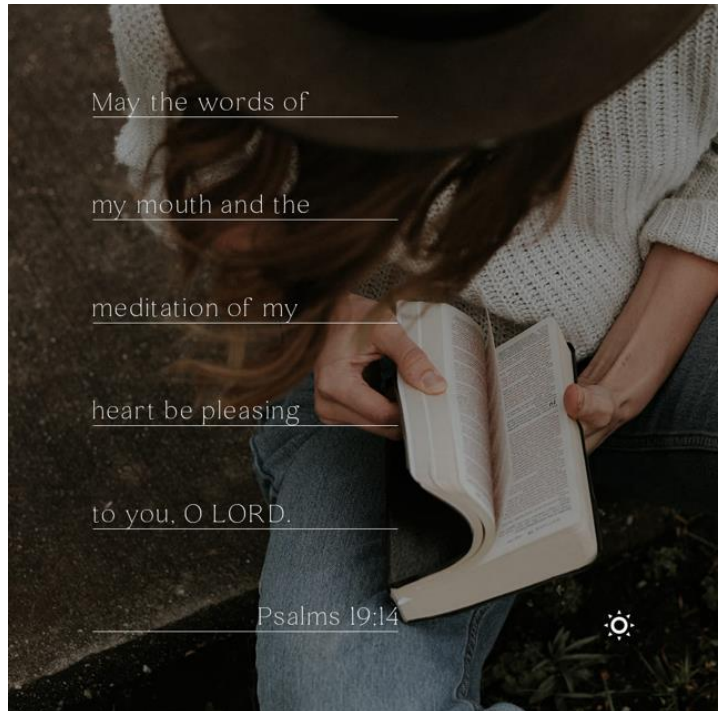
“God, if you would just get me out of the situation I am in I promise to follow you the rest of my life!” God, if you can help me with my marriage I promise to become the best husband in the world!” Lord, I lost my job and am almost broke. If you can help me out here I promise I will be obedient to you in all things!” Have you ever made a promise to God, or anyone else for that matter, and did not fulfill the promise you made? I think we can all say we have been there and done that. None of us have been good about keeping all the promises we have made.

Jesus, still in the deep end of the pool, continues in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 and begins to talk about oaths. He tells us to not break our oaths that we have made to the Lord. He goes on to say that we are not to swear by anything outside of ourselves either. “Do not swear by heaven, earth or even by our own head” we are told. Why is this such a big deal? We all have broken oaths. We have all sworn by something outside ourselves (“on my mother’s grave”). Politicians make promises all the time and don’t deliver (“I was for it before I was against it”). Couples make vows at their wedding (“in sickness and in health”) and don’t always follow through with them. Witnesses swear on the Bible and still perjure themselves. No one seems to get in trouble for not fulfilling their promises.

So why is Jesus telling us not to make oaths and promises? At the heart of this admonition by Jesus is the fact that we were created by God. As part of His creation He has given us the ability to communicate. That communication should be honoring and pleasing to the One who gave it to us. When we take oaths, or make promises we can’t keep, we are dishonoring the Lord. Even in the best of circumstances, when we intend to do what we promise, we never know if we can fulfill them. So Jesus gives us a simple solution in Matthew 5:37, “Let your yes be yes, and your no, no.”

The issue is integrity. Do we follow up in action with what our mouths have uttered? Our actions should always line up with our words. Our lives as Christians should show such integrity of character that we don’t have to make some sort of vow, oath or promise to another to show that what we say is genuine. What we say we are going to do with a simple yes should suffice. What we say we are not going to do with a simple no should suffice. It suffices because we have a track record of following through with our yeses and nos. What we say, we do. It should be as simple as that.

The truth about integrity is it is more than just doing what we say. It is more than our actions following true to our words. True integrity is placing God at the center of our lives. It is following the leading of the Holy Spirit despite the challenges, hardships and urges to do otherwise. It is recognizing He is Lord of our whole life-including our actions, our thoughts and our speech. It is a choice to honor Him with it all. Integrity is honoring the promise we once made that we would follow Him wherever He leads, be obedient to Him in all things and do the things we said we would do. In other words, our integrity starts when we prayed the prayer to accept Jesus into our lives as Lord and Savior. It means we let Him be Lord and Savior.



Our lives as Christians are a testimony to Jesus. Our integrity in speech and in action is a reflection of His Lordship in our lives. Simply saying yes or no is enough for anyone who knows us that we will do what we say. We don't need to make any other promise statements or oaths. Our yes and no means obedience to Christ our Lord. That is more than enough.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. - Psalm 19:14

In Christ, Matt