

Huh?

Part Seven: *promises*

April 23, 2023

The scribes and Pharisees looked righteous, but righteous living goes beyond outward actions. It also includes the inward condition of the heart. Jesus illustrated this in Matthew 5:20-47 when he explained God's full intention for the Old Testament Law.

After he explained God's intention for murder, adultery, and divorce...

4th - Jesus gave us God's intention for promises. Matthew 5:33-37

When Jesus told his listeners, "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord..." he was referring to a tradition based on Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2, and Deuteronomy 23:21 that was developed over centuries by Israel's religious leaders.

The three main ideas found in Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2, and Deut. 23:21 are:

1. You must not promise to do something you have no intention of doing.
2. You must not swear that something is true if you know it is false.
3. You must promptly complete the promises you make to God or make in His name.

Obviously, God gave these commands to Israel to keep their conversation and business dealings truthful, but the rabbinic tradition that was created from these commands was far from what God intended.

- **The command "You are not to swear falsely using God's name" (Lev 19:12) became to mean you can make false promises if you do not make them to God or in His name.**

The Pharisees taught you must keep a promise if you make it to God or in His name, but you do not have to keep a promise if you make it by heaven, by the earth, by the temple, by Jerusalem, or by the hairs on your head. Lying is acceptable if you do not lie to God or in His name!

There were two big problems with the Pharisees' tradition of making promises:

Problem #1: God does not want us to be dishonest. Exodus 20:16; Zechariah 8:16-17; Proverbs 12:22

God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) wants His children to speak the truth and deal truthfully with others. People who lie do not resemble God; they resemble Satan – the author of lies (John 8:44; Revelation 21:8).

Problem #2: The Law said all promises must be made in God's name. Deuteronomy 10:20

Promises made in your dead mother's name hold no weight but promises made in the name of the Lord – the One who will judge the living and the dead – hold great weight!

In contrast to the Pharisees' perverted tradition...

- **Jesus said, "Do not make any vows!" Matthew 5:34-37**

Was Jesus telling us to quit making promises? No. Jesus made promises and so did Paul (Romans 9:1).

- **Jesus was telling us to not make any flippant, sinful, untruthful promises in someone's or something's name to impress people or get something we want.**

Jesus doesn't want us to stop making promises; he wants us to stop making bad promises! Our promises are to be truthful, and we must do what we promise to do. God is truthful and always keeps His promises and He wants His children to be truthful and always keep their promises.

Some Personal Questions...

1. Do you make promises?
2. If so, are you always truthful and dependable with your promises?
3. Do people trust you?