

Swearing and Taking Oaths

- I. By looking at the following verses one could conclude that Christians are forbidden from taking an oath of any kind.
 1. **Mat 5:33** - Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:
 2. **Mat 5:34** - But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:
 3. **Mat 5:35** - Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.
 4. **Mat 5:36** - Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.
 5. **Mat 5:37** - But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.
 6. **Jas 5:12** - But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.
- II. Defining the terms
 1. Swear *v.* - I. 1. *intr.* To make a solemn declaration or statement with an appeal to God or a superhuman being, or to some sacred object, in confirmation of what is said; to take an oath.
 2. Oath *n.* - 1. a. A solemn or formal appeal to God (or to a deity or something held in reverence or regard), in witness of the truth of a statement, or the binding character of a promise or undertaking; an act of swearing; a statement or promise corroborated by such an appeal, or the form of words in which such a statement or promise is made.
- III. God commanded in the O.T. that swearing was to only be done by His name.
 1. **Deu 6:13** - Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.
 2. **Deu 10:20** - Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.
 3. **Isa 65:16** - That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.
- IV. The Pharisees had turned the law of God on its head and required people to swear by anything except God and His name.
 - A. **Mat 23:16** - Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!
 - B. **Mat 23:17** - Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?
 - C. **Mat 23:18** - And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.
 - D. **Mat 23:19** - Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?
 - E. **Mat 23:20** - Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.
 - F. **Mat 23:21** - And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.
 - G. **Mat 23:22** - And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

V. Jesus Christ and James both commanded us to not swear by the following things:

1. Heaven (God's throne)
2. Earth (God's footstool)
3. Jerusalem (God's city)
4. Our own heads (of which we can't even change the hair color)

VI. Notice that neither Jesus Christ, nor James said that we should not swear by God or His name, never stating something such as "neither swear by God nor His name".

1. All the things they specified that were not to be sworn by were things that carry no real weight when it comes to binding us to our oaths.
2. These types of things -- things other than God and His name -- are what are prohibited by the commandments to "swear not at all" (**Mat 5:34**), "swear not" (**Jam 5:12**), and "neither by any other oath" (**Jam 5:12**).

VII. It can be concluded that swearing by God was not condemned by Jesus or James, in that the apostle Paul (our example - **1Co 11:1**) swore by God on a few occasions.

1. **2Co 1:23** - Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.
2. **Gal 1:20** - Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.
3. **Php 1:8** - For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

VIII. Therefore, if you choose to swear or take an oath, do so only by God and not anything else.

IX. If you are not comfortable doing so, as Paul was, then don't swear at all and simply let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.