

55. Swearing by God's Name.

Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. *Matt. 5, 37.*

The Lord says in the Third Book of Moses: "Ye shall not Swear by My name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." From these words we see that swearing is forbidden. Does that mean that all swearing is forbidden? *No*, that is not the meaning of that passage. It certainly is not wrong to call upon God. If it is an important case and the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor render it necessary, it cannot be wrong thus to call upon God. We have a direct command to swear thus. In the last book of Moses, Deut. 6, 13, we read: "Thou shalt fear the Lord, thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name." If we swear to the truth of a statement of ours before the proper authorities, let it be done to the glory of God and to the welfare of our fellow-men.

The question, then, arises: *What manner of swearing is forbidden?* The answer is: All false, blasphemous, frivolous swearing and all oaths in uncertain things. *False swearing, or perjury*, invokes the vengeance of God. When one swears to do an evil deed, it is a *blasphemous oath*. It is *frivolous swearing* when the importance of an oath is not considered, or when an oath is unnecessary. It is frivolous and thoughtless if people frequently say, "God knows," "By God," or call upon the dear name of Jesus in vain. This is swearing, calling upon God as witness to the truth of our statement.

Let us watch our tongue and ever be on our guard. Parents should never allow their children to use such expressions, and they should be very careful not to give them a bad example. Also this is frivolous and therefore forbidden swearing, when one utters an oath *in uncertain things*. No one should swear to anything of which he is not absolutely certain. No one should swear to do something the nature of which he does not as yet know, or to keep secret things which he will not know until some time in the future. The grave nature of such an oath may be seen from the case of King Herod. Let us always bear in mind the sacredness of an oath, considering the greatness of God's name.

Prayer.

O Thou just and gracious God and Father, I humbly and sorrowfully confess that I have not only been conceived and born in sin, but that I have also frequently transgressed Thy holy Ten Commandments in thought, word, and deed, thereby fully deserving both temporal and eternal punishment. But since Thy beloved Son, my dear Savior Jesus Christ, has fully atoned for all my sins, original and actual, by fulfilling the commandments which I have transgressed and by shedding His holy, precious blood, I pray Thee O be gracious unto me for His sake. And give me new strength to amend my life. Let me not swear lightly, but simply say yes or no when I mean that, and no more, lest I take Thy holy name in vain. Amen.

Let me no wrong or idle word
Unthinking say;
Set Thou a seal upon my lips —
This, Lord, I pray.

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