

Rossville Church of Christ Doorpost Devo



August 13, 2023



Encouragement from God's Word

Matthew 5:33-37: Disciples Keep Their Word

The world is full of talk. Lofty claims are made in the media, in advertising, in politics, and in daily life. But often, promises aren't kept. The reality doesn't match the rhetoric. Bold statements fall flat when the time comes for follow-through. In a world so overloaded with information and manipulation, it's hard to know what and who to trust.

Scripture Plan: Read

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

1 John 3:1-10 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

1 John 3:11-24 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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Discussion Questions

1 John 3:1-10

Discussion Question #1: What does it mean to be a child of God? How does this make you feel? Why is this such a great blessing?

Discussion #2: What does it look like practically to live like a child of God? How does this kind of life look different than being a child of the devil?

Discussion #3: What is sin and what should be our relationship to sin? How should we respond to sin in our lives and hearts?

1 John 3:11-24

Discussion #1: Why does John bring up Cain as an example? How can we avoid making the same mistakes as Cain?

Discussion #2: How does Jesus show us what love looks like? How should this change the way we love others?

Discussion #3: What does it mean that God is greater than our hearts? In what ways does this help us when we doubt?

Apply and Obey

To obey what God says, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--for destroying the works of the devil through Jesus and for calling us your children.
- Lord, We Praise You--that you have showed us in Jesus what love looks like. We praise you for your loving character and nature.
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- Lord, Help Us--to walk in love and to have the love for others that Jesus has for us.

The problem is that this is not just a problem “out there” in the world or in the media. This is an issue within the human heart. We often claim more than we can back up. We tell others what we think they want to hear. We agree to do things we know we can't do because we don't want to disappoint, or we want to be perceived a certain way. Not only that, but we also often lie to ourselves. We lie to ourselves about our limits, our flaws, and our shortcomings. In this way, we sometimes project a version of ourselves to ourself and to others that can't quite match up to reality.

Even so, disciples of Jesus Christ are called to be people of truth and integrity. Even in the simplest of matters, we ought to be trustworthy and honest. Consider what Jesus says in Matthew 5:33-37:

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

In Jesus' day, people were apparently swearing by heaven or by earth or by Jerusalem. Jesus teaches against these oaths and lofty statements. He is pushing back against the idea of swearing by things that seem to give the promise greater weight or authority. He shows the foolishness of such thinking. Jesus points out that people are swearing by things and places that don't belong to them anyway. It all belongs to God. He is in total control. He has absolute authority. So if we are swearing by such things to give us more credibility, we are putting ourselves in a place of authority that does not belong to us. We are not on the throne. We are simply living on God's footstool, the earth, and even that we do not own. And Jesus tells us that really we are not even in control of the hairs on our heads. We cannot not make one hair white or black.

At the root of so much dishonesty and deception is the lie that we are in control. We think we are in control so we promise more than we can deliver. We want people to see in us more power than we really have. But if we recognize the truth that God is the one in charge, we will be content with a simple “yes” or “no.” We will see that we cannot control much, but we can be people of simple integrity. We can follow through with what we say.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Being a disciple of Jesus is about being a person of integrity and truth, imitating the way of our Master. It is also about recognizing our own limitations and acknowledging that we are not in control. To swear by anything beyond ourselves is presuming too much. We cannot guarantee anything because God is on the throne. If the Lord wills, then it will be so. Beyond that, we can make no assumptions. In this way, honesty is about humility. Integrity is about trust and dependence on our God above. Trustworthiness is about knowing who we are and knowing who God is. When we see and understand that, our "yes" will be "yes" and our "no" will be "no." When we put our lives, our word, and our will in the hands of the Father, we will be transformed more and more into the image of Christ, the one is ever faithful and always true.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9