

James 5:12

Introduction:

1. Subjects previously covered in our study of James include:
 - a. "facing temptations" (1:2-18)
 - b. "hearing and doing the Word" (1:19-27)
 - c. "respect of persons" (2:1-13)
 - d. "faith and works" (2:14-26)
 - e. "a warning for teachers" (3:1)
 - f. "use of the tongue" (3:2-12)
 - g. "true and false wisdom" (3:13-18)
 - h. "strife among Christians" (4:1-10)
 - i. "speaking evil of others" (4:11-12)
 - j. "self-sufficiency" (4:13-17)
 - k. "words of warning and reproof for the rich" (5:1-6)
 - l. "patience" (5:7-11).
2. (5:12) James dealt with "swearing."
3. This subject needs to be studied carefully to settle such issues as:
 - a. swearing to tell the truth in a court of law
 - b. a man and woman exchanging vows when they are married
 - c. making a promise (pledge) to repay a loan.
4. Let us begin by making several . . .

Discussion:

- I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SWEARING
 - A. We must understand what "swearing" is -- to affirm or deny with an oath, to invoke the name of something or someone sacred in an oath.
 - B. We must understand that the Bible does not condemn all swearing.
 1. Swearing was commanded under the Law of Moses.
 - a. The Israelites were instructed to swear by God's name (Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20).
 - b. The Israelites were also given guidelines concerning swearing.
 - 1) God's name was not to be taken in vain (Exodus 20:7).
 - 2) Falsely swearing by God's name was forbidden (Leviticus 19:12).
 - 3) Oaths and vows were to be kept (Numbers 30:2).
 2. Jesus made a statement under oath (Matthew 26:63-64).
 3. Paul called upon God as his witness (Romans 1:9).
 4. God swore by Himself when He promised to bless Abraham (Hebrews 6:13-14).
- II. CHRISTIANS ARE TO AVOID A CERTAIN TYPE OF SWEARING
 - A. People sometimes swear to convince others that they are telling the truth.
 1. To illustrate, Peter made an oath and swore to try to convince people that he was not a follower of Christ (Matthew 26:69-74).
 2. The Jews developed a system of swearing by certain things (Matthew 23:16-22).
 - B. This is the kind of swearing that James condemned -- calling profanely upon God or some sacred thing [ex.: heaven or the earth] as a witness to what is being said.
 - C. Jesus condemned the same kind of swearing (Matthew 5:33-36).
 - D. Rather than swear to convince people that we are telling the truth, . . .
- III. CHRISTIANS ARE TO SAY WHAT WE MEAN
 - A. We are to say yes when we mean yes and no when we mean no without making oaths to convince others that we are telling the truth.
 - B. Jesus gave the same instruction in Matthew 5:37.