

## GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 11

### Question 1

- a) Verse 33 is not a direct quotation from the Old Testament. It is a collective statement based on related things taught in the OT.
- b) This study is all about truthfulness: **Num 30:2**.
- c) It also shows that whatever outward show is put on; God knows what is going on inside the heart of a man.

### Question 2

- a) Some have taken Jesus' words to mean that, as His followers, we should never under any circumstances take an oath.
- b) Quakers for example will not take an oath in court.
- c) What Jesus says here is not in contravention of the Old Testament teaching.
- d) He is saying that oaths intended to make someone look good outwardly, but do not come from a truthful heart, are worthless.
- e) They dishonour God and it is this dishonesty in word and deed that Jesus is challenging: **Psalm 51:6**.
- f) The exact wording of oaths determined whether they were binding or not. So these were open to abuse (**Read: Matt 23:16-22**).
- g) *"If men will play such games with oaths, Jesus will simply abolish oaths. He is interested in truthfulness, its constancy and absoluteness"* (Don Carson).

### Question 3

- a) It was a custom in Jesus' day for people to confirm a promise by swearing by something that would last.
- b) It might be a place such as Jerusalem; or it might be earth, or heaven, or even one's own life.

- c) Jesus saw this as a way to hide true intentions; seeking ways to avoid standing on one's word. Therefore they would avoid using the name of God.
- d) These could be described as 'second class' oaths.
- e) Jesus catches them out by showing that any oath they make which excludes the name of God cannot exclude God himself. Heaven (Isa 66:1), earth (Isa 66:1) and Jerusalem (Psalm 48:1-4) are all linked with God. Even the head is linked, because God made us.

### Question 4

- a) As His followers, Jesus is calling us to be people of the truth; people who say what we mean and mean what we say.
- b) What comes out of our mouth should not need embellishing. In other words, our 'Yes' really does mean yes and our 'No' really does mean no.
- c) What we say should be believable because the character of our life following Christ.
- d) James 5:12 is based on Jesus' command in v37. All our words should be binding; whether taking a legal oath is required or not.
- e) This is the radical Christianity the Sermon on the Mount invites.

### Question 5

- a) Anything other than truthfulness comes from the evil one who created falsehoods when he questioned the character of God during the tempting of Eve in the Garden of Eden: **John 8:44**.
- b) *"Having to swear or make oaths betrays the weakness of your word. It demonstrates that there is not enough weight in your own character to confirm your words. How much better it is to let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and 'No' be 'No'"* (Guzik).
- c) It must be stressed again that Jesus was not saying that we should not take oaths, but that they should never be used to cover untruthfulness.
- d) There is a real sense here that by our fruits we will be known.