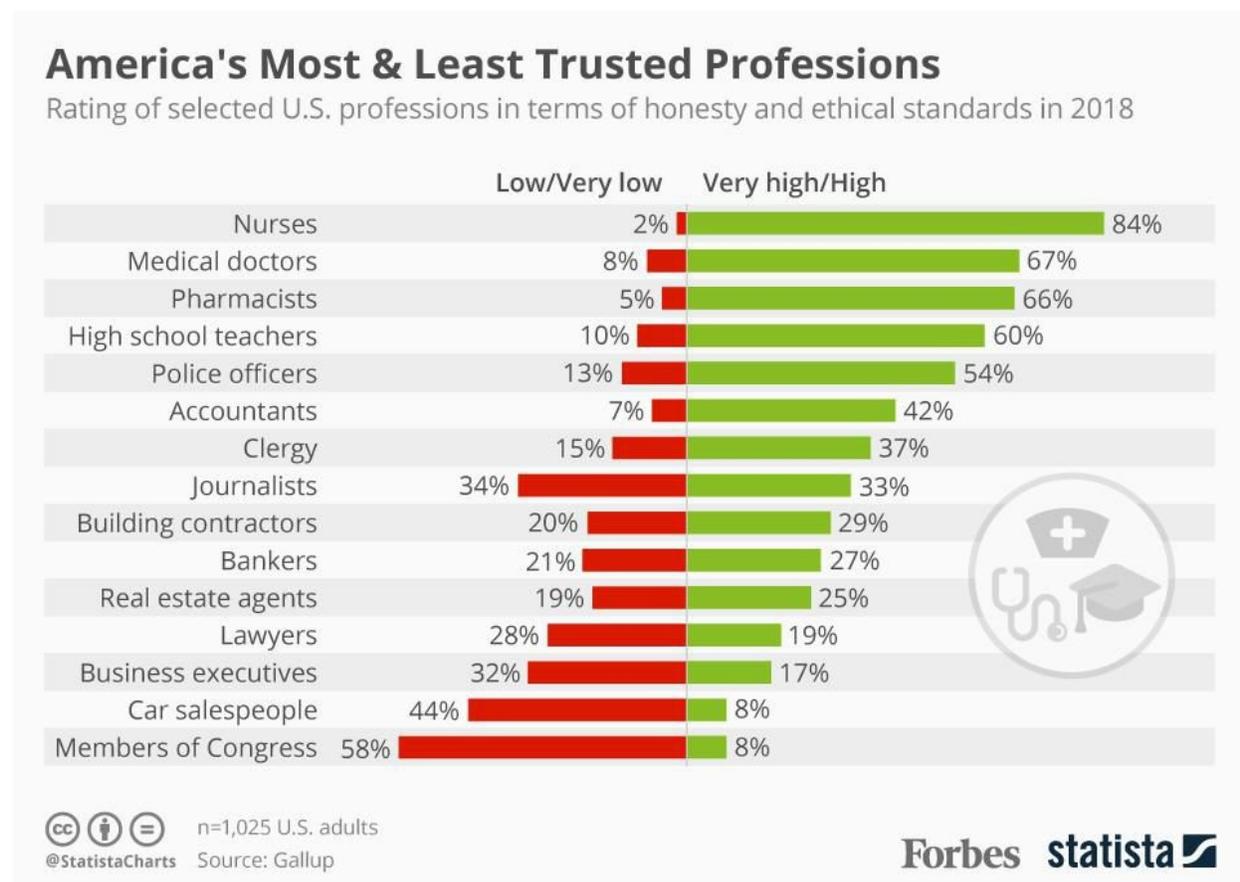


## Your Word is Your Bond James 5:12 (NKJV)

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

We live in a world where we sort of expect people to lie to us.

As we move closer to the election this November we will be continually be lied to by the people who expect us to put some of the most important decisions our government will make in the hands of the people who are hardly capable of telling us the whole truth.



In the above chart we find that the members of congress are at the bottom. Now they have earned that position. So don't feel sorry for them.

So how is it that they get elected? You might ask yourself that question.

What if the people who know you were to make a chart? Where would you be on that chart?

But James tells us that above everything else, people need to be able to believe us.

God's people are not to be caught up in lies, or falsehoods.

J. Vernon McGee tells a story of when he was a boy his dad was trying to borrow some money from the bank. And his dad met the banker and told him that he was going to loan him the money. But his dad said but I haven't signed the papers yet. And the banker told him that he trusted him and knew that he would sign them later. Wow!!

We once was such a country that the average person in this country could be trusted for their word was their bond.

So let us look at this passage and let us learn the importance of integrity.

After having given considerable thought to this verse, I would say that we have before us a big subject, namely, The Sacredness of Speech. *Lehman Strauss, Lehman Strauss Commentaries – James, Your Brother: Studies in the Epistle of James, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1967), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 198. SEE THIS FOR A VERY FULL DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT*

I. But above all, my brethren

A. Honesty is the basis of all human relationships.

1. Without a acceptance of the need for honesty all society will break down.
2. Dishonesty will destroy a marriage, a business and government.
3. It is one of the things that we demand from our children above all else.
4. So then among Christians it should be a given.
5. If you cannot trust the people within the church then the church has serious problems.

B. Integrity should be a crown for every person to desire and to wear proudly.

1. You might not be able to be the smartest person in a group.
2. You might not be able to be the richest person in a group.
3. You might not be the most successful person.
4. But anyone can be the most honest person.

II. Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath.

A. Taking an oath.

1. The idea of swearing (ὀμνύειν) involves invoking the name of God to ensure the truthfulness of what one says, although paradoxically, “swearing is necessary only in a society where truth is not revered” *Ralph P. Martin, James, vol. 48, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 203.*
2. Taking oaths is a common practice in most societies, both modern and ancient.

- a. Boaz made an oath to Ruth.
  - (1) Ruth 3:13 (NKJV)
    - (a) 13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you--good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning."
- b. So did Paul
  - (1) 2 Corinthians 1:23 (NKJV)
    - (a) 23 Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.
  - (2) Galatians 1:20 (NKJV)
    - (a) 20 (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)
  - (3) Philippians 1:8 (NKJV)
    - (a) 8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.
- c. Even God took an oath.
  - (1) Hebrews 6:13 (NKJV)
    - (a) 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

3. As we will see later, some, including the Jewish, kind of went overboard with oaths to the extent that they became meaningless.

4. What is over used is often cheap and worthless.

B. What do you swear by?

1. It was simply a way of crossing one's fingers as you tell a lie.

2. Matthew 23:15-22 (NKJV)

- a. 15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. 16 Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is

obliged to perform it.' 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' 19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

3. The idea was that some oaths were binding and others were not.
4. Or at least some were more binding than others.
5. And when someone is telling you something you had better know the rules.
6. It should not be forgotten that in some cultures lying to one considered an enemy is a smart thing to do to gain an advantage.
  - a. Communist countries have been notorious for this.
  - b. The Third-Reich used this very often.
  - c. So with Islam

(1) The Qur'an in a variety of verses (2:225, 3:28, 3:54, 9:3, 16:106, 40:28, and 66:2) establishes the religious legitimacy of breaking oaths, lying, unilaterally violating treaties, and generally scheming against non-Muslims. Allah himself is described as "the best of schemers" (3:54, 8:30, 10:21), and Muhammad declared, as a justification for murdering unarmed prisoners after offering them safe passage, "war is deceit" (see the Hadith collection of Bukhari, vol. 4, book 52, numbers 268–271). So during the negotiations of Oslo I and II, Arafat's willingness to acquiesce to Israeli demands was merely his acting as a good Muslim warrior, using taqiyya, deceit in warfare, to put his enemy at a disadvantage.  
<http://muslimfact.com/bm/terror-in-the-name-of-islam-permits-lying-to-deceive-unbelievers-and-bri.shtml>

- d. So with politicians.
- e. But never for a Christian.

C. Jesus said the same thing.

1. Matthew 5:33–37 (NKJV)

a. 33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'  
34 But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

2. Hence James, like Christ (Matth. 5:34), defines this swearing as swearing by heaven, by the earth, or by any other oath (ὄρκος) connected with a hypothetical curse. *John Peter Lange et al., A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: James (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 137.*

III. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No,"

A. People's favorite today is, "I swear on a stack of Bibles".

B. Or I swear on my grandmother's grave.

C. The real situation is that if someone is going to lie, no matter how they formulate the oath will it do any good.

IV. Lest you fall into judgment.

A. All liars will have their part in hell

1. Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

a. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

B. Satan is the father of lies.

1. John 8:44 (NKJV)

a. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

C. To lie is to align ourselves with the father of lies.

D. To speak the truth is to align ourselves with the one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## An Example of a Bad Oath

Acts 23:12–21 (NKJV)

12 And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. 14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, “We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.”

16 So when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.” 18 So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.”

19 Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”

20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. 21 But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.”

James 1:19 (NKJV)

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

James 1:26 (NKJV)

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

“reverence for the name of God may well be called paramount in the discipline of the tongue.

Paradoxically, swearing not only increases the untruthfulness which oaths are supposed to prevent but also as inevitably leads to blasphemy. The oath is the commonest and most serious moral fault in speech, . . .

. . . swearing is necessary only in a society where the truth is not revered.”

*James B. Adamson, The New International Commentary on the New Testament – The Epistle of James, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 194-195.*