

Are we guilty of deliberate, willful sin as a Church? Why would I say such a thing? Don't we ask people to swear an oath to God and other members in front of our assembly when they become members of our Church? Doesn't James clearly say this is wrong: "Above all, my brothers, do not swear..."? It could be even worse if you are married! Did you happen to make a vow at your wedding? What about the individual who "swears" on a Bible as a witness in court? Could it be that God has abandoned our Country because we have sinned against Him in this way – to "swear" to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God?" Consider our kids who "pledge allegiance to the flag." What about the soldiers who take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States? Or, is James talking about something completely different? Today we will find out.

Title: The Anatomy of a Commitment

Text:

Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

A. What?

B. Why?

C. How?

Flow of Thought:

I. Testing our trust in God:

- A. In Trials – v.2.12
- B. In Temptation – v.13-17
- C. In Life – v.18-21

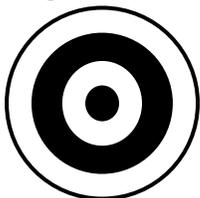
II. Testing our focus – 2:1-4:17

- A. In how we relate within the community of faith:
 - 1. Favoritism? – 2:1-7
 - 2. Love! – 2:8-13
 - 3. Faith? Works! – 2:14-26
 - 4. Speech – 3:1-18
 - 5. World-like living – 4:1-5:6

III. Testing our character – 5:7-12

- A. In our response to persecution – 5:7-11
- B. In how we view making a commitment – 5:12

Target Practice: Use this resource to dig deeper in your personal or family devotions during the week.



- Consider all the ways we make vows or swear in some way within our society. Why do we do this?
- What is the attitude behind the issue that James is dealing with?
 - Why would James mention items such as "heaven" or "earth" or "anything else?"
 - In what way will an individual's character and their ability to make a commitment collide in the "yes/and "no/no" phrase?