

28.27c Sermon on the Mount—“You Have Heard It Said . . . But I Say,” Part 1 (Matthew 5:21–37)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials. For the section on murder, cut apart each type of murder. Fold up the consequence and reveal it at the appropriate point in the presentation.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *to murder*: to kill someone
- *to bless*: “The word bless, spoken of God, means to regard with favour, or to confer benefits, as when God is said to bless his people. When we speak of our blessing God, it means to praise him, or give thanks to him. When we speak of blessing men, it unites the two meanings, and signifies to confer favour, to thank, or to speak well of” (Barnes in Online Bible).
- *to swear*: (a) to promise with an appeal to God for the truth of what is said (Webster’s 1828 Dictionary); (b) taking the Lord’s name in vain, like “Oh, my God!”; (c) euphemisms that take God’s name or something associated with cursing (like *damn*) and substitute other letters so that a word sounds like the name of God or of His acts, *e.g.*, *gosh* or *dang*.
- *to reconcile*: to restore friendly relationships
- *to sue*: to start a legal case against someone
- *the council or Sanhedrin*: Jewish supreme court

Scripture: (ESV)

Matthew 5:21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 “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.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be

simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Introduction/Review:

Scribes and Pharisees worked hard to keep God’s laws. They were concerned that Jesus was not keeping God’s law. In fact, they worried that He might even destroy God’s law, but in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, “I did not come to destroy but to fulfill the law.” That means Jesus would totally, completely obey all of God’s Word. That is impossible for humans to do, but Jesus could do it. Why? Because He is God.

Jesus also said something that I find impossible to do on my own: “Unless your righteousness is better than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” We need Jesus’ righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

Story Components for This Lesson:

Reference in Matthew 5	You have heard . . . (What the scribes and Pharisees said)	But I say unto you . . . (What Jesus said)
vv. 21–26	You shall not murder.	“Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment,” <i>etc.</i> . . . therefore . . . leave your gift at the altar, be reconciled,” <i>etc.</i>
vv. 27–30	You shall not commit adultery. [If your class is composed of young children, you may wish to skip or modify this point.]	“Whoever looks at a woman to lust . . . has already committed adultery. . . . If your right eye (right hand) offends, cast it from you.
vv. 31, 32	Give a certificate of divorce.	No reason for divorce
vv. 33–37	Do not swear falsely.	Swear not at all.

Story:

Today’s part of the Sermon on the Mount explains how a person can do what Jesus said to do—exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. In each of five examples, Jesus quoted a commandment or something that everyone had heard as a rule of life. Each time He said, “You have heard . . .” and then quoted the rule. Afterwards He said, “But I say unto you . . .” and explained how to obey that commandment correctly. When He quoted a well-known rule of life that wasn’t in God’s Law, He showed it to be wrong. Let’s look at these rules.

(This sermon is convicting. It tells us things that we don’t practice, things we don’t like to hear, and things opposite to what we’ve been taught by well-meaning people. May the Lord help us to understand what He wants us to do, and may He give us grace to do it!)

“You shall not murder.”

The first “you-have-heard” statement is Commandment #6. What is that commandment? [You shall not murder.] What is murder? [Killing someone. We are not to kill.] “But I say unto you,” said Jesus, “whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”

Ooo! This sounds serious. Anger equals murder? And murder means hell fire! How can this be?

What is a core cause behind someone’s murdering someone else? Many times it is because the murderer is angry with another person. Anger often leads to actual murder.

✓On the other hand, there is a righteous (good) anger—anger against sin that would not lead to murder.

Jesus was angry with the Temple merchants. He did not sin when He threw them out of the Temple.

Jesus talks about three sinful kinds of anger in this verse. [Show visual found at the end of this lesson.]

1. Anger without a cause—“everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.” Maybe a person is just “having a bad day, and he is annoyed. Is that kind of anger okay? Not if there is no cause for anger. What if you are doing wrong, and your parent becomes angry? ✓In that case, there is a cause. Anger without a cause, however, still demands a consequence of judgment. God will judge it in the last day if not before.

2. Anger with contempt or despising—“whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council.” This kind of anger calls someone “Raca,” which means “stupid.” Jesus said there is a harsher punishment—being liable to the council—for angrily calling someone “stupid.” To appear before the council (or Sanhedrin) was a scary business, for these men could make life very difficult if they judged against someone.

3. Before I tell you about the last kind of anger, let me define the word *fool* as it is used in this verse. *Fool* means someone wicked and ungodly. Let me also explain that Jesus and godly men in the Bible called others *fools* when they were trying to instruct those people in the true ways of God. ✓They were not using the term in angry contempt of those people but were trying to show how they were wrong. However, to be so angry with a person as to call him or her a fool (a wicked, ungodly reprobate) is to deserve the punishment of hell (Gehenna)*—“whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”

Be reconciled.

Anger causes hard feelings among people, even among friends or family. Jesus spoke quite clearly about this situation: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Do you see how important right relationships are in God’s sight—even to the point of interrupting one’s worship so that reconciliation can take place first.

Jesus continued on a related topic—being sued and going to court. He said people should do their utmost to reconcile with an opponent and thus avoid going to court: “Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.”

As these verses demonstrate, a lot of risk is involved in going to court. What good advice Jesus gives about doing one’s best to reconcile! It’s all part of the two greatest commandments: “Love the Lord your God,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

So, to review, what was the sixth commandment Jesus quoted? [You shall not murder.] What did Jesus say this commandment includes? [Not to be angry with a person.] There is a whole lot more to Commandment #6 than we usually consider. We might think we would not murder, but we sure can get angry enough to be in danger of hell fire. Let us pray and confess. [Do so.]

“You shall not commit adultery.”

[Teacher, skip or modify this paragraph if teaching young children.] The next “you-have-heard” is the seventh commandment. What is it? [You shall not commit adultery.] All sexual sin can be included here even though there are technical differences in language between premarital (having sex before marriage) and marital defilement (having sex with another person’s spouse). Jesus expands this commandment with His “but-I-say-to-you,” proclaiming, “Everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” In other words, not only outward actions but also inward musings of the heart are sin. In fact, the mind launches sin—people consider a sin before doing it. Jesus said, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw

it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” This sounds terribly violent to us; however, better than spending eternity in hell is to go through life without an eye or a hand if losing that body part turns someone away from sin to life in Christ.

Connected with the seventh commandment is a discussion about divorce. Some Jews in Jesus’ day thought they could divorce a wife for any reason, *e.g.*, if she burned his toast. All he had to do was to give her a document that told her she was now divorced. Jesus said it’s not so easy. In fact, divorcing one person and then marrying another is to commit adultery. Jesus wants married people to stay married.**

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord.”

The next “you-have-heard” statement is not one of the Ten Commandments but it is related to the third commandment. What is that commandment? [You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.] “You have heard, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’” That means that when we promise with an oath to God, we had better fulfill our promise and not lie.

This is what was happening: The Jews might not have been using the name of God when they swore, but they used the names of things in His creation: they swore by heaven, by earth, by their heads. (That reminds me of something I used to say when I was younger—“My eye! you didn’t do that!” I was swearing by my eye.) The Jews, in private conversation, would often say things like, “By Jerusalem, I promise you . . .” or “Heaven is my witness that I am speaking the truth.”

What did Jesus say? “But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” So what did Jesus say about swearing? [Not to swear at all.] If you think you must swear in order to convince others of your honesty, what does Jesus say about the words you used to swear? Where do they come from? [Evil.]

[Show “swearing” chart found at the end of this lesson.] Now, today I will be using swear words to demonstrate the points we are making. Please know that I am not saying them with personal meaning. This chart shows three kinds of swearing, but the last two are very much the same:

1. Promising, using God’s name, that you are telling the truth. This is okay in a court of law—“So help me, God,” but it is *not* okay in everyday life—“I swear to God I’m telling the truth.” Do you know what? When I hear someone say, “I swear to God,” I think that person is usually lying, breaking not only the third commandment but also the ninth—“You shall not lie.”
2. Misusing the name of the Lord or His acts or attributes as in exclamations like “Oh, my God,” “Goodness,” or “Damn!”
3. Misusing the name of God or of His works in euphemisms, which are “better-sounding” words for God without actually saying the name of God—“Oh, my gosh!” “Ye gads!” “Geez!” or even “Dang!”

✓I think Jesus was including all of these kinds of swearing when He said, “Swear not at all.” If you have a habit of swearing in any of these three ways, ask God for grace to break the habit. These words are unnecessary. Rather, “Let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and let your “no” be “No.” I have spent a lot of time on this “you-have-heard” statement because young people tend to think it is okay to use cuss words in their speech. Jesus said it is not okay.

**Gehenna*. “After the return of the Jews from captivity, this place was held in such abhorrence, that, by the example of Josiah, (2Ki 23:10) it was made the place where to throw all the dead carcasses and filth of the city; and was not unfrequently the place of executions. It became, therefore, extremely offensive; the sight was terrific; the air was polluted and pestilential; and to preserve it in any manner pure, it was necessary to keep fires continually burning there. The extreme loathsomeness of the place; the filth and putrefaction; the

corruption of the atmosphere, and the lurid fires blazing by day and by night, made it one of the most appalling and terrific objects with which a Jew was acquainted” (Gill in Online Bible).

**The exception in this Scripture passage is “sexual immorality.” Some people believe this specifically refers only to the betrothal period as in the case of Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1:18, 19). I see a wide interpretation today of “sexual immorality,” even among believers, but few seem concerned about “whoever marries a divorced woman [or man] commits adultery.” A spouse’s being in danger, a condition not addressed in this passage, is, in my opinion, a legitimate and practical cause for at least separation.

Lessons from this lesson:

- Jesus is God:
He had authority to expand the 10 Commandments (Matthew 5:21–48).
- Ask God for grace to control anger and hateful speech.
- We should determine, even while we are young, to follow the biblical plan for marriage.
- Honor the name of God by speaking it only reverently, never casually.
- Lessons about swearing:
 - (1.) *Profane swearing is always the evidence of a sinful heart.* To trifle with the name of God, or with any of his works, is itself most decided proof of sinfulness.
 - (2.) *No man is believed any sooner in common conversation because he swears to a thing.* A man that is truly a Christian, and leads a Christian life, does not need oaths and profaneness to make him believed.
 - (3.) *It is no mark of a gentleman to swear.* [E]very man who swears, prays—that God would sink him and others into hell. No profane man knows but that God will *hear his prayer*, and send him to the regions of woe.
 - (4.) *Profaneness does no man any good.* No man is the richer, or wiser, or happier for it. It helps no one’s education, or manners. . . . It is disgusting to the refined; abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; degrading to the mind; unprofitable, needless, and injurious, in society; and awful in the sight of God.
 - (5.) *God will not hold the profane swearer guiltless* (edited from Barnes in Online Bible).

Activities:

- Play dough: lips; hand; heart
- Sing “Let Your Yes Be Yes” found below (<http://larryholdermusic.org/godcares.html>). At his site the composer gives free access to his worthy musical, “God Cares for You,” for young voices. This musical is based on the Sermon on the Mount.
- Sing the first and second stanzas of “Jesus Said It on the Mountain” found in Lesson 28.27b or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org.
- Practice asking forgiveness. Have students say, “I was wrong to (tell the specific offense). Will you please forgive me?” Wait for an answer. In the case where a person feels he is innocent, [s]he might need to humble oneself, saying something like, “I know we have a conflict, but I want to be reconciled to you. Can we be friends even though we disagree?” In both of the above situations, the answer might be “no”—“No, I won’t forgive,” or “No, we can’t be friends.” Nevertheless, an attempt has been made for reconciliation. Harboring a grudge by either party against the other person is sin; we are to forgive.
- Review questions: (Game: Assign point value to each question. Keep track of points that individuals or teams make.)
 1. (3 pts.) What are the two phrases we heard over and over again in this lesson? [Hint: “You have . . . But . . .”] [“You have heard; but I say unto you.”]

2. (2 pts.) What is at the heart of nearly all murder? [Anger.]
3. (2 pts.) What's another word for Raca? [Empty or stupid.]
4. (3 pts.) What's another word for fool? [Wicked or ungodly.]
5. (2 pts.) What does someone deserve who calls another a fool? [Hell.]
6. (3 pts.) If someone sues us, what should we do? [Try to reconcile with the accuser.]
7. (2 pts.) What should be interrupted when we remember that a brother has something against us? [Worship of God; bringing a gift to the altar.]
8. (3 pts.) Give an example of what someone would say if swearing in court. ["So help me, God," *etc.*]
9. (4 pts.) What is a euphemism? [Making something sound better than it is; *e.g.*, saying God's name with different letters.]
10. (2 pts.) Give an example of a euphemism. [Gosh, Dang, Geez, *etc.*]

Handwork:

- Do the crossword puzzle found below.

Memory Verse[s]: (KJV)

- Matthew 5:34, 37—Swear not at all . . . but let your communication be [yes, yes or no, no].
- Review John 1:1–18:
 - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
 - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
 - 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
 - 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
 - 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
 - 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
 - 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
 - 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
 - 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
 - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
 - 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

to murder

to bless

to swear

to reconcile

to sue

council/Sanhedrin

Consequences of Anger

Anger without a cause:

judgment

Anger with contempt

(saying "*Raca*" ("stupid")):

Sanhedrin

Anger with wickedness

(saying "*fool*" ("wicked, ungodly")):

Gehenna (hell)

Three Kinds of Swearing

1.* Promising, using God's name, that you are telling the truth.

(This is okay in a court of law — “So help me, God,” or “As God is my witness.”)

This is NOT okay in everyday life —
“I swear to God I'm telling the truth.”)

2. Misusing the name or acts of the Lord. (“Oh, my God!”
“Damn!”)

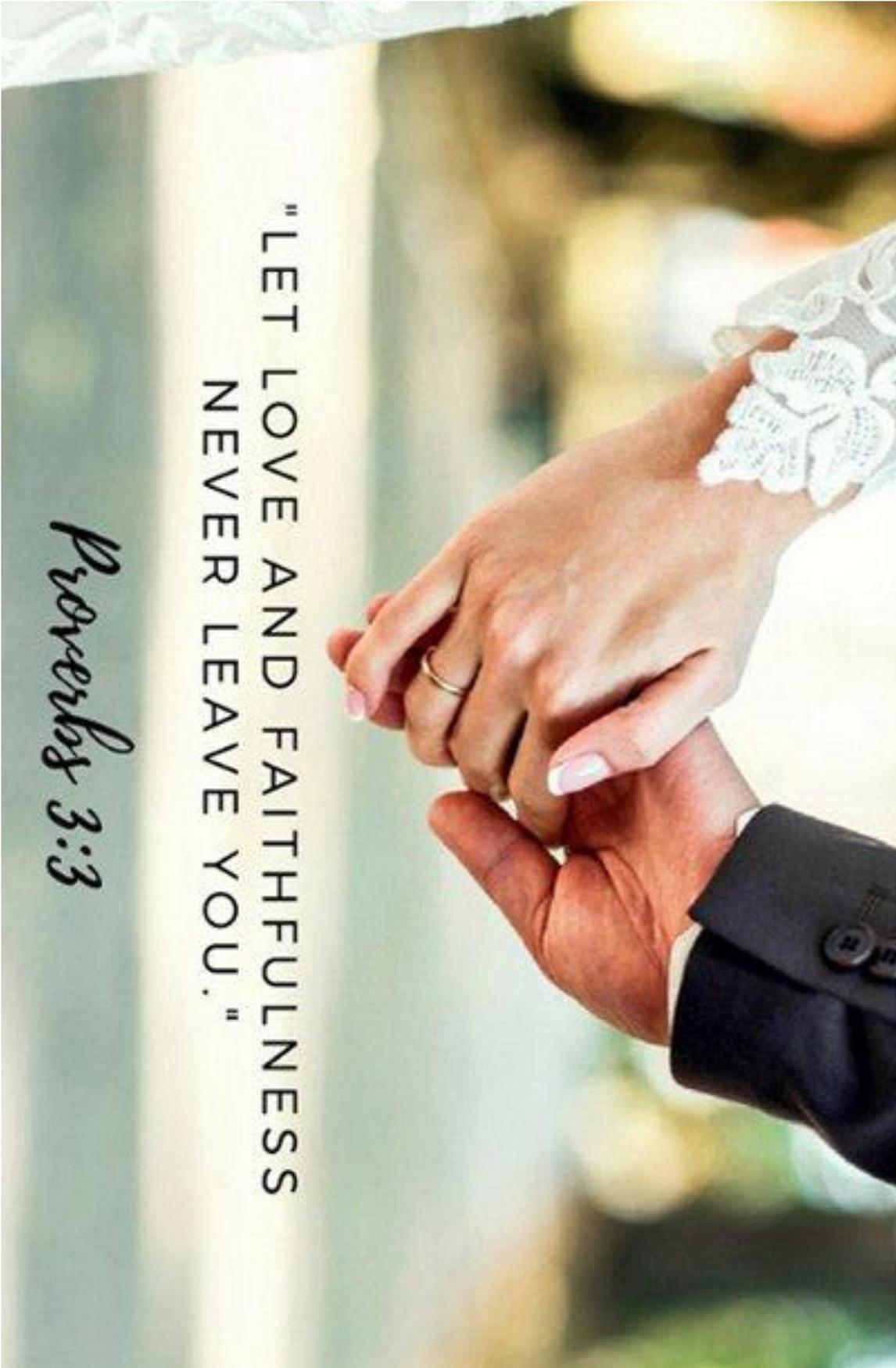
3. Euphemisms for God.

(“Oh, my gosh!” “Dang!” “Ye gads!” “Geez!”)



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**I tell you that anyone who
is angry with a brother or sister
will be subject to judgment - *Jesus***



"LET LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS
NEVER LEAVE YOU."

Proverbs 3:3

**LET WHAT YOU SAY
BE SIMPLY**

“**YES**”

OR

“**NO**”

MATTHEW 5:37, ESV



Let Your Yes Be Yes

Words & Music by Larry Holder

Sing verses staccato

1. Let your "yes" be "yes", let your
 "yes" be "yes"; there's no
 "yes" be "yes", let your

"no" be "no"; Does-n't take an - y more just to let them know That your
 need to swear by the sun or the moon; let us all take care. For the
 "no" be "no", for the Lord is pleased when you keep it so. In the

word is good, that you mean just what you say; Let your "yes" be "yes", let your
 moon and sun are in God's con - trol. Let your "yes" be "yes", let your
 way you speak, you give hon - or to the Lord; Let your

"no" be "no"! 2. Let your When you
 "no" be "no"!

make a pledge, when you give your word, do not swear by an - y - thing that be -

longs to the Lord, For the sun and moon and the stars are His a-lone: Mor-ning,

From the musical "God Cares For You" larryholdermusic.org/godcares.html

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Let Your Yes Be Yes (page 2)



noon, and night, all His han - di - work is shown. 3. So let your

⊕ *Choir half-and-half* *Choir together*



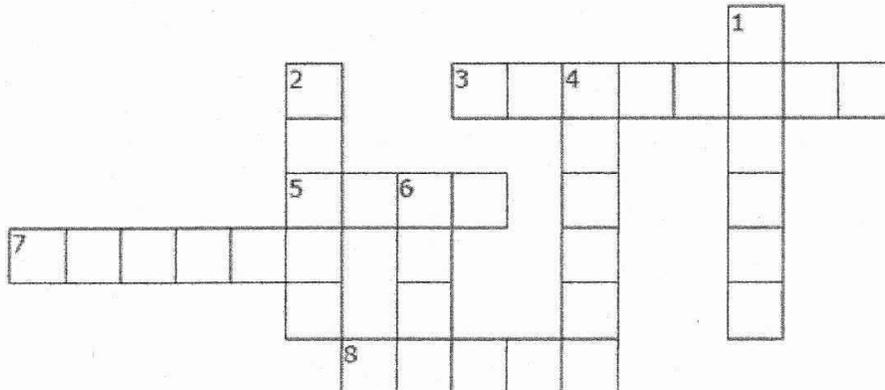
"yes" be "yes", (Let your "yes" be "yes") Let your "no" be "no"!

Forgiving and Forgiven

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."

Matthew 5:23-24

Based on Matthew 5:21-25



ACROSS

3. To decide if a person is guilty or innocent
5. A present that is given to another person
7. Killing of a person by another person
8. The place where gifts or sacrifices to God are made

DOWN

1. A group of human beings (men or women or children)
2. To be furious
4. To be at risk of being injured or harmed
6. A person who lacks good sense

DANGER	PEOPLE	ANGRY	MURDER
JUDGMENT	GIFT	ALTAR	FOOL

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