

“But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne.... Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.”

Matthew 5:34, 37 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 5:33-48

As with many things, we take simple things and make them complicated. NOTHING moves from complex to simple without intentionality! Apparently, verbal promises had risen to the level of elementary-playground rules of engagement. You: “Yeah, you can have my Pokémon Pikachu card.” Your friend: “Promise?” You: “I promise.” Your friend: “Do you pinky finger swear it?” You: “Yes, I pinky swear.” As you see, “pinky swears” are neither involving or invoking God in the card-gift. But involving God in backing our promises is a big NO NO. Jesus: “Don’t drag God on these deals, just keep your word!” Of course, no self-respecting Jew would outright use God’s name in any kind of vow, that would straight out be blasphemy! But, dropping heaven, earth or God’s city was “acceptable.” Growing up people would outright declare, “I swear to God!” hoping to convince someone of their sincerity. Now, believers would not do this because they’d cringe at those words. But non-christians would say it all the time. BTW, no one swears to Darwin or Buddha 😜. Vows are pretty important in relationships and in society or community. We put the word “solemn” in front of the word vow to really beef it up. It is a contractual promise, more like a modern MOU (memo of understanding). “A man who makes a vow to the Lord or makes a pledge under oath must never break it. He must do exactly what he said he would do.” Numbers 30:2. So, can we keep our contracts? Absolutely. Should we keep our word or a promise? Again, definitely. Do we need to “beef” it up by invoking stuff that belongs to God? Nope, not necessary. Just let your YES be yes and your NO be no - simple. Quit complicating everything 😊.

## oratio

Dad,

We (as humans) are so oddly funny, not haha funny either. Help us to keep things simple. Your love, your rules, your ways and not ours - much much simpler. And, Jesus words, are a great reminder to keep my word, keep my promises. To say what I’m going to do and do what I said I’m going to do! Thanks for this simple, yet profound thought this morning!

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root