James 5:12: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."

James had just written to "the brethren" of his day to encourage them in some very difficult and challenging trials. Earlier in his letter, he taught them about the dangers of an untamed/unbridled tongue, and to "not speak evil of one another" …….

Now James warned them about another rash sin of an unbridled tongue, carelessly and thoughtlessly swearing oaths without any commitment in your heart to keep your word.

> *Be so careful of swearing before God because you are using God's Name to tell someone that you are telling the truth!*

When you swear an oath (BEFORE GOD), and then you do not keep your word, you didn't just lie, which is bad enough, but you dishonored God's Name! I think that is why James PREFACED (V12) with the words:

> *"But above all things, my brethren", he wanted them to know that dishonoring God's Name was no light offense, be so careful of how you use God's Name! End of (V12): "Lest ye fall into condemnation".*
> *Leviticus 19:12, Cf. Exodus 20:7, Matthew 7:21-23*

If all we had was James 5:12, we should think to NEVER take an oath or swear before God! But that was not James' intent.

If you go back to Matthew 5:33-37, I believe James was referring to the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. *Matthew 5:33-37*

Understand that it is not a sin to swear an oath.

> *Genesis 22:15-18, 26:3-4, Cf. Hebrews 6:13-18.*

Paul, at times, in his letters used oaths to confirm what he said as true, to remove any questions in the minds of those who heard him. This is abundantly clear from what we just read in Hebrews 6.

> *Romans 1:9, 9:1, 2 Corinthians 1:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:5*

In Matthew 23:16-22, we get to the root of the matter! Hypocritical swearing! Do not swear like this!

What the Pharisees were teaching the people was that it was ok to swear an oath and then go back on your word, to in effect lie using God's Name!

It grieves my heart whenever I hear someone thoughtlessly blurt out "I swear to God"! It's no different than the

world constantly using the words, "Oh my God"!
   Ecclesiastes 5:2-6, Numbers 30:2
Brethren don't get into the habit of always thinking that you must use God's Name or swear an oath to confirm your words…… instead, get into the habit of thinking before you speak, telling the truth, and being trustworthy to keep your word and your promises.

> *Let this be who you are, my brethren, "but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay". Let your words be trusted so that you do not need to be swearing for every little thing that you say. Matthew 12:36-37*