

Matthew 5:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Analysis

You cannot even control your hair color naturally (in ancient times without dye), so how can you swear by your own head? This illustrates human powerlessness and God's sovereignty over even small details. Since you control nothing ultimately, speak humbly and truthfully, recognizing your limitations.

Historical Context

Ancient peoples couldn't artificially color hair as modern technology allows. Jesus's point: you can't even change this small thing by will alone, so don't make grand oaths as if you control outcomes. Only God controls the future.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing your limitations over life and future events create humility in your speech?
2. In what areas do you speak presumptuously as if you control outcomes only God controls?

Interlinear Text

μήτε	ἐν	τῇ	κεφαλῇ	σου	ὀμόσης	ὅτι	οὐ
Neither	by	G3588	head	thy	shalt thou swear	because	not
G3383	G1722		G2776	G4675	G3660	G3754	G3756
δύνασαι	μίαν	τρίχα	λευκὴν	ἢ	μέλαιναν	ποιῆσαι	
thou canst	G1520	hair	white	or	black	make	
G1410		G2359	G3022	G2228	G3189	G4160	

Additional Cross-References

Luke 12:25 (Parallel theme): And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

Matthew 6:27 (Parallel theme): Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?