
The Ten Commandments: No Lying

Today we will continue our study through the Ten Commandments. As we look at the ninth commandment we will deal with the issue of truthfulness. Even though the ninth commandment informs us of what not to do—to bear false witness against our neighbor—it actually calls us to be true witnesses of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this text, we will learn what it means to bear the truth and to be a testimony of truth to our neighbors.

Exodus 20:16

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

I. **We must bear the Truth to our neighbors.**

In order to be Truth Bearers we have to know who we are in Christ. God was commanding the Israelites not to bear false witness because they were His covenant people amidst a pagan culture. In fact, Exodus 19:5-6 says, “Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all people, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” This is where God assures Israel of their covenant relationship with Him. So, like Israel, we are God’s covenant people who bear His image, as well as His truth. We live in a culture that is highly pretentious and judgmental, which causes us to be insecure about who we are in Christ. But the Gospel truth that we know and believe transcends cultural barriers that we encounter every day.

II. **We must be Testimonies of Truth to our neighbors**

The Westminster Larger Catechism says that to obey the ninth commandment is to promote truth between man and man and the good name of our neighbor as well as our own. In this way, our testimonies promote truth-sharing and are for the benefit of others. Even though your personal narrative may be painful for you, it can be healing for the recipient. Proverbs 18:21 says, “death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Our words can be both dangerous and damaging or comforting and encouraging. Because of this, we have to be mindful of how we speak to one another (that includes inappropriate jokes), so that we are offering words of grace and affirmation. Also, as testimonies of truth, we demonstrate a reality that our society strives to disprove. As witnesses of the truth we reflect God in every aspect of our lives. For instance, we learn that God desired for Israel to reflect His glory to all nations. Remember, Israel was encouraged to worship pagan idols all around them but God commanded them to have no other gods before Him. And it is through the nation of Israel that God would draw all other pagan nations to Himself. God uses each of our personal testimonies in our areas of influence to draw others to Himself.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the ninth commandment teach us about truthfulness?
2. In light of the ninth commandment, why is it essential to know who you are in Christ?
3. How do you use your words for the benefits of others?
4. Discuss how doubt and deception challenge your confidence in the truth.
5. How do unethical practices affect your witness?

6. When are you tempted to bear false witness?

Going Deeper

1. Have you hurt someone with your words? If so, have you confessed and sought forgiveness?
2. What has caused you to doubt the truth?