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Section: Commands (Law)

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November 15, 2023

**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q53. Why does God give the ninth commandment: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor?**

So we will always tell the truth and not speak evil of others.

**Exodus 20:16** “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

**1 Corinthians 13:6** (NIV1984) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

**Leviticus 19:11** (NIV1984) “ . . . Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.

**Zechariah 8:16** (NIV1984) These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts;

FALSE, adjective [Latin falsus, from fallo, to deceive. See Fall and Fail.]

TEST'IMONY, noun [Latin testimonium.] A solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact.

NEIGHBOR, noun. One of the human race; any one that needs our help, or to whom we have an opportunity of doing good.

You shall not give/make *untruthful declarations* against *one of the human race*.

1. What is truth?
2. The dangerous tongue
3. Forms of false testimony
4. Positive Requirements of the Ninth Commandment

* **What Is Truth?**

**John 14:6** . . . “I am the way, and the truth, and the life . . .

**John 17:17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

Truth is found in the very nature of God.

**Luke 4:41** And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But [Jesus] rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

It’s one thing to believe the truth that there is a God and even that Jesus is God, but actually embracing the truth means embracing Christ - embracing the fullness of who He is, believing all the truth of who Jesus is and believing all of His words.

Anytime a true statement is interpreted or understood to have meaning apart from God, it is no longer meeting the biblical definition of truth. The only true standard of truth is the Word of God.

Truth is not just a statement of literal facts. We see that truth is from God, that the Word of God itself IS truth, that Jesus Himself is THE truth.

* **The Dangerous Tongue**

**Psalm 34:11-14** Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

**Proverbs 12:13, 17-18** An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous escapes from trouble . . . Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

**James 1:26** If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.

**James 3:1-12**

**James 3:5-6** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

All sinning has its root in man’s fallen sin nature.

Sins of the tongue are motivated by mental sins such as arrogance, jealousy, bitterness, vindictiveness, hatred, pride, pettiness, envy, and the list goes on. Sins of the tongue are often fueled by emotions that found their origin in sinful thoughts. These sinful thoughts find their origin in the heart.

**Matthew 15:17-20a** Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.

HEART -> THOUGHTS -> EMOTIONS -> BEHAVIOR

* **Forms of False Testimony**

**John 21:20-23** Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”

* **Speaking carelessly**

**Matthew 12:36-37** I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Idle words are like words that just come out of our mouths without really having any intentional or helpful purpose – words that really have no value. It’s the kind of speaking where the words are coming out of our mouths, but they are ineffective for any good purpose. It is worthless talk.

* **Lying**

**Leviticus 19:11** “You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another.

**Colossians 3:9-10** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Consider what the life of Joseph and all the trials he faced when others lied about him.

**Genesis 37:18-35**

This is the essence of what lying is. A heart condition that is dissatisfied with a circumstance or a potential change that they lie guards against.

* **Slander and Gossip**

SLA'NDER, verb transitive to defame; to injure by maliciously uttering a false report respecting one; to tarnish or impair the reputation of one by false tales, maliciously told or propagated.

GOS'SIP, verb intransitive to prate; to chat; to talk much. To run about and tattle; to tell idle tales.

The old saying goes, “If you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say anything at all” I would venture to change it to says, “If you don’t have something profitable and true to say, don’t say anything at all”.

* **Positive Requirements of the Ninth Commandment**
* **We must promote our neighbor’s welfare.**

**Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

**Proverbs 12:18** There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

**Proverbs 16:24** Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

* **We must defend our neighbor’s good name.**

Even when true things are being said about someone in a genuine effort to help them, we need to make sure that the audience who is listening has the maturity and the relationship to be able to process the information in a way that doesn’t taint their perception of them in a negative way.

* **We must love our neighbor.**

Love is the fulfillment of the law. We tell the truth out of love for our neighbor. Love for God being expressed in love for our neighbor is our motive for speaking truthfully to and about our neighbor.

**1 Corinthians 13:1** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I love God then I will love my neighbor, and if I love my neighbor then I will not use my thoughts and words to bear false testimony against them.