

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS “The Faithful and True Witness”

Ex 20:16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." (NIV)

*Generically, we say, “Thou shalt not lie.” Not lying is at the heart of the ninth commandment. God, who is true, requires truthfulness from His people. But technically, the ninth commandment deals with protocol in the court of law. It is the legal mandate that one not give false testimony against another.*

Deut 19:15-21

15 One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

16 If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime,

17 the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time.

18 The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a **liar**, giving **false** testimony against his brother,

19 then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you.

20 The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you.

21 Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (NIV)

*The ninth commandment is about giving true testimony, worthy witness. Morally, it is to keep us pure from the defilement of deceit. Civilly, it is the talionic, the punishment identical to the offense. If one sought his neighbor’s eye with false witness, then his eye was forfeit.*

*In this sense, the letter of the law is reactionary; eye for eye, tooth for tooth, etc. One could almost say that in the letter of the law the rule was “do unto others what they have done unto you.”*

Matt 7:12

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (NIV)

*In the above verse, Jesus gives us the spirit of the law. It still rests on God’s universal law of reciprocity, “you reap what you sow.” Except in the New Testament, the rule is proactive as opposed to reactive. “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.”*

*But before we delve further into testimony, let’s examine the subject of truth and truth telling.*

*God is true and cannot lie:*

Num 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? (NIV)

Rom 3:4

Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." (NIV)

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, (NKJ)

1 Sam 15:29

He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind." (NIV)

Heb 6:17-18

17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. (NIV)

*Truthfulness is the nature of God. Lying is one thing that is impossible for Him. When He speaks, it is truth. As Jesus said:*

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. (NIV)

*Truth is a person, not a thing.*

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (NIV)

*God the Father is true. His word is truth. Jesus is the word in the flesh (John 1:14). He is the truth. Furthermore, the Spirit is the truth.*

John 14:16-17

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-

17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (NIV)

John 15:26-27

26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. (NIV)

*Here in John 15 we cut to the chase. This is where we are going. Walking as Zion citizens, it is necessary for us to give true witness of the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit.*

John 16:13-15

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.  
15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (NIV)

*Remember that if we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the law. He takes truth from the Lord, who is Truth, and gives it to us that we may live and speak truth.*

1 John 5:6

This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. (NIV)

*Conversely, God's arch-enemy, the devil, is characterized in a different way.*

John 8:44

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (NIV)

*It was the serpent who told Eve the lie that:*

Gen 3:4-5

4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (NIV)

*So we can see that when we look at the ninth commandment, "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor", we are taking on a subject as expansive as the Scriptures themselves. Even so, it is as practical as your next right spoken word.*

*We want to examine some of the causes for lying and how we are to overcome in truth telling.*

*Scripture tells us that the devil is the father of lies. As the parents, so the children.*

Gen 12:11-20

11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are.

12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live.

13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

14 When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman.

15 And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace.

16 He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, menservants and maidservants, and camels.

17 But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai.

18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?"

19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!"

20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had. (NIV)

Gen 20:12

Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. (NIV)

*Abraham lied by omission. She was his sister, he simply failed to state that she was his wife as well. Lest you think that he prospered by his lying, it was in Egypt that he received Hagar.*

Gen 26:7

When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful." (NIV)

*Isaac lied about Rebekah directly. She wasn't his sister. Isaac's son Jacob became the proverbial deceiver. Jacob's son Judah conceived of the plan of selling Joseph into slavery and then he and his brothers lied to their father about Joseph's death (Gen. 37:26-27 and following). Judah's descendant David pretended to be a madman when he fled from Saul to Gath. Later, while living in Ziklag, he would lie to King Achish about raiding Judah. Ultimately, he had Uriah killed and sought to cover it up.*

*Children learn the art of lying from their parents. We lie for many reasons (fear, gain, hatred, etc.), but the root of lying is pride.*

Isa 14:13-15

13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

15 But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. (NIV)

Ezek 28:17

Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. (NIV)

*Pride causes us to see things falsely and thus speak falsely. When we are afraid of being punished and lie to cover up our mistakes, it is pride that is keeping us from confession. When we boast about the 5' fish that was only 5", it is pride that causes us to blow the story up. When we slander our neighbors, making them beneath us in our own eyes, it is pride that is trying to lift us up.*

Ps 31:17-18

17 Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave.

18 Let their **lying** lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous. (NIV)

Ps 52:1-5

1 Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?

2 Your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit.

3 You love evil rather than good, **falsehood** rather than speaking the truth. Selah

4 You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!

5 Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin: He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah (NIV)

Ps 101:5-8

5 Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure.

6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to me.

7 No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

8 Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD. (NIV)

*In this Psalm, King David is speaking of how he is going to keep his house and kingdom clean of liars. David is just a type of his Greater Son. Jesus will not have those who practice deceit dwell in His house or stand in His presence (see Rev. 21:8)! Haughty eyes and a proud heart are given as character flaws of those who slander their neighbors.*

Ps 119:69 (NKJ)

The proud have forged a lie against me, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

*Since pride leads to lying (elevating ourselves, degrading others, or denying guilt), humility gives birth to honesty.*

Prov 6:16-19

16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him:

17 haughty eyes, a **lying** tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,

18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil,

19 a **false** witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. (NIV)

*Of the six things that the Lord hates (causing strife is the seventh), two of them are lying! Note that a lying tongue follows haughty eyes.*

*We need to humble ourselves before God to put the devil to flight from us in this area of life.*

James 4:6-7

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (NIV)

*Covetousness and greed are other motivators to lie.*

Acts 5:1-5

1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. (NIV)

*The love of money is the root of all evil.*

Jer 6:13

"From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice **deceit**. (NIV)

*For gain, the prophets in Israel began prophesying falsely. False prophecy is a death sentence.*

Deut 13:1-5

1 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder,

2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them,"

3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

4 It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.

5 That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you. (NIV)

*False prophets are allowed by God to perform miracles to try the hearts of men. Do we want God or His gifts? Do you follow God because He does miracles and wonders or do you follow Him because He is God?*

*False prophecy is to be guarded against. It is why we are told to judge prophecies. False prophecies can come from man's own mind and imagination (Ezek. 13:12) or a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophet (1 Kings 22:22-23). False prophecy is destructive to the people of God.*

Ezek 13:22-23

22 Because you disheartened the righteous with your **lies**, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives, 23 therefore you will no longer see false visions or practice divination. I will save my people from your hands. And then you will know that I am the LORD." (NIV)

Zech 10:2

The idols speak deceit, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. (NIV)

*True prophecy, in the other hand, is to be an encouragement to God's people.*

1 Cor 14:3 (NIV)

But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

Rev 19:10

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (NIV)

*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy! Without the Spirit it is impossible to give effective witness. He came that we may testify of Jesus.*

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (NIV)

Acts 5:31-32

31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. 32 We are **witnesses** of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (NIV)

*We should be characterized by truth telling. But the law speaks of not bearing false witness. Put positively, it is an injunction to give truthful testimony. Under the law of Moses, this simply meant truthful witness in the court of law. The spirit of the law is truthful testimony to the grace of God manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rev 1:5

and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, (NIV)

Rev 3:14

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. (NIV)

*Jesus is the faithful and true witness. To be Christlike, we must give faithful testimony of our Lord. To deny Him by word or deed is to be unfaithful.*

2 Tim 2:11-13

11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him;  
12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;  
13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (NIV)

*Indeed, testifying of Him and what he has done for us increases our faith to overcoming faith.*

Rev 12:11

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (NIV)

Ps 34:11-13

11 Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.  
12 Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,  
13 keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (NIV)

1 John 5:20

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (NIV)

*Amen!*