

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### "YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS"

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: March 12, 2023

SPEAKER: Brian/Wil

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 5:20

## Family Dinner Table

### Truth and Technology

Technology has complicated our ability to discern truth. The daily onrush of information from our newsfeed can be overwhelming, making it easier to scroll and scan, rather than check and contemplate. According to pastor and author Tim Challies, one of the ways we have adapted is to skim: *"It is a necessary skill if we are to avoid drowning. Yet there is a cost to our skimming. The more we skim, the more we become people who prefer to skim, people who would rather skim than read patiently and deeply. As we continue down this path, we become increasingly comfortable looking no further than a headline and comfortable drawing our conclusions from just a few words. Instead of looking to sources and verifying facts, we skim, draw our conclusions, and move on. Or worse, we skim, draw our conclusions, and then hit one of the ever-present "share" buttons using social media to share a lie or "like" a lie. The ninth commandment forbids us from lying, but it does far more than that. It demands that we deliberately seek out the truth. Even in an age of skimming, in an age in which we are drowning in a glut of information, it demands that we pursue the whole truth rather than risk promoting a lie. It demands that we resist the lazy temptation to have our views shaped by a skim, and that we instead do the hard work of pursuing facts. For as the Heidelberg Catechism warns us, we are in danger of doing the work of the devil."*<sup>3</sup>

- Read the [HCQ&A 112](#). What are ways we can preserve and promote truth and the good name of our neighbor?

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During our study of the *Ten Commandments*, we've learned that the Sinaitic laws were given to God's people in order to promote their welfare and communal well-being. The ninth commandment "You shall not bear false witness" by extension surrounds and safeguards the other laws. Truth-telling provides the bedrock for a societal ethos that honors others, defends life, preserves marriage, and protects property.

### The Intention of the Commandment

Our God, who does not lie, intends to form a truth-telling community. Truth ought to be cherished and held up as sacred because God is truth (John 14:6). In contrast, lies originate from the devil (Genesis 3:1). As theologian J. G. Vos explains in his commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism: *"Just as God is the source of truth, so Satan is the source of untruth, the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan is described in the Bible as the one who deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Satan is also called "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and "the prince of this world" (John 14:30) who has nothing in Christ. Satan has a kingdom which he seeks to extend and propagate, a kingdom of untruth. Those who are dominated by untruth are citizens of Satan's kingdom; Christian people who deal in untruth are handling the weapons of Satan's kingdom."*<sup>1</sup>

- Read Numbers 23:19, John 17:17, Titus 1:2, and Hebrews 6:18. Why is truth-telling so important?
- Describe the character of a liar. (See John 8:44, 1 Timothy 1:8-10, 1 John 2:22, and Revelation 21:8)

### The Meaning of the Commandment

The negative meaning of the ninth commandment rejects all forms of lying, deceit, slander, gossip, and destructive words. The positive meaning promotes integrity, transparency, and honesty as essential ingredients of biblical community. Broadly speaking, all sin breaks the ninth commandment, since all sin rejects truth, behaves according to lies, and often seeks to hide and cover-up sinful behavior. Tim Keller summarizes: *"Human community is destroyed when we don't tell the truth. When you tell a lie to a person you enslave them. You deprive them from the freedom to be in touch with reality. You are advantaging yourself at a terrible cost to the other person. The people that you are lying to, you are enslaving. Your neighbor is out of touch with reality and therefore devastated. Your neighbor is dying for a lack of truth."*<sup>2</sup>

- How does Scripture reinforce the notion that "all sin rejects truth"? (See Proverbs 6:16-19, 12:22; Isaiah 59:2-4; and Revelation 21:8, 22:14-15)
- Using the [WCF Larger Catechism Q&A 144-145](#), discuss the duties required and sins forbidden in the ninth commandment. How is misconstruing the intentions, words, and actions of others a violation? (cf. Nehemiah 6:1-9)

### The Hope for Forgiveness and Formation

Just as Yahweh liberated his people from slavery in Egypt, Jesus liberates us from the slavery of sin, setting us free through his truth (John 8:31-32). As a result, the work of the Holy Spirit empowers us to lead lives that prize and promote all that is true (John 16:8-13).

- Our Savior endured a sham trial and false verdict in order to redeem and restore liars and hidiers. After repeatedly denying that he ever knew Christ (John 18:17, 25-27), how was Peter later restored by Jesus (John 21:15-17)?
- Read John 8:31-47. The religious leaders were deeply offended by Jesus because he spoke the truth. They refused to hear his Word as he bore witness to the Father. According to Christ, how will we know we are truly his disciples? What are the marks of slavery to sin and Satan?

<sup>1</sup> Vos, Johannes. *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary*. 2002 edited by G.I. Williamson. Phillipsburg, NJ. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing. 387

<sup>2</sup> Keller, Tim. *False Testimony*. Gospel in Life Podcast, August 21, 2020. <https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/gospel-in-life/listen/false-testimony-881141.html>

<sup>3</sup> Challies, Tim. *Howard Schultz, Tim Keller and Commandment #9*. April 15, 2013. @Challies. <https://www.challies.com/christian-living/howard-schultz-tim-keller-and-commandment-9/#more>