

The Ninth Commandment

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The ninth commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20), protects our relationship with God because by seeking and bearing true witness to the truth, we can have a relationship with God. God is truth (John 14:6), and he who speaks truth from the heart abides with God (Psalm 15:1-2). Speaking the truth also shows love toward our fellow man (Ephesians 4:15). Lies of any kind—bald-faced, white or anywhere in between—cause separation and distrust, while truth, though sometimes hard to bear at first, produces unity and trust in the end.

1. Does the Bible define "bearing false witness"? Proverbs 14:5, 25; 12:17.

Comment: "Bearing false witness" is lying. Conversely, a faithful witness gives accurate testimony. He declares events, statements and information as they happened, not as he perceives them or as they give him an advantage. Such a person will consistently tell the complete truth.

2. How did the Old Covenant deal with false witnesses? Deuteronomy 19:15-21. What does God think about lying? Proverbs 6:16-19; 12:22; Ezekiel 13:8.

Comment: If enacted today, the Old Testament law—that a false witness would receive the same penalty that would have been given to the accused—would substantially reduce the number of lawsuits in our courts! People sue indiscriminately because they have no penalties to fear. God considers such things as abominations!

3. Who is the father of liars? John 8:44. Who cannot lie? Hebrews 6:17-18; Numbers 23:19.

Comment: A quick look at this world reveals that its loyalty is to Satan, who influences and rules it. He lies from the very depths of his character. In contrast, God does not and cannot lie, for truth is a primary attribute of His character.

4. Is it lying to deny that Jesus is the Christ? I John 2:22-23. Are we lying if we say we know Christ but do not keep His commandments? I John 2:4; Jeremiah 9:3-6. Can we say we love God and still be lying? I John 4:20.

Comment: If we say we love God but break His laws, we show we hate both God and man. We can just as easily lie with our actions as with our mouths!

5. Does the wrath of God come upon those who suppress the truth? Romans 1:18. Why do the wicked suppress the truth? Romans 1:24-25.

Comment: Commandment breakers suppress the truth to avoid admitting they are wrong. The human mind reasons that it is easier to lie than to live God's way, which they view as oppressive. But by lying, they become slaves to sin and Satan, the father of lies.

6. When does a lying tongue first appear in a wicked person? Psalm 58:3; Isaiah 48:8. Will liars always be allowed to lie? Psalm 63:11; 31:18; Proverbs 12:19; 19:5, 9. What terrible fate awaits liars? Revelation 21:8, 27.

Comment: The sinful habit of lying begins in earliest childhood and becomes ingrained in the character until it is rooted out through overcoming and repentance. All who continue to practice lying will receive the final death.

7. What does lying produce? Amos 2:4; Proverbs 12:18; 21:6; Hosea 10:13-15.

Comment: Lying produces penalties, poor health, death, corruption, suffering and more. A thief takes replaceable material

things, but a slanderer can rob one of self- esteem and reputation that may never be completely regained.

8. What should a Christian's attitude be toward lies? Psalm 120:2; Proverbs 30:7-9. Is part of conversion ridding ourselves of lies? Zechariah 8:16-17; Ephesians 4:25, 29; Colossians 3:9.

Comment: A Christian's goal should be to remove all vestiges of falsehood from his character, and thus conform to the image of Christ.

9. What is part of Israel's responsibility upon their future repentance? Zephaniah 3:12-13. What is not found in the mouths of the redeemed 144,000? Revelation 14:5. Will the New Jerusalem accept liars into it? Revelation 22:15.

Comment: Removing lies from their character may be the hardest thing the Israelites have to do in the Millennium! They will be able to see the example of the firstfruits of God's Kingdom, who are found without fault and without deceit. They will have overcome bearing false witness and entered the very Family of God, into which God will never permit liars!