

COMMANDMENT 09

Introduction: In a world of hot takes and half-truths, the ninth commandment, “Do not bear false witness,” hits hard. Let’s explore how truth isn’t just about facts but about content, intent, and context. It changes everything, from gossip and online outrage to courageous, restorative speech. Let’s discover how following Jesus can transform the way we talk, and the people we’re becoming.

ICE BREAKERS

- ☐ When you were a kid, what harmless “tall tale” did you believe way too long?
- ☐ Without naming names, what’s a phrase people use that sounds honest but is really spin?

EXPLORE

In a world of hot takes, subtweets, and résumé polish, the ninth command isn’t just “don’t lie,” it’s “don’t weaponize words against your neighbor.” Scripture treats speech as covenant business: words can free or condemn, restore or ruin. This week we’ll trace the Bible’s arc from courtroom truth to everyday speech that either brings life or death. We’ll consider a simple filter (Content, Intent, Context) so our words don’t merely state facts but serve people in love.

- ☐ Read Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 19:16-19; Proverbs 12:22; 18:21; Matthew 12:36-37; 18:15; Ephesians 4:15; 4:31-32; Psalm 141:3; James 3:5-10; Colossians 4:6
 - After reading Exodus 20:16 and Deuteronomy 19:16-19, where do you feel the weight of words most in everyday life (home, work, online)? Why?
 - Matthew 12:36-37 can feel sobering. What’s the difference between being careful with words and becoming performative with them?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☐ What is one way your words have recently given life (encouraged, clarified, defended) and one way they’ve drained life?
- ☐ Why do you think going to the person and not triangling is so rare?
- ☐ What is a sarcastic remark, slander, or bitter word that you have excused as “humorous” or “venting”? How would kindness, compassion, and forgiveness change those words?
- ☐ Where have you seen “true words used in untrue ways”? What is missing in those instances?
- ☐ What practical “guard at the door of your lips” could help you this week?

PRAYER & PRACTICE

Challenge: Spend each evening this week reflecting in prayer: Where did my words bring life? Where did they bring destruction? Resolve to repair where you can.

Close in prayer. Thank God for his grace and the truth that he brings to us. Ask for help in guarding our mouths and our hearts so that we reflect God’s love. Ask for healing where our words have harmed, and for courage and wisdom where our words are needed to restore, encourage, and bless.

