

COMMANDMENTS

Do Not Lie (Exodus 20:16)

Bottom Line: If we are to love God and love others, we must be fully committed to the truth.

Discuss this statement: “What’s true for you is true for you. What’s true for me is true for me.” What does this mean? Is this a helpful idea or a harmful idea?

When Jesus stood before Pilate, He said, “for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). Pilate’s response? “What is truth?” (v. 38). Pilate was not sincere in asking this question, he was speaking cynically and rhetorically. Pilate was mocking Jesus’ claim that He knew what was true. The world does the same thing today when they adopt platitudes like the one above. When truth can be anything we want, then truth becomes meaningless. But according to Jesus, bearing witness to the truth is the very reason He was born and came into the world. When we devalue truth, we devalue Jesus’ purpose for coming to us.

What are some examples of how the world devalues truth today? (Ex: the world says you can claim a gender identity that differs from your biological sex; the spin and bias that the media intentionally puts on news stories; etc.) In contrast, what are some examples of how we can honor truth today?

Telling the truth is important to Jesus, important to God, and should be important to us. This is clearly seen in the ninth commandment, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” In other words, you shall not lie. The negative mentioned here, “you shall not bear false witness,” implies the positive, “you shall tell the truth.” In everything we do, we should be truthful and honest. Jesus condensed the Ten Commandments down to two: “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind”, and “love your neighbor as yourself.” So this commandment to not lie is how we go about loving God and loving others.

How does our telling the truth show that we love God? How is our love for God seen in our telling the truth even if it may result in negative consequences for us?

How is telling the truth to our neighbor showing that we love them? How might someone use truth unlovingly? Have you ever seen someone doing this? Have you done this?

The full commandment says, “you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” You should not tell lies about someone else. Applying the same “positive-negative” principle as before, what should this commandment lead us to DO in regard to what we say about others?

The preciousness of truth is most easily seen when we are being lied about. Nobody will say that truth is unimportant or meaningless whenever someone is saying something about them that isn’t true. Perhaps that’s why this commandment is phrased the way it is. Forbidding speaking lies about your neighbor puts a much more personal spin on this commandment than if it were simply “do not

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lie.” Telling the truth protects our own reputation, it protects the reputation of the God “who cannot lie”, and it also protects the reputation of others by not allowing falsehood to be spread about them.

What effects does lying have on relationships, no matter the reason behind it?

Read Ephesians 4:22-25. What does Paul tell us to do in place of lying? Why is it not enough to simply not lie?

If you’ve spent any time in the church, school, or the workplace, you’ve likely seen the negative impact that gossip, lies, false teaching and slander have on the unity of society. But as members of the body of Christ, we are supposed to build one another up in love rather than tear one another down in lies. Not only does our wrongful speech hurt others, it also hurts our witness to the world. Additionally, the church of Christ is to be a place known for speaking the truth in love, not avoiding the truth or covering up the truth.

Is there any such thing as a harmless lie? Why or why not? In what ways could you easily lie at your job? At school? At home? What keeps you from lying in those situations?

What does repentance from lying look like? Is it a matter of simply refusing to lie from here on out? Or is there more to it?

Reflection: Read these aloud, using your discretion about which questions should be pondered and which questions should be discussed.

Do you believe the truth of the Gospel? The Bible promises that you can know the truth and the truth will set you free (John 8:32). Jesus Christ died for you, paying the penalty for every lie you’ve ever told and every sin you’ve ever committed. He is inviting you to reject the lies of the world and to accept the truth that genuine joy is found only in Him. Will you believe this truth? Until you give yourself to the source of all truth, your search for truth will never be complete.

Do you find yourself telling lies? Even “little ones?” The Scripture says that Satan is “the father of lies” and everyone who makes a habit of lying belongs to him (John 8:44). Why do you feel the need to lie? Is it insecurity on your part? Are you trying to cover something up? What does repentance from these lies look like? What does a commitment to truth require you to do?

Jesus says in Matthew 5:37 that our “yes” should be “yes” and our “no” should be “no.” Do you find that people are quick to trust you? Or are they slow to believe what you say? What does this communicate about your integrity and character? What can you do to earn the trust of people around you?

Do you view God’s Word as completely truthful? Do you trust that what God has given us in the Bible is helpful, relevant, and for our good? Whatever your answer is, how do your actions line up with that profession? What can you do to exercise more trust in God’s Word?