

Honor the Truth

Exodus 20:16

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor

I. What Did This Mean to Them?

A. The meaning of the word.

1. **False Testimony** (שקר) = falsehood, lie and (עד) = witness, one who gives a testimony.
 - a. The word implies not only false speech but also false actions - a deceptive type character.
 - b. **ILL: The apocryphal book "Susanna"**.
2. You are not only not to lie yourself, you are to avoid liars! Ex 23:7 - Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.
3. Lying shows you are not in touch with reality.
 - a. Rom 1:25 - They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.
 - b. I Jn 1:6 - If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

B. Deceitfulness identifies you with Satan rather than God!

1. One of the biggest distinctions between God & Satan is falsehood vs. truth.
2. **Devil** (διάβολος) = deceiver, liar, false witness, malicious accuser.
 - a. When you falsely accuse someone, you are following in Satan's footsteps.
 - b. Jn 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.
 - c. II Cor 11:13-15 - For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.
3. God is truth (Is 65:16; Jn 3:33).
 - a. His law is truth (Ps 119:142).
 - b. His commandments are truth (Ps 119:151).
 - c. His word is truth (Ps 119:160).
 - d. It is impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18; Tit 1:2).
4. Lord Jesus is truth.
 - a. He was the word Who became flesh full of grace & truth (Jn 1:14).
 - b. He said He was the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. - Jn 14:6.
 - c. He promised us He would send "the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17).
 - d. The Spirit of truth would guide us into all truth (Jn 16:13).

C. God's punishment for lying. **ILL: Ananias & Sapphira** (Act 5:1-10).

II. What Should This Mean to You?

A. About being a false witness.

1. Is making an accusation important enough to do it? Is the supposed offence too petty to bother with?
2. What is the cost of making an accusation?
 - a. Are you guilty of gossip?
 - b. Are you guilty of slander? (An accusation that could destroy your victim!)
3. Do you have enough evidence to support your accusation?
 - a. Usually accusations are made because of “hear say” with no evidence but gossip.
 - b. You tend to jump to conclusions before you hear the whole story.
4. When someone is accused, follow the biblical plan! **Matt 18:15-17** - If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.
 - a. Go privately.
 - b. If that fails - go back with a witness.
 - c. If that fails - involve the church leadership.

B. About lying.

1. What about unwholesome talk? **Eph 4:29** - Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
2. What about swearing? **Eph 5:4** - Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.
3. What about Gossip & Slander?
 - a. **Jam 3:9-10** - With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.
 - b. **Jam 4:11** - Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it.
4. What about “White Lies”?
 - a. How important does a lie have to be before it becomes a “real” lie?
 - b. Who decides if a lie is a “white” lie, or some other color?
5. What if telling the truth might get someone in trouble or get someone hurt?
 - a. Rarely are situations completely black & white! So who makes the decisions here?
 - b. The question here: Can I really tell the truth & trust God for the outcome?

C. About deceitful behavior.

1. Hypocrites in the church are the main excuse most people have for not being involved.
2. If you “play church” without striving for a corresponding changed life, you are a hypocrite!
3. Even worse - the biggest hypocrites are the ones who claim to be Christians but don’t go to church. They just sit at home at a distance & take critical potshots at the ones who do!

- D. **God’s advise about representing Him with your speech:** Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.
- **Jam 1:19.**

God is truth

Lord Jesus is truth.

God’s word & way in your life is truth.

God wants you to live a life of truth to accurately represent Him!