

Commandment #9

Exodus 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What is the command?

- This is not about lying. Although we should not lie.
- **Exodus 20:16 (AMP)** "You shall not testify falsely [that is, lie, withhold, or manipulate the truth] against your neighbor (any person).
- Definition: A misrepresentation of reality, a lie, twisting of truth, partial truth, that hurts another person in any way regardless of intention.

This command is actually about justice.

This is why you swear in to court.

- The phrase "so help me God," a popular component of grand and petit juror oath statutes, is actually an abbreviated form of the oath, "So may God help me at the judgment day if I speak true, but if I speak false, then may He withdraw His help from me." White, *supra* note 30, at 379-80 n.10.

What does this command reveal about God?

God is a God of justice.

- **Isaiah 61:8** "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant.
- **Micah 6:8** He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Listen to this next part fully and do not mishear what I am saying. But there is a reason I am saying this.

Lying is a sin:

- **Colossians 3:9** Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.
- **John 8:44** You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

But... is lying always a sin?

- It is not always a sin to lie, just as it is not always a sin to kill.
- Silly Ex.- Me eating food at someone's house that I don't like
- Serious Ex. - It was not a sin for the Germans to hide Jews during the Holocaust.
- Biblical Ex. – Rahab
 - **Joshua 2:1-6** Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. ² And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." ³ So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." ⁴ Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but **I did not know where they were from.** ⁵ **And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.**" ⁶ (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)
 - **Hebrews 11:31** By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

- **James 2:25** Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

Do not mistake my intentions here – I am not giving you freewill to lie.

- But this reveals something important about God, and the purpose of the 10 commandments.

The 10 commandments are not just a moral code, but the foundation for a flourishing society. (remember the promise of honor parents)

- The pillars of liberty and morality, are the basis of our society.
- The 10 Commandments should be your voting guide. Vote platform, not party. Vote Commandments, not Candidate.
- The 9th commandment is meant to uphold liberty and punish immorality.

Justice should vindicate the victim and punish the perpetrator. This is why this commandment is here.

Deuteronomy 19:16-21 If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. ¹⁸ And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. ²⁰ And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. ²¹ Your eye shall not pity: life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Today, sensationalism is elevated above truthfulness

Court of Public Opinion

Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

What this command reveals about us

- We have a duty to uphold justice by only reporting the truth about others.
- Repeating false witness is the same as bearing false witness.
- Lying, spreading lies, misrepresenting others is harmful in every way. This is the opposite of loving others.
- It also destroys the fabric of society when we cannot trust testimony.

2 examples from the Bible of false witnesses:

1 Kings 21 – the story of Ahab and Naboth

- Naboth has a garden, Ahab wants it.
- Ahab offers to buy or trade for it. Naboth refuses.
- Ahab goes to bed and whines.
- **1 Kings 21:5** But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?"
- **1 Kings 21:8-10** And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth. ⁹ She wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people; ¹⁰ and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, You have blasphemed God and the king. *Then* take him out, and stone him, that he may die.
- **1 Kings 21:16** So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.
- Elijah comes to Ahab to pronounce God's judgement.
- **1 Kings 21:19-24** You shall speak to him, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you murdered and also taken possession?'" ' And you shall speak to him, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.'" ' " ²⁰ So Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found *you*, because you have sold

yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD: ²¹ "Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. ²² I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel sin.' ²³ And concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' ²⁴ The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field."

Second False Accusation

Mark 3:22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

- Jesus was convicted and sentenced to death based on false testimony and false witnesses.

What do we do?

Consider valid accusations carefully, soberly and justly

- If you hear testimony about someone, we must judge it to know if it is true.
- **1 Corinthians 6:2-3** Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?
- **1 Timothy 5:19-21** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. ²¹ I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

Refuse to listen to false witness

- Hearing it will affect you
- **Proverbs 20:19** He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.

Don't repeat it.

- **Exodus 23:1** You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

Refuse to engage with it

- **Exodus 23:2-3** You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert *justice*.³ You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

What are God's promises?

He will hold us accountable to keep this commandment.

- **Matthew 12:36-37** But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
- Read this backwards – Those who live in a way that will lead to condemnation – those not saved – will speak idle words that bring hurt to others. Those who are saved, living by the spirit, will speak words that bring life to people.

This is how God feels about falsehoods – 5 and possibly 7 of the 7 abominations to God are related to this, 1 being specifically named.

- **Proverbs 6:16-19** These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: ¹⁷ A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, ¹⁹ A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

Why does God hate this so much?

- Because God is the ultimate justice and He will judge.
- **Hebrews 10:30** For we know Him who said, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord. And again, "*The LORD will judge His people.*"
- When we falsely accuse others, we are acting as the judge instead of allowing God to be the judge. We are ensuring sentencing based on our own desires, or fears, rather than on truth.

Revelation 12:10-11 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

- Satan is the accuser of the brethren. He is also the father of lies.
- We should look more like God than Satan
- We overcome by Jesus' blood. That first removes our sin and shame.
- The Word of our testimony – If we are to overcome by testimony, our testimony better be made of truth.
- Not loving our lives to death – We would rather die than lie