



The Righteous Shall Live By Faith

A Study of the Ten Commandments

Lesson 10

False Witness

Be Like God

REMEMBER WHY GOD GAVE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:

1. They show us what God is like, a reflection of His character.
2. God is telling us to be like Him.

Numbers 23:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Thinking about the text

What does this verse say about man? What does this verse say about God? Why is this good news for us?

God is true in all his dealings. God will not lie on the Day of Judgement, and Jesus will not bring false witness against the children of God. In the judgement Jesus will not say that you are a Christian if that is not true. Jesus will truthfully tell the Father the names of everyone who belongs to His family.

Exodus 20:16 (ESV) ¹⁵ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Thinking about the text

What is meant by bearing false witness? Why is it qualified by saying “against your neighbor?”

Why might someone give a false witness about a neighbor? What are examples of giving false witness?

Psalms 34:13 (ESV) ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

Proverbs 6:16–19 (ESV)

¹⁶ There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Thinking about the texts

How does God feel about lying? From where does evil speaking come?

What do these verses tell you about the character of God?

God wants us to have a heart like His toward others. God wants us to love others. He wants us to honor our parents and others in authority. He wants us to protect the lives of others. He wants us to be faithful in our relationships, especially in our marriage relationship. He wants us to respect the property of others.



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Example of Bearing False Witness—Slander

Leviticus 19:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

Proverbs 14:5 (ESV)

⁵ A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.

Proverbs 24:28 (ESV)

²⁸ Be not a witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips.

Proverbs 12:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit.

Proverbs 19:9 (ESV) ⁹ A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will perish.

Psalms 101:5 (ESV)

⁵ Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.

Thinking about the text

What is prohibited in these instructions? Why?

What do we learn about how we should live from these instructions?

Is there a promise living this way? Is there a warning against living dishonestly?

Slander is a false and mean statement that hurts the name or reputation of another person.

Slander steals a person's good reputation.

Proverbs 22:1 (ESV)

¹ A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.

Proverbs 11:9 (ESV)

⁹ With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.



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Paul's Words on Your Speech

Ephesians 4:25–32 (ESV)

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Galatians 6:9–10 (ESV)

⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Thinking about the text

What kind of speech should we have towards others? (Give Examples)

How should we act toward others? Why should we act this way? (Give Reasons)

Matthew 25:36–45 (ESV)

³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

When we speak slanderously or unkindly about others, we are harming someone who God loves.

Whatever we do to others, we actually do to God.