

Heidelberg Catechism 112 – Love Your Neighbor: Protect his Reputation

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: In Law 6, God requires that you preserve life. But God is not only concerned about preserving life. God is concerned that you live a good quality life. So in Law 7 God requires a pure life. But God was not only concerned about you living a pure life, so in Law 9 God requires a satisfied life. And to add to all those requirements concerning your life, today you will see in Law 9 that God requires a reputable life – both for you and for your neighbor.

Our headings are:

Prohibited Things in Law 9
Prescribed Things in Law 9.

Our goals are: That you will learn that a lying lip is an abomination (可憎之物) to the Lord because it hurts souls and humiliates (羞辱) Christ, and that you will learn to speak truth to honor Christ and help your brother.

112 Q. WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR US IN THE NINTH COMMANDMENT?

A. God's will is that I **never give false testimony** (假见证) against anyone, **twist** (扭曲) **no one's words**, not **gossip** (谗言, 八卦) or **slander** (诬陷), nor join in **condemning anyone** without a hearing or without a just cause. Rather, in court (法庭) and everywhere else, I should **avoid lying and deceit** of every kind; these are devices the devil himself uses, and they would call **down on me God's intense anger**. I should **love the truth, speak it candidly** (热诚地), and openly **acknowledge it**. And I should do what I can to **guard and advance my neighbor's good name**.

Prohibited Things in Law 9

1. The source of lying is not your lips; the source of lying is your heart.

Specifically, watch out for hatred (憎恨), and jealousy (嫉妒) – two common causes for lying.

Acts 5:3: But Peter said, "Ananias, why has **Satan filled your heart to lie** to the Holy Spirit...

You remember what happened to Ananias and Sapphira!

2. God forbids lying words everywhere but especially in legal situations, as in a trial (审判) in court.

Lying is such a terrible sin that God links lying with the worst sins and judgments imaginable. Let these words shock you!

Revelation 21:8 – "...**all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**, which is the second death."

Proverbs 25:18: A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is **like a club (棍), a sword, and a sharp arrow**.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness (不义), sexual immorality (奸淫), wickedness, covetousness (贪婪), maliciousness (恶毒); full of envy, murder, strife (纷争), deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers (谗毁的), 30 backbiters (背后说人的), haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things (捏造恶事的), disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning无知的, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of

death...

Lying to those close to you (like your parents or spouse) is worse as you should love them more. Remember the consequences when Jacob lied to Isaac his father to rob Esau his brother! Remember how **Naboth** was murdered by Jezebel who used 2 scoundrels (恶棍) lying under oath. Words do kill! Remember the **Scythians** believed that: *If a man lied on an oath he lost his head.* **Even pagans valued truth.**

3. Consider some forms of lying by words that is often minimized or ignored!

a. God forbids you from twisting other people's words so that their intent or their meaning is changed. God forbids you from **using part of what they say** or from **ignoring the context** of what they say.

b. God forbids gossip. Gossip is useless talk about another person. The substance of what the **gossiper** says could be true, **but if it is unnecessary, it is gossip.** Gossip is with the intention to insult or embarrass (使尴尬). Remember: "*The scorpion (毒蝎) takes its poison in its tail, the slanderer (诬陷人者) in his tongue.*"

Matthew 12:36 "But I say to you that for **every idle word (闲话)**, **men may speak, they will give account** of it...

c. God forbids slander. The slanderer shows that he has adopted the Devil (the chief slanderer) as father. The goal of the slanderer is to **hurt someone's reputation.** When someone's reputation is hurt, he may lose business or credit to which he is due.

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.

d. God forbids flattery (谄媚). Flattery is often acceptable, but it is a lie. "You have the best voice in the world." Flattery is telling others what they want to hear. Maybe you want to **build someone's self-esteem**, but to do this is to hurt the person... whether you intend to or not. **How does this help children later in life?** Others flatter to **gain some personal advantage.** "What beautiful zucchinis you have in your garden!" But what you mean is, "Give me some!"

e. God forbids white lies... like when the phone rings and you tell your children to say that you **are not at home.** Learn to say you are busy, or you can't or won't come to the phone. Don't lie.

4. What are forbidden actions in Law 9? (You can lie by actions?)

a. God forbids pretending (假冒) -with the intent to deceive and gain some advantage, like pretending to like someone. These are unspoken lies...and very harmful lies. **You can kill a man other than by cutting his throat.**

b. God forbids taking credit for another man's actions. Supervisors (主管) can take credit for what employees do.

Prescribed Things in Law 9

1. What does God prescribed for keeping Law 9?

a. Embrace and love truth.

1Corinthians 13: 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up (不自夸); 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked (轻易发怒的), thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

If the Devil knows you reject lies and embrace truth, after a while, he will give up tempting in that area. For example, a love interest might stay around you for a while, even if you don't like him,

but after a while, he gets the message and moves on. So keep quoting truth to the Devil and he will flee. Darkness flees from light.

Proverbs 13:5 -A righteous man hates lying, But a wicked man is loathsome (令人厌恶的) and comes to shame.

b. Mean what you say – not equivocating (使用模棱两可的话隐瞒真相) – playing with words. Your words should match what is in your heart. Speak clearly. So if you say you are going to do or not do something for or to your children, keep that promise. Even if it causes pain, discomfort, time, or money, God expects you to do as you have promised or threatened. If you don't do as you say, you are lying and teaching them that truth and promises don't matter. **But they do!**

Psalm 15:1 LORD, **who may abide in Your tabernacle (会幕)**? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? 2 **He who walks uprightly**, And works righteousness, And **speaks the truth in his heart...**

c. Have the right intention when you speak-not having fingers crossed behind your back or having mental reservations (对某事所持的保留) as RC's (罗马天主教的)! 'I said it but did not mean it.' The Jesuits (耶稣会会士) were the RC's investigators of their people who became Christians who felt that they did not always have to hold to the truth in their investigations. They promised to do something but didn't. It was like they had spiritual fingers crossed behind their backs - like little children cross their fingers behind their backs as their way out of not doing as they promised. But God knows the intents of your heart. **If you intend to deceive, it is a lie.**

d. Think before you speak so you don't spread lies or misinformation. (Be quick to hear, slow to speak.)

Proverbs 21:23 – He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles.

2. God prescribes that you:

a. Speak the truth when it is due, especially to protect the reputation and preserve the lives of your neighbors, especially in a court of law. But if you have to give testimony against someone, make sure you have fully learned the facts.

b. Speak the truth in gentleness and meekness even when it might hurt the other person. For instance, you know that you might have to put your arms around someone when you tell them their relative died. You have to speak the truth, but you have to **be gentle**. Or if someone were going to die and he asked you if he were, don't hide the truth from him. Speak it **in love**.

Proverbs 25:15 By long forbearance (忍耐) a ruler is persuaded, And a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

c. Speak the truth so that it will preserve the spiritual lives of those in sin and darkness. You must know truth!

Proverbs 2:17-18 – **Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge, for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be ready on your lips.**

If you don't have the knowledge of the truth that God requires which can lead to the salvation and sanctification (成圣) of others, you are like the Old Testament man with stone in his hand ready to stone to execute the passerby. If you have the Word of Life that you can speak you will see that man rescued from the condemnation (定罪, 咒诅) of death and given eternal life. Your tongue is a tree of life.

Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, **But those who deal truthfully are His delight.**

Ephesians 4:25 - Therefore, putting away lying, **"Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.**

d. Know that there are serious consequences for lying. To emphasize the consequences of refusing to speak the truth, a liar (说谎者) was severely punished by God, sometimes with the death penalty. The liar got the same penalty as the innocent accused could have gotten because of the liar's testimony (见证).

Leviticus 5:1 – If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter – if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

Remember Peter before the Sanhedrin, the Hebrew men before Nebuchadnezzar, and Jonah before the murderous Assyrians! If they did not speak the truth **they would have denied Christ and denied others from hearing the Gospel.**

Acts 5:29 Peter...answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.
Positively, consider the great blessings that come from speaking the truth.

3. Some additional issues with speaking the truth.

a. While ordinarily withholding the truth is considered a lie, sometimes you don't have to speak the truth. You don't have to tell someone your PIN number for your ATM card.

Withholding the truth here is a good act! And you don't have to tell anyone how much money you have in the bank.

b. Be selfless in speaking the truth. Selfishness kills truth telling. You are trained today not to speak up unless forced. Men have become preoccupied with (沉迷于) pursuing personal pleasure rather than to be bothered with being a witness or speaking for truth – especially to the police. **But a man may be hurt by silence as slander.** King David understood this and explained it well while under the inspiration (默示) of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 15 above. Speak up for babies, that they are real babies that are killed by abortions (流产). (They lie when they say the baby is not a baby!) Speak the truth about perversions (歪曲, 堕落) so man and women can be saved. Speak up against the lies of the evolutionists (相信进化论者). Speak up against humanism (人本主义) and secularism (世俗主义). Know truth so you can speak truth.

c. Not all lying is sin. Just like killing sometimes is honorable可敬的 and required to protect innocent life无辜的生命, so in order to protect innocent life, God told Samuel to lie, he told Israel to purposely deceive the nations in war, he honored Rahab for protecting the innocent by lying, and he rewarded the Egyptian midwives for lying to protect Jewish babies' lives.

Conclusion:

Love truth, speak truth, confess truth, promote truth and defend truth. Know that lying takes many prisoners but when you **speak the truth you may set men free from false accusations (指控), you may cause the wicked to be punished, and you may preserve others' reputation and lives.** Most of all, when you **speak the truth (There is salvation in Jesus) you set men free from their hopelessness so they can properly glorify the Lord.**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You are God child, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Reflect him.

2. You reflect him by spreading the truth of the Gospel so men can be rescued (被拯救) from sin and misery (悲惨境遇). Jesus said: "I **am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through Me."

3. But what about truth telling on daily basis? Will you tell the medical ethicist (伦理学家) who says the unborn baby is a not human that he is speaking a lie from the

Devil's bowels (心肠) . Will you tell the mother who lies to her husband to spare her children that she is leading them to hell? Will you tell the lady who lies in order to advance in her job that she imitating the Snake's child? Will you tell the doctor who gives false testimony in court for money that he will have to answer to a higher court on Judgment Day? Will you tell your professor in university that self-love is sin and that he must love God and man instead? I hope you will say, "Yes," and I hope you will tell the truth with courage and love.

If you are not a Christian, you have heard that God considers lying one of the worst sins. Sins deserve death and hell. If, however, you claim Christ's perfect obedience as your obedience...and his death as punishment for your sins, then you can leave this building a brand new man or woman.