

## The Ten Words – Truth Matters! Exodus 20:16

### INTRODUCTION

Please turn in your Bible to **Exodus 20:2, 16**. When I was growing up I heard this rhyme that you probably heard it many times while you were **growing up**:

*Sticks and stones may break my bones  
But words will never hurt me.*

If you analyze those words, they might be called the Stoic's Credo, for only a person who denies his emotions can truly say **"words will never hurt me."**

A truer version might go something like **this**:

*Sticks and stones may make me curse  
But cruel words will hurt much worse.*

While not as inspirational (you'll never see that on a Hallmark card), it is much closer to reality. However badly sticks and stones may hurt, the pain of cruel words is always much worse. After all, sticks and stones crush the body; **cruel words crush the soul**. You can kill with cutting words as easily as with sharpened sticks and jagged stones

Listen... **Truth is in short supply in our day**. In a world where words are many and truth is cheap, we are to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Flip the Ninth Commandment over and it reads like **this**: *"You must not tamper with the truth."*

This Commandment/Word (**20:16**) speaks of the sanctity of truth. Truth matters! Truth is sacred!

*Let's dig in. First, please note...*

**I. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Commandment –**

**What does it mean?**

Two ideas emerge as to its meaning, namely...

**A. Do not intentionally speak that which is**

\_\_\_\_\_ (**Lev 19:11-12; Col 3:9-10**)

First of all, the command means that you shall not intentionally speak that which is untrue. **Leviticus 19:11 states**: *"You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another."* **Leviticus 19** is dealing with the application of several of the Ten Commandments, and here the ninth commandment is shown to include all forms of lying. **Colossians 3** also makes this wider application. There we find these **words**: *"Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."* (**Colossians 3:9-10**)

*The second idea is that...*

**B. Do not speak \_\_\_\_\_ against another**

**(Exodus 20:16; Deut 5:20; James 4:11)**

The command also means that you shall not speak evil against another person. It is interesting when you compare the Ten Commandments as originally given here in **Exodus 20** with the second giving of the Ten Commandments in **Deuteronomy 5**. Remember, **Deuteronomy 5** takes place forty years later outside the borders of Canaan. And in **Deuteronomy 5** we find Moses reminding the Israelites about the Ten Commandments, as well as further explaining to them about the Ten Commandments, so there are some minor differences. In **Exodus 20** the word translated *"false"* in *"false witness"* is a word that means *"untrue."* In **Deuteronomy 5** the word translated *"false"* in *"false witness"* is a word that means *"insincere, empty or worthless."* This goes beyond simply that which is untrue and includes speaking any evil against your neighbor. In the N.T., the apostle James picks up on this in **James 4** when he says, *"Do not speak evil against one another, brothers."* **"Brothers, do not slander one another."** (NIV) *"Do not speak against one another, brethren."* (NASB) *"Do not speak evil of one another, brethren."* (NKJV) (**James 4:11**)

*What does it mean? Next, please note...*

**II. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Commandment –**

**How is it violated? In what ways?**

Let's talk next about how we break this commandment. There are many different ways of lying. You can dress it up in other language, try to justify or disguise it, but that's just another lie in itself! **What are some of the different ways that we bear false witness?** Here's a few...

**A. Lying under \_\_\_\_\_**

**B. The \_\_\_\_\_ lie**

**C. The \_\_\_\_\_ lie**

**D. Keeping \_\_\_\_\_ when you know the truth**

**E. \_\_\_\_\_**

**F. \_\_\_\_\_**

**G. \_\_\_\_\_**

**H. \_\_\_\_\_ lies**

**I. "Little \_\_\_\_\_ lies"**

**J. Careless \_\_\_\_\_**

**K. Lying to \_\_\_\_\_**

Well, I don't want to end on a negative...so, let's consider,

### III. The \_\_\_\_\_ cure for lying - Is there hope for the lawbreaker?

The Bible teaches **speaking the truth with love. And this is rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The gospel makes all the difference.** *“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”* (Colossians 3:9-10)

What is the positive application of the command, *“You shall not bear false witness?”* I believe we find it in **Ephesians 4:15** where Paul writes about *“speaking the truth in love.”* It has been said that love without truth is hypocrisy, but truth without love is brutality. God doesn't want you running around telling someone how ugly their dress is, or that you hated the gift they gave you, or what a lousy solo they sang. We must always speak the truth, but we must balance the truth with love.

You should ask yourself three questions before saying anything questionable about or to someone else:

*Is it true?*

*Is it kind?*

*Is it necessary?*

Unless you can answer “yes” to all three, you're probably better off leaving it unsaid. **And of the three questions, don't miss the last one...is it necessary?** Just because it's true and kind, do you really have to say it? **Love covers a multitude of sins, and a closed mouth gathers not foot!**

So let us confess our sin of lying to God and ask his forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Let us turn away from the sin of lying in our lives. And let us seek to be truthful and loving in all that we say and do. Only then will we be living in obedience to the ninth commandment: *“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”*

### CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? Ask yourself, *“Why is this sin so terrible?”* Why is this sin condemned so frequently and in such strong terms? What's so terrible about lying?

1. It destroys society.
2. It wrecks homes.
3. It splits churches.
4. It fractures families.
5. It poisons every human relationship.
6. It cauterizes the conscience.
7. It condemns the soul.

We may say it very simply: Truth comes from...God is truth. Lying comes from hell...because Satan is the father of lies.

### What does this Commandment demand?

We can sum up the positive demands of the Ninth Commandment in three simple statements.

**God wants...**

- A. Truthfulness in our \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Honesty in our \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Integrity in our \_\_\_\_\_

### How do I become a more truthful person?

Let's wrap this up with **three simple suggestions** for becoming a more truthful person:

- A. Practice \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ listening
- B. Practice personal \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ yourself to becoming a “Person of Truth”