

The Ten Commandments: Posted on our Hearts and in our Homes

The Truth about Lying

Exodus 20:16

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Dr. Steve Horn

Introduction to Text: We return today to a series of messages concerning the 10 Commandments. Today we are considering the 9th commandment. I appreciate all of the favorable comments about what this journey has meant to you. I can tell you that the study for me personally has been quite rewarding. As we have done each time, we remind ourselves of the first two verses of this chapter and then will read verse 16 for the ninth commandment.

Text: ¹ Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

¹⁶ Do not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Introduction: The story goes that the local preacher was walking down the street one day when he came upon a pack of boys (all about 12 years old or so) encircling a stray dog. Curious, the pastor walked over and asked the boys, “What are you boys doing with that dog?”

“We found the dog, Mister,” said one of the boys, “and we all would like to bring it home. We have decided that whoever of us can come up with the biggest lie will get to keep the dog.”

The preacher, obviously not pleased with the plan, started in on the boys pretty good. “You boys should not be having a contest telling lies,” he protested. He launched into about a 5 minute mini-sermon starting with the fact that lying is a sin—one of the big 10. He concluded with the declaration that “Boys, I have never told a lie.”

The boys with heads bowed low were dead silent. Just when the preacher was feeling pretty good about the fact that he had gotten through to the boys, the ring-leader of the group looked up and said, “All right, mister, that’s the best lie I have ever heard—you can have the dog.”

I can tell you that there are lots of jokes about lying. However, if you have ever been on the receiving end of a lie told about you or the receiving end of a lie that deceived you, you will attest to the fact that the truth about lying is no laughing matter. As we have done with all of the commandments, it is important to begin with correctly understanding the precise meaning of the ninth commandment.

Defining the Ninth Commandment as Lying

Though many times this commandment will get reduced to “No lying” or “Do not lie” the precise nature of the commandment had to do with bearing false witness against another in a legal setting. The concern again was the order of the community. Because that was the concern, it is not a stretch at all to expand that commandment to all and any form of lying—especially when you consider other texts about lying. Order in the community certainly breaks down when lies are told.

Let's bring in to this conversation this morning, a couple of other words from Scripture:

Ephesians 4:20-25—In speaking about the new life that a believer should have in Christ, Paul instructed, ²⁰ But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, ²¹ assuming you heard Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Jesus: ²² you took off your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires; ²³ you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; ²⁴ you put on the new man, the one created according to God's [likeness] in righteousness and purity of the truth.

²⁵ Since you put away lying, Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another.

Colossians 3:5-10—Similarly to the Colossian believers, Paul wrote, ⁵ Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient, ⁷ and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his Creator.

James 5:12—Here we read, ¹² Now above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. Your "yes" must be "yes," and your "no" must be "no," so that you won't fall under judgment.

Each of these texts along with the list of commandments helps us to see the close connection between our relationship with God and our relationship with others.

The Damage Done by Lying

Lying alters our relationships with other people.

Why? In the Ephesians passage, we learned that *We are a single body*. Can you imagine the members of your body lying to the other members? For example, the eye is supposed to see as to alert the body to pending trouble. Would the eyes lie to the legs and cause the legs to walk into a hole? When we begin to see our relationship with other believers as a body, how could we ever lie one to the other?

Consider what happens when we lie.

- We cause others to lie.
- We destroy credibility for the future.
- We create doubt for previous words spoken.

Lying affects our relationship with God.

- God hates lying.
 - Proverbs 6:17-19—
 - ¹⁶ Six things the LORD hates;
in fact, seven are detestable to Him:
 - ¹⁷ arrogant eyes, a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
 - ¹⁸ a heart that plots wicked schemes,
feet eager to run to evil,
 - ¹⁹ a lying witness who gives false testimony,
and one who stirs up trouble among brothers.
 - Proverbs 12:22—“Lying lips are detestable to the LORD, but faithful people are His delight.”
 - Revelation 21:27—“Nothing profane will ever enter it: no one who does what is vile or false, but only those written in the Lamb’s book of life.”
 - Revelation 22:15—“Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.”
- God knows when we lie.
- God knows when we lie about our relationship with Him.
 - Matthew 7:21-23
 - ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but [only] the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name? ' ²³ Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers! '

The Decision to Stop Lying

Like all other sins you must ...

Admit you have a problem.

Believe that Christ died not only to forgive you, but to free you from your sin.

Commit daily to speak the truth.