

Lesson 22 – The 8th Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

(Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20)

This commandment covers far more than just questions in a courtroom. This commandment includes any negative talk about a person without speaking to them personally. It is about spreading information about people, even if it is true, that would hurt them or harm their reputation. It goes even further than just teaching us not to do such things, it also teaches us that we should help those around us to protect and preserve their reputation. We should say good things about people. Things that will cause others to respect and appreciate them.

Look up the following Bible passages and write what they teach about gossip:

Romans 1:29-31 _____

1 Timothy 5:13 _____

Romans 15:1-2 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 _____

Galatians 5:16-26 _____

Matthew 18:15-16 _____

Giving a false witness (telling lies, gossiping) is so destructive to society that courts of law, both in the days of the Israelites and today could not function if the witnesses, who were called to testify, could not be trusted to tell the truth. Without a trustworthy judicial system, based on eyewitness testimony, from reliable, truthful witnesses our society would be at risk of breaking down and having no law or order. When this happens chaos must come, and the innocent will suffer.

George Washington stated:

We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

What do you think about these statements: _____

Look up John 8:44 When you lie, whose language are you speaking? _____

Four high school boys were late to their morning classes one day. They entered the classroom and told their teacher they were detained due to a flat tire. The teacher smiled and told them it was too bad they were late because they had missed a test that morning, but he was willing to let them make it up.

He gave them each a piece of paper and a pencil and sent them to four corners of the room. Then he told them they would all pass or all fail based on one question which they must all get correct.

Which tire when flat?

Being dishonest is a way of life these days. It is sometimes difficult to know who is telling the truth and who is lying. It seems that many people try to balance the risk of being caught in a lie, against the benefits of lying.

List some ways that people are dishonest. _____

List ways that advertising is dishonest. _____

Is there ever a time when it is okay to not tell the truth? _____

How would the world be different if everyone told the truth? _____

In John 14:6 Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through Me."

What did Jesus mean when He said He is the "Truth"?

A minister was invited to talk with a family about their son getting involved with the wrong crowd. The father was frustrated as he described the impact of the new friends on his son's relationship with his family. He said, "The thing that bothers me most about his hanging around with these kids is the fact that they have turned him into a liar."

Moments later the phone rang and his wife went to answer. She came back into the room with the message that the call was for the father. He told her, "Tell him I am not at home right now."

The minister then commented the bad friends had not made the boy a liar; the father had.

What do you think about this story? _____

Do you think that it is easy to stop lying once you've started? _____

Why? _____

What do you think of the statement: It becomes easier to lie the more you do it?

Why? _____

What are some thing you might need to do to stop a habit of lying too much?

Put a check mark next to anything that is a lie.

- Allowing someone to believe something when you know it is not true.
- Saying things that are true, but have a double meaning, intended to mislead.
- Simply choosing not to speak when someone is falsely accused.

- Telling some, or part, of the truth so people will believe what you want.
- Someone says, "How are you?" You say, "Fine." when you are not.
- Saying, "What a beautiful baby" if you think their baby looks ugly.

- We say we are Christians but do not act like it.
- Withholding painful information that won't affect their life if they never know.
- Telling the truth even if it hurts.