

Do Not Lie Because God is Truth

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

Truth Defined: sincerely believed *and* in accord with reality

- Truth is not the same as telling everything as that can cause harm
- Truth is not the same as full transparency as not everyone needs to know everything or at least not at that point

Lying is always a sin

- There are no times when lying is morally good – it is always a sin
- This includes times where there is a positive outcome such as with Rahab and the spies
- God’s sovereign ability to use lies and deception do not make them morally good
- And, sometimes lying is more heinous than others when it causes harm to someone else

The ninth commandment is more than a prohibition on lying

- It goes beyond the call to truth to emphasize the responsibility to one another
- *“And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39).*
- We break the ninth commandment when our words harm others whether by
 - sharing with someone we shouldn’t (gossip)
 - sharing unverified/inaccurate/incomplete information
- We break the ninth commandment when we stay silent
 - Not telling what is true and good
 - Not speaking up when you can protect the reputation of another

The ninth commandment fulfilled in Christ

- *“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth” (John 17:17-19).*
- *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).*
- *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).*

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q76: What is the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment is: *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*

Q77: What does the ninth commandment require?

The ninth commandment requires us to tell the truth and to maintain and promote it and our own and others’ reputations, especially when testifying.

Q78: What does the ninth commandment forbid?

The ninth commandment forbids anything that gets in the way of the truth or injures anyone’s reputation.