

TEACHING GOAL

To study the positive requirements of the ninth commandment.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. Which is the ninth commandment?
- A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?
- A. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.
- S.C. 77-77, L.C. 143-144, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 99-100

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: John 14:1-17

Support Passages: Titus 1:1-3; Hebrews 6:17-18; Romans 3:1-18;
John 8:12-47; Exodus 23:1-9; Colossians 3:8-9

BIBLE STORY

I Samuel 19:1-6; Jonathan's witness.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

" So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in 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 8:31-32, ESV)

APPLICATION

The Scriptures tell that God is love, but they also tell us that God is truth. Since truth is an attribute of God and given that we must be imitators of God to be pleasing to Him, it follows that we must be truthful in all that we say and do. Truth is indeed a very precious commodity in our day and age.

SUMMARY

Standing before Pilate Jesus confirmed that He was a King saying, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" Pilate, like many others in this world did not know what truth was. He was face to face with truth in the flesh and did not recognize it. What a tragedy! Jesus is the "way, the truth, and the life" yet so many do not know it!

Perhaps we are a bit rusty in our understanding of the nature of truth so as we undertake the study of the ninth commandment we shall begin with the nature of truth. If we are not to bear false witness against our neighbor then we are to do the opposite, we are to be truthful in our dealings with other people. Truth is the opposite of falseness or lying. It bears the qualities of accuracy, honesty, sincerity, reality or certainty. Truth is one of God's attributes in which He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Thus Paul writes that he is "--an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began--." ¹

Again, in Hebrews 6, Paul writes concerning God's oath to bless Abraham, "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, --" ² The two unchangeable things, of course are His Promise and His Person. As Paul writes, "--Let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."" ³

Compared with God who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His truth, every human being is a liar. Yet we may know the truth and through the process of sanctification the Holy Spirit enables us to be more and more conformed to it. God's word is truth, that is to say, it is accurate, honest, factual, real, sincere and certain. "-- "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."" ⁴ As the ninth commandment states, "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor", so also does Paul command us, "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices" ⁵

We see in Jonathan's witness before Saul a good example of keeping the ninth commandment. Saul was seeking to put David to death but Jonathan

spoke well of David saying, "--"Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the Lord worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?"" ⁶

Saul did in fact listen to Jonathan and promised not to kill David. Jonathan told the truth about David and his life was spared. So are we to be truthful in a world that is given to prevarication and suppression of the truth in unrighteousness. ⁷

¹ Titus 1:1-3, ESV

² Hebrews 6:17-19, ESV

³ Romans 3:4, ESV

⁴ John 8:31-32, ESV

⁵ Colossians 3:9, ESV

⁶ 1 Samuel 19:4-5, ESV

⁷ Romans 1:18