

T H E T E N

COMMANDMENTS
THROUGH THE EYES OF JESUS

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 9 October 15, 2023

"Honesty: You Must Not Bear False Witness"



OPENING PRAYER

O God, help us to be honest, help us to tell the truth, help us to speak the truth in love. Help us to be people of integrity with our words. Help us that we may love our neighbor as we love ourselves with our words as well as our deeds. Help us Lord to not participate in mudslinging, but instead be people of ideas. Help us O God that we might be people who reflect your love to your children in all that we say and all that we do. In Jesus name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Exodus 20:16 (NIV)

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

Ephesians 4:29 (NRSV)

Let no evil talk come out of your mouths but only what is good for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 9 October 15, 2023

“Honesty: You Must Not Bear False Witness”

INTRODUCTION

The ninth commandment was about not bearing false witness in the courts of ancient Israel. The people of Israel were prohibited from making false accusations against one of their neighbors and fellow Israelites. Most of us reading this devotional would not go to court and make false accusations... so how does this commandment apply to us?

We violate the ninth commandment through the telling of half-truths, rumors, gossip, and innuendos about other people. We are also bearing false witness when we share false narratives about politicians and political parties on social media or through verbal communication. And sometimes as Christians, we cloak gossip in spiritual language. Instead of bearing false witness, we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves and to give grace with our words to those who hear.

QUESTIONS

1. When you hear the commandment “do not bear false witness,” what comes to mind?
2. The ninth commandment was about bearing false witness in the courts of ancient Israel. To what extent would you agree with ancient Israel that maybe we should reserve honesty only for legal courtroom proceedings?
3. Psychologists and linguists note that sometimes it’s hard to make our questions as well as our statements direct (e.g. at times “Do you like this outfit?” may mask the real question: “Do you still love me?”). How can you, in both your questions and your answers, grow in your ability to let your “yes” mean “yes,” and your “no” mean “no?” What fears make it hardest for you to avoid evasive words and speak plainly?
4. Jesus wanted the community of his followers to be characterized by mutual love (cf. John 13:34-35). But he knew that, realistically, human nature is such that sometimes disagreements and problems would arise. So he told his followers to be as wise in avoiding unverifiable charges and countercharges as possible. How can Jesus’ wisdom shape your handling of disagreements in church, small group and even family settings?
5. To fail to tell someone else the truth is not loving. To tell them the truth in angry or belittling ways is also not loving. Ephesians said one key to helping each other grow is “speaking the truth in love.” Which do you find harder most of the time: speaking the truth at all, or doing so in love? What can help you grow toward maturity in both of those dimensions?

FINAL APPLICATION

How can you not bear false witness when it comes to politics? How can this group help?