

## Ten to the Power of Two.



### LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2010

**Word 9: Do not give false testimony. Exodus 20: 16**

*“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour”* (Ex. 20:16). A good relationship demands truthfulness and honesty in speaking of another. The old saying, “A person’s word is as good as their name,” is sometimes a joke today. But God’s people ought to cherish their own reputations, and that of others.

This command prohibits a hateful lie, and perverting justice. To lie in court undermines the law itself, and also breaks the third, and eighth commandments. It also warns against slandering people, tale bearing, backbiting, innuendos, sly insinuations, evil suggestions, aggravating what is done amiss and making it worse than it is, and any way endeavouring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbour’s. Suppressing the truth when known, and gossip are considered in the same context as slander, conceit and disorder (2 Cor. 12:20).

- 1) How important is being truthful to you? Do you ever lie? Why / why not?
- 2) We sometimes use euphemisms such as “shading the truth,” “telling a little white lie,” or “skirting the issue.” Are there ‘degrees or shades’ of lies? Is it ever appropriate or acceptable to lie in order to achieve greater good i.e. May a Christian falsify documents in order to smuggle Bibles into a “closed” country? Why / why not, and if so, under what circumstances?
- 3) What does the Bible say about truth and values (see Proverbs 6:16-19. 12:12 & 19:5). What does it tell us about God, His Word and truth? (Proverbs 30:5, Daniel 10:21, John 14:6 & 17:17).

If people are unwilling to speak ill of someone, they are less likely to fall short of other commandments (see Matt. 5:37).

- 4) Have you ever tried to minimise the guilt of something by telling a lie (not the whole truth!)? What were the implications and consequences? Compare and contrast this with Peter’s lie in

Matt. 26:69-75.

- 5) Discuss examples of lies / words which are doubted today i.e. ‘The cheque is in the post.’ (see Ps. 12:2). If this has become normal and acceptable, how should (*do*) we respond?
- 6) The worst tragedy about this way of living may be that we end up telling lies and believing lies about God (Rom. 1:25), and about ourselves (1 John 1:10).

**Read James 4:11-12, & Matt. 15:18.**

- 7) Of all sins, lying is the one most identified with the devil (John 8:44). We have a simple truth; we either follow God’s truth or that of Satan. Why do you think this is the case?
- 8) What does Matthew 12:35-37 say about how we will give account for our words? Can we bear false witness simply by keeping silent? What is the difference between this and keeping secrets?

**Read Colossians 3:8-9.**

- 9) If we are inclined to lie, or exaggerate the truth, why would anyone believe what we have to say about Jesus? How should we be known? What specifically will you do about it?

Read Ephesians 1:13.

- 10) What place in your life is so vulnerable that you would tell an outright lie rather than reveal the truth? Like Peter, are you afraid of the consequences of being publicly identified with Jesus? If so, do you need a dose of the Spirit’s power to give you the courage to be honest (see Acts 1:8).

Paul calls God’s Church “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). By “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15), it is commissioned by Christ to preach “the truth of the gospel” to all the world (Galatians 2:5; Matthew 24:14; 28:19). Everything in the life of a Christian is anchored to truth. God wants us, as His children, to commit ourselves to truth and reflect it in everything we do.

Give thanks for God’s promise in John 8:31, 32, and pray about how you can live up to His standard, and also declare this truth.

