

TEN: Free to Obey

A Christian Looks at the Ten Commandments

TELL THE TRUTH

Exodus 20:16

INTRODUCTION: The ninth commandment says

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

Who here has ever told a lie? If you did not raise your hand you just told a lie.

How many lies do you have to tell to be a liar? Just one! So we are all a bunch of liars! So I don't want to catch anyone not paying attention or grabbing a nap because we all need this one! Amen?

The basic meaning of this commandment is simple: Tell the truth!

So, in preparing the message for this morning on this commandment I decided to just look up the word truth in the Bible. I found that it appears 223 times in the New King James Version, which is the version I use as my primary study version and the version I preach from.

I started with the first reference in Genesis. Although I did not begin with the intent to read every one of the references, that is what I did, because in so doing, I picked up on a progression through the Scriptures, going from the most basic statements about truth for anyone to some of the finer implications concerning truth for the followers of Christ.

I thought about just reading all of them to you in order, but then I realized that even if each one only required 30 seconds to read aloud, it would take me nearly two hours to read only the verses with the word truth in them, and that leaving out any other verses for context.

So, I just picked some of the most important ones, but I warn you, I am going to reference a lot of Scripture today, because I want you to see how central the concept of truth is throughout the Bible. Let's begin by asking our first study question we have been using about the Ten Commandments.

1) What does the ninth commandment reveal about God?

- **God is a God of truth.**

Exodus 34:6 NKJV And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abounding in goodness and truth**,

Deuteronomy 32:4 NKJV He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, **A God of truth** and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

Because God is a God of truth, God values truth. Truth is important to God.

- **God's Word is truth.**

Psalms 119:160 NKJV **The entirety of Your word is truth**, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. If God is a God of truth, how could His word be anything else?

Psalms 138:2 NKJV **I will ... praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.**

Do you know that **the only thing God allows to be exalted above His name is His Word!**

- **God's truth lasts forever.**

Psalms 100:5 NKJV For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And **His truth endures to all generations.**

2) How does God want this portion of His character to show in our lives?

- **God demands that those who follow Him speak truth.**

Psalms 15:1–4 NKJV 1 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? 2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And **speaks the truth in his heart**; ... 4 ...**He who swears to his own hurt and does not change**;

Listen folks, these are not the ten suggestions. They are the Ten Commandments because every one of them is based on the character of God which does not change. God says, if you want to live in fellowship with Me you must be a truth speaker and not a liar. Even when you make a promise that turns out to be bad for you, you stick with it because it is important that people see that you always tell the truth because you represent Me.

Psalms 33:4 NKJV For the word of the LORD is right, And **all His work is done in truth.**

We who are saved are always about the work of the Lord, even when we are not at church or formally doing ministry or mission. We are about our Father's business! And all His work is done in truth, or it is not done at all.

- **The scarcity of truth is bringing the downfall of our nation.**

Isaiah 59:1–4 NKJV 1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; **Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.** 4 **No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth.** They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

While these words were spoken initially to Israel, they apply to any nation. They describe the results of spin gone wild where few if any care about the truth but speak lies to accomplish their own purpose.

- **God knows that for a person to be a faithful speaker of truth, truth must abide in their heart.**

Psalm 51:6 NKJV Behold, **You desire truth in the inward parts, ...**

God is not just concerned with our outward expression. He knows that if we lie with our words it is because already we have a deceitful heart.

3) What does the New Testament say that helps us understand this commandment better or how to live it out day to day?

- **Jesus was and is the Truth of God Incarnate.**

Luke 20:21 NKJV Then they asked Him, saying, "**Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth:**

John 1:14 NKJV And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

John 1:17 NKJV For the law was given through Moses, but **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

John 14:6 NKJV Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

- **God desires for all people to know the truth and to trust in Christ, who is the Truth Incarnate.**

1 Timothy 2:3–6 NKJV 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of **God our Savior**, 4 **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, **the Man Christ Jesus**, 6 **who gave Himself a ransom for all**, to be testified in due time,

- **Those who reject Jesus do so because they reject truth, just like the devil.**

John 8:42–47 NKJV 42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.

43 **Why do you not understand My speech?** Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 **You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore **you do not hear, because you are not of God.**”

The reason people reject Jesus is not because there are strong arguments against the existence of God or the deity of Christ. They reject Jesus as their Lord because they do not want to repent and abandon their sin which they greatly enjoy. Jesus said, you don’t understand what I am saying because you desire to do what the devil likes to do!

Romans 1:18 NKJV For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,**

The Holy Spirit is declaring through Paul that the problem is not that they cannot bring themselves to understand or believe the truth. They suppress the truth because of their unrighteousness.

- **The truth leads people to Jesus, and Jesus, the Truth of God, sets them free from sin and death.**

John 8:31–32 NKJV 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**”

The truth of God’s Word, and specifically the gospel, is what breaks the bondage to both sin and death. Oh! That glorious gospel –

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

But on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, appearing to more than 500 people.

Jesus now offers forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life to anyone who will trust Him as their Savior and Lord.

My friend if you will believe in your heart that Jesus died for you and rose from the dead, and you will invite Him to become the Lord and Master of your life, all your sins are washed away; and you will go to heaven when you die and live with the Lord forever.

- **Jesus said God's Word is truth.**

John 17:17 NKJV Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth.**

- **God wants us to believe His Word and live our lives accordingly.**

1 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because **when you received the word of God** which you heard from us, **you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**, which also effectively works in you who believe.

Listen to my plea, young adults and teens. If I had one wish for my childhood and teen years is that someone would have read these two verses or some of the hundreds of verses like them to me to try to teach me, to encourage me, to know that Jesus Himself said that all of the Bible is true.

Seven years of my life as a young adult I spent wandering in a spiritual wasteland because I doubted the veracity and reliability of the Scriptures. The problem was not that people had any evidence that convinced me that something in the Bible was not true. The problem was they cast doubt and asked questions that lead you to assume that the proofs all ran contrary to the Scriptures.

When I finally responded to a challenge to examine the evidence and to see if indeed the Bible was true or not, I found tons of evidence for the absolute perfection of the Holy Scriptures, literally mountains reasoned support that was near impossible to contradict.

I am telling you, if you have doubts about the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible, you invest some time digging into the evidences. They are readily available for you to read or even watch on video.

The God who created this universe and who will one day sit as judge over it all is the God of Truth. And His Word is truth. And having made it abundantly available to each of us, He holds us accountable for believing His Word and living our lives in accord with it.

- **The Holy Spirit, called the Spirit of Truth, dwells inside believers.**

John 16:13 NKJV However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth;** ...

John 14:17 NKJV the Spirit of truth, ... **dwells with you and will be in you.**

- **True love rejoices in truth.**

1 Corinthians 13:4–6 NKJV 4 **Love** suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but **rejoices in the truth;**

Therefore,

- **We are to speak the truth in love.**

Ephesians 4:14–15 NKJV ... we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

- **We are to wrap ourselves in truth as we put on the armor of God to withstand the attacks of Satan.** Do you feel like you are under attack? Wrap yourself in God's truth.

Ephesians 6:13–16 NKJV 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, **having girded your waist with truth**, ...

- **The Church is to be the pillar and the ground of truth.**

1 Timothy 3:15 NKJV ... I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**.

And most especially today, because we live in the day of which Paul wrote to Timothy. 2 Timothy 4:1–4 NKJV 1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**