

END-TIMES ISSUES



#138 Commandment #9 – Introduction.

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

A N D B E Y O N D I

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



Each command represents a **category**.

- Within these categories are principles that govern all of life.
- The **"DO"** commands also imply what we are to "DO NOT."
- The **"DO NOT"** commands also imply what we are to "DO."

WE CAN GROUP THESE COMMANDS IN TERMS OF "LOVE."

- Commands #1 through #4 – LOVE for GOD.
- Commands #5 through #10 – LOVE for NEIGHBOR.

WE CAN GROUP THESE COMMANDS IN TERMS OF "OBLIGATION."

- Commandments #1, #2, #3 – God's **exclusive, sovereign claim on us**; our obligation to our Creator: complete loyalty in thought, word and deed.
- Commandments #4, #5 – God's **established foundational structures** that enable a proper relating of people to God and to the rest of society (beginning with one's parents). Our attitude toward God flows through these two commandments, on to the rest of them.
- Commandments #6, #7 – **Basic human obligations**; this involves issues pertaining to the very nature of humans, as God's image-bearers. (This is also the basis for human dignity.)
- Commandments #8, #9, #10 – **Basic social obligations**, necessary for the proper functioning of a society; related to actions, words and thoughts.
- Each of these categories is interrelated. Loyalty to God (#1–#3) enables the proper use of the foundational institutions (#4–#5), which protects human dignity (#6–#7), which sustains social order (#8–#10).

Today, we introduce the Ninth Commandment:

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
Exodus 20:16 (BSB); also in Deuteronomy 5:20.

LIKE ALL THE COMMANDMENTS:

- Its application to life is seen in the **Genesis accounts of the creation and the fall (Genesis 1-3)**. This specific commandment is *not* expressed as a *command*; because without sin, obedience to it would have always been spontaneous. (There was no need for a "do not"!)
 - The **proper use of words** can be seen in the interaction between God and the first humans. Without sin in the world, this would be the pattern for all future communication.
 - We also see God using words to *create*, and the man using words to *define* the significance of the animals, etc.
 - The **first violation of this obligation** is seen in the interaction between the serpent and the woman.
 - This involved an intent to *deceive*, not to communicate truth.

LIKE ALL THE COMMANDMENTS: (continued)

- This command was later expressed in the **Ten Commandments**.
 - In this list of ten commandments, we find it in the "negative" form ("do not"). Yet the "positive" obligations are also implied.
- It is found in **Jesus' teachings** in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere.
 - Jesus often emphasizes the "positive" side of the "do not" commands.
 - He also focused on the root cause issues – the internal attitudes that influence the way we respond to situations.
- It is mentioned in the **writings of the apostles**.

★ IN THE FUTURE ★
This commandment, along with all the others, will be the **standard** by which we are judged.

Regarding the word "FALSE" – The two accounts use *different* words!

>> Though in English, we normally translate them the *same*. <<

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Exodus 20:16 (BSB)	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Deuteronomy 5:20 (BSB)
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- Most translations use the **same** word in both passages: **"false."**
 - It's OK, since the **Hebrew words are synonyms** – though the word in Deuteronomy *expands* the concept (⇒ to be explained later).
- Three translations point out the slight differences:

Translation	Exodus 20:16	Deuteronomy 5:20
Christian Standard Bible	False testimony	Dishonest testimony
God's Word Translation	Lie	Avoid the truth
New American Bible	False witness	Dishonest witness

• WHY the differences?

- ✓ **Obviously, the meanings are close.** Since each commandment represents a *category* of obligations and prohibitions, both words are understood to imply *everything* the commandment represents.
- ✓ **The Exodus passage** (*spoken by God*) points to the prohibition ("do not") and its implied obligation ("do").
 - » Exodus 20:16 uses the Hebrew word *šeqer* (lying).
- ✓ **The Deuteronomy passage** (*spoken by Moses*) emphasizes the *extent* of the prohibition: it includes any avoidance of truth, and any "worthless" use of words.
 - » Deuteronomy 5:20 uses the word *šāw'* (false, vain, empty).
 - » **This word connects the Ninth Commandment to the Third Commandment.** (It uses the same word, translated as "vain.")

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in **vain**, for the LORD **will not leave anyone unpunished** who takes His name in **vain**.

Exodus 20:4 (BSB); also in Deuteronomy 5:11.

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• There is a parallel between the Third and Ninth Commandments.

- ✓ **For both** – it is a sin related to *speech*; and it is a *serious* matter.
- ✓ **The use of the Hebrew word *šāw'* (false, vain, empty)** – emphasizes the fact that the prohibition applies to *any* misrepresentation or distortion, not just outright lying.
 - » The "positive" aspect of the Ninth Commandment has to do with *building-up* people with one's speech. So the "negative" aspect would also include *any* words that are "without value" – words that don't "build up" others. This would include the "careless (or empty) words" that Jesus warns us about:

"But I tell you that men will give an account on the day of judgment for **every careless word** they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be **condemned**."

Matthew 12:36-37 (BSB)

- ✓ **Any misuse of God's name** – is forbidden... won't go unpunished.
- ✓ **Any misuse of speech/truth** – is forbidden... will be condemned.

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How serious is this matter? Is it OK to lie "a little bit"?

- People seem to always want to find an "exception" to the rule. For now, we will just point out some verses from Scripture. (We will have to examine this further, at a later time.)

Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'
Anything more comes from the evil one.

Matthew 5:37 (BSB)

Simply let your "Yes" be **yes**, and your "No," **no**,
so that you will not fall under judgment.

James 5:12b (BSB)

- **Violating the Ninth Commandment is also sin against God.** When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the *apostles* (Acts 5), Peter told them:

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit** ...
You have not lied to men, but to God!

Acts 5:3a, 4b (BSB)

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WHEN WE SIN AGAINST PEOPLE, GOD SEES IT AS A SIN AGAINST HIM.

Our attitude toward the "image of God" (= people) is a reflection of our attitude toward the God who is being "imaged."

★ And it applies to more than just speech. ★

- Grumbling against Moses and Aaron was equivalent to grumbling against God – Exodus 16:8; Numbers 16:11.
- Paying attention to, or rejecting, the instructions of the apostles is equivalent to paying attention to, or rejecting, God – Luke 10:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:8.
- Kindness to the poor is an expression of honoring God; oppressing the poor is contempt for their maker – Proverbs 14:31.
- Jesus said:
 - ... **whatever you did** for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, **you did for Me**. / ... **whatever you did not do** for one of the least of these, **you did not do for Me**.

Matthew 25:40b, 45b (BSB)

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To WHAT does this command apply?

- **As seen in the specific wording of the Ten Commandments**, the focus is on our speech in a court of law. We are not to give false *testimony*; we are not to be false *witnesses*.
 - ✓ Some people see this and try to argue that the command does not apply to *personal conduct* – to people lying *outside* a court of law!
 - ✓ Not only do they ignore the fact that this command represents a *principle*, but they ignore other passages that give the *same* commandment in different words – such as in Leviticus 19!
- **Leviticus 19 is a repeat of the Ten Commandments** (not in the same order as in Exodus and Deuteronomy). It expresses the commands in terms of *application* – specific examples of how they would apply in life. In this chapter, how does it express the Ninth Commandment? It simply calls it "lying" and "deception," and applies it to *anyone*! There is no reference to a court of law.

You must not **lie** or **deceive** one another.

Leviticus 19:11b (BSB)

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Three "spheres" or realms of application.

- As we look throughout Scripture, we can see this commandment's application in:
 - ✓ **Judicial proceedings** – resulting in legal justice, OR injustice; this would include lying, partial truth that distorts perception, or even withholding the truth (including failure to testify, when you know the truth).
 - ✓ **Social interactions** in the public sphere – speech that influences consumer behavior and public perception: promoting truth, OR distorting it to manipulate people. We tend to apply this to politicians and advertising/marketing; but it includes much more.
 - ✓ **Individual situations** – verbally building-up others, OR tearing them down with derogatory comments, scapegoating, etc.
- We also see the commandment expressed in both *negative* ("do not") and *positive* ("do") ways.

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Violating this commandment can also be a violation of *other* commandments.

- We've already seen its connection to God.
- ✓ **The link to the Third Commandment** – Both commands involve speech and have the same prohibition. (In Deuteronomy, the *same* word "vain" is used in *both* commands, to describe the sin.)
- ✓ **Another example: The link to the Sixth Commandment** – "murder in the heart," expressed by means of speech.

SPEECH
(8TH Cmd.)

You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not murder' and 'Anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

Again, anyone who says to his brother, '**Raca**,' will be subject to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, '**You fool!**' will be subject to the fire of hell.

Matthew 5:21-22 (BSB)

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Our response to the Ninth Commandment will influence *all* of life.

This is because:

★ **The different areas of our lives are *interrelated*!** ★

- **We will develop character traits** that extend beyond the "speech" aspect of this commandment.
- **Attitudes and values** that influence our talk will also influence other areas of life.
 - ✓ For instance, if you desire to build-up people and not tear them down, it will influence *all* aspects of life: what you do, what you say, and what you think.
- Examples of various character traits...

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- **Here are some examples** of character traits that will be influenced by a pursuit of the *positive* aspect of the Ninth Commandment:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| ✓ Kindness/compassion | ✓ Honesty |
| ✓ Thoughtfulness before action | ✓ Purity of thought |
| ✓ Encouragement and genuine praise | ✓ Sincerity |
| ✓ Reliability and integrity in commitments | ✓ Humility |
| ✓ Self-awareness and accountability | ✓ Discernment |
| ✓ Generosity in interpreting other's actions | ✓ Pursuit of truth |
| ✓ Boldness/courage to speak truthfully, when the pressures of the world are against it | |
| ✓ Self-denial or renouncing self-interest that benefits at the expense of others. | |
| ✓ An active commitment to other's welfare, benevolence | |

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The **ultimate** contrast between *obeying* and *disobeying* the Ninth Commandment: This has to do with **Jesus!**

- **About Jesus:**
 - ✓ He is the true witness – Revelation 3:14.
 - ✓ He *is* the truth – John 14:6.
 - ✓ He faithfully testified the truth against the world – and the world hated him for doing so – John 7:7.
- **At Jesus' trial and crucifixion:**
 - ✓ The disciples were unwilling to stand up and bear witness to the truth. Instead, they abandoned Jesus – Mark 14:50.
 - ✓ Peter bore false witness against him three times – Matthew 26:69-75. ("I do not know him.")
 - ✓ The religious leaders gathered together many false witnesses to testify against Jesus – Mark 14:55-59.
 - ✓ Pilate asked "What is truth?" – John 13:38 (= probably mocking the idea of truth, rather than seeking to learn about it).

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OUR MISSION!

Speak the truth!

LEARN to recognize

some of the **sneaky** ways the devil tries to get us to violate this command
(whether directly or indirectly).

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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