

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

John 8:31-32

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."

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. Every one 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 in Titus 1 that he is "an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago."

Again, in Hebrews 6, Paul writes concerning God's oath to bless Abraham, "God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as a anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast." The two unchangeable things, of course are His Promise and His Person. As Paul writes in Romans 3, Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged."

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. We shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free, according to John 8:31 and 32, if we abide in the word of Christ. As the ninth commandment states, "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" so also does Paul in Colossians 3:9 command us, "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices."

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, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you -- why then will you sin against innocent blood, by putting David to death without a cause?" 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.¹

¹ Romans 1:18