

# AM Exodus 20:1-18 Truth Matters - Commandment 9

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[ 0 : 00 ] And we are going to continue to look at the final two commandments this morning and this evening. This morning we're going to look at commandment number 9. And then this evening we'll finish off these commandments with commandment number 10.

But Exodus chapter 20 and we'll read the opening 21 verses here as we have done in the past. Let's hear God's word.

And God spoke all these words saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the Lord your God am a jealous God. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

[ 1 : 11 ] But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work.

You or your son or your daughter. Your male servant or your female servant. Or your livestock. Or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them.

And he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother. That your days may be long in the land that the Lord is giving you.

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

[ 2 : 29 ] You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. Or his male servant. Or his female servant.

Or his ox or his donkey. Or anything that is your neighbor's. Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning.

And the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking. The people were afraid and trembled. And they stood afar off. And said to Moses. Moses. You speak to us and we will listen.

But do not let God speak to us. Lest we die. Moses said to the people. Do not fear. For God has come to test you. That the fear of him may be before you.

That you may not sin. The people stood far off. While Moses drew near to the thick darkness. Where God was.

[ 3 : 28 ] Amen. And may God give us good understanding of his inspired word. Now before we come to look. Now can you turn back in your Bibles.

If you have them to Exodus chapter 20. And to the ninth commandment. As I've already intimated. Which is found in verse 16. Moses says in this ninth commandment.

God says in this ninth commandment. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

I don't know if you know the expression. But when I was young. There was an expression that said. Sticks and stones may break your bones. But names may never hurt you.

If we're honest. I think we know that to be untrue. Words can be very powerful for the good.

[ 4 : 42 ] But they can also be very hurtful. And very damaging. To us. And to others.

We've already spoken to the children. This morning about the use of our tongues. I've entitled the sermon this morning.

As you'll see. Truth matters. Truth matters. Truth matters. You see. What we say. With our tongues. According to the Bible. Is very very important. The apostle James. In the New Testament. Tells us that the tongue.

Though a little member. In our body. Has the great potential. To cause disaster. And hurt. Listen to the words.

[ 5 : 38 ] Of James chapter 3. James writes. Likewise. The tongue. Is a small. Part of the body. But it makes great boasts.

Consider what a great forest. Is set on fire. By a small spark. The tongue. Also. Is a fire. A world. Of evil. Among the parts. Of the body. It corrupts. The whole body. Sets the whole. Course. Of one's. Life.

On fire. And is itself. Set on fire. By hell. In other words. It has an inordinate. Power. And anyone. The Bible says. Who can control. Their tongue. Would be a perfect. Person. Now the ninth commandment.

[ 6 : 34 ] Do not bear false witness. Against your neighbour. Has to do. With our speech. How we use. Our tongues. Now first of all.

Let me just give you. A background. To the commandment. Itself. Because these commands. Were given. In a specific context. And to a specific people.

But this command. Has a specific reference. To what a witness. Would say. In a courtroom. The command.

Primarily governs. The legal testimony. That a witness. Would give there. But it's not. Completely. Contained. And confined.

To that. Courtroom. Context. The command. Relates. To all. The words. That you. And I.

[ 7 : 29 ] And we. Use. Are our words. True. Or are they. False. Are our words.

True. And trustworthy. Or are they. A lie. That is what this. Command. Is about.

In the days. In which this command. Were given. People. Were often. Convicted. Of crimes. And they had little. Protection. They were not presumed.

Innocent. Until guilty. As we have. In our legal system. Today. Rather. The opposite. They were guilty.

Until they were. Proven. Innocent. There were few. Standards. Around. For the presentation. Of evidence.

[ 8 : 24 ] In a courtroom. And sometimes. Courts. Would convict. And could convict. Someone. On the strength. Of one. Witnesses. Words. Alone.

Thus. In that context. Abuse. Was prevalent. Which is why. God. Has given. This commandment. To.

His people. Because. God. Loves. Truth. He is the. True God. The Lord.

Jesus. Said himself. That he was the way. The truth. And the life. And so. God loves. Truth. And in the courtroom. Specifically.

God. Loves. Justice. He plays a high. Places a high. Importance. On truthfulness. And therefore. On justice.

[ 9 : 23 ] The writer. To the book. Of Proverbs. In chapter. Six. In verse. Sixteen. Through to. Nineteen. Says. These words. He says.

There are. Six. Things. The Lord. The Lord. Hates. A powerful word. The Lord. Hates. Seven. That are detestable. To him. Haughty eyes. Or proud eyes. A lying tongue. Hands. That shed. Innocent blood. A heart. That devises. Wicked schemes. Feet. That are quick. To rush. Into evil. A false witness.

Who pours. Out. Out. Lies. And a man. Who stirs up. Dissension. Among. Brothers. God. Hates.

[ 10 : 19 ] Falsehood. And God. Hates. Lying. And two. Of those things. In Proverbs. Six. Verses. Sixteen. To nineteen.

Are about. Speech. And about. Lying. And further. On. In Proverbs. In chapter. Twelve. And verse. Twenty. Two. The writer. Says.

These words. The Lord. Detests. They're really strong words. Aren't they? The Lord. Detests. Lying. Lips. But he delights. In men. And women.

Who are. Truthful. You see. Before. The world. Of forensic science. That you and I. Live in today. Almost everything. Depended. On the strength. And testimony. And word. Of a witness. Especially. In a courtroom. It was.

[11:13] Your word. Against. Their word. It was. One. Versus. One. And in an environment. Where many of those.

Offences. Would lead. To the death penalty. Many of those. Offences. Were capital. Offences. Punishable. By the death.

The defendant's life. Was therefore. At stake. All based. On a witness. Who would either. Tell the truth. Or tell a lie.

The word. Of a false witness. A lying witness. Could be fatal. Fortunately. In Israel. It was different. Any accused. Person. Would appear. Before a court. Of elders. In Deuteronomy. 19. And verse. 15.

[12:12] We read. These words. God laid down. This judicial system. For Israel. He says. One witness. Is not enough. To convict. Anyone.

Accused. Of any crime. Or offense. They may have committed. A matter. Must be established. By the testimony. Of two.

Or three. Witnesses. And especially. For capital. Offenses. These.

Legal. Safeguards. Were put in place. By God. To protect. The innocent. From people. Who would lie. Who would tell.

False stories. Or untruths. And therefore. God put them in place. To prevent. Injustice.

[13:06] In. His world. And these. Principles. By and large. Underpin. Even. Our. Judicial. System. Today. Here.

In the United Kingdom. People are tried. Generally. In front of a number of people. A jury. And they are.

Told. If you've ever been called up to. Witness. Against some crime. A Bible is presented. Before somebody. And you are asked to swear.

By almighty God. To tell. The truth. The whole truth. And nothing. But. The truth.

Because truth. Is important. Truth telling. For God's people. Is vital. Truth telling.

[14:01] For all people. Is God's requirement. Truth. Why do we say that? Well. Where there is no truth.

There can be. No. Justice. So we have to reject. Every form of falsehood. And lies. Whether that is in the courtroom.

Or in a church. Or in our everyday. Say lies. We are to be people. Who prize. And value highly. Truth. Now the command. We are going to confine ourselves. To telling of lies. This morning. But the command. Is very very far reaching. Because the command.

Covers. Perjury. It covers. Slander. What we say about somebody else. It covers. Gossiping. It covers.

[15:01] Backbiting. And so we could spend. A number. Of sermons. And lessons. On those aspects. Of this. Command itself.

But this morning. We are going to. Confine. Confine ourselves. To thinking. About. Lying. I could spend. Hours. Giving you.

Statistics. On the various. Forms. Of. Lying. But suffice it. To say. That everyone. In this room. Has told lies.

In a survey. Various surveys. Have been conducted. Over the years. And in. The confused. Dot com. Survey. That I looked at. With regards.

To telling lies. You know that. Insurance provider. Confused. Dot com. Well they do. Lots of surveys. Also on people. Their survey.

[16:00] Told us. That the average. Britain. That's you and I. Tells. Ten lies. A week. With forty.

Percent. Of people. Claiming. That fibs. As we sometimes. Call them. Are sometimes. Necessary. The head of the insurance.

At confused. Dot com. Matt Lloyd. Says these words. Little white lies. Are part. And parcel. Of daily life. The head of that insurance.

Company. Tells us that. Little white lies. People who tell. Lies on their insurance. Policies. For example. Are part. And parcel. Of everyday life.

But for you and I. If we are Christians. Here this morning. It's meant to be different. The apostle Paul.

[17:01] In Colossians 3. Verses 8. And 9. Says these words. He's writing. He's writing. To a group of people. Who had come to.

Faith. In the Lord Jesus. Whose lives. Had been. Radically changed. They had had their sins. Forgiven. And they were meant.

To be living. Righteous. And just. Lives. And just. Lives. And so. He says. These words. In Colossians 3.

Verses 8. And 9. He writes. To these Christians. These people. Who have professed faith. And so. It applies. To you. And I. If we have professed faith. He says. But now.

You must. Also. Rid yourself. Of all such things. As these. Anger. Rage. Malice. Slander.

[17:56] And filthy. Language. From your lips. Then he goes on. In verse 9. To say. These words. And he's speaking. To Christians. And he says. Do not lie.

To each other. Since you have taken off. Your old. Self. With its practices. And have put on. The new self. Which is being renewed. In knowledge. In the image. Of its. Creator. Do not lie.

To each other. In church. Do not lie. To each other. Outside of church. You know.

There are many things. Aren't there. That we. Teach our children. If we're fortunate enough. To have children. There are many things. That we teach our children. To do.

[18:54] But we never. Have. To teach them. To say no. No. And we never. Have to teach them. To tell lies. It comes naturally.

To them. It comes naturally. To us. To tell lies. Because. We're sinful. It's the hallmark.

Of our. Sinfulness. By nature. You see. Before. We were Christians. We belonged. To another family.

We were outside. Of God's family. And the Bible. Actually says. That our family. Was the devil. That that might be. Unpalatable today. In 2022.

Especially. If you're here. This morning. And you think. Well I'm a kind of. Righteous person. I come to church. I come to the free church. I've always come to the free church. I was brought up. To go to church. I read my Bible.

[19:53] But actually. The Bible says. That if you're not a Christian. The Bible tells us. In John chapter 8. That we belong. To another person. And we belong. To Satan. Listen to these words.

And the Lord Jesus. Is speaking to people. Who professed. To be religious. The religious leaders. Of his day. The Jewish religion. And he says. You are of your father.

The devil. And your will. Is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer. From the beginning. And he does not stand.

In the truth. Because there is no truth. In him. When he lies. He speaks out of his own character. For he is a liar. And the father. Of lies. That was. As I reiterate.

[20:53] Said to religious people. Who claimed. To know God. God. But lying. But lying. Is a behaviour.

More suitable. To those. Who belong. To the devil. Rather than those. Who belong. To God. And so. This ninth commandment.

Not to lie. But to tell the truth. Truth. Is a call to. Truthfulness. In our lives. That should come.

As no surprise. To us. For the God of the Bible. As we've already says. The God who we are called. To worship. To serve.

And obey. Is the one true God. And the Christ. That we claim to follow. And to be his disciples. He was the one.

[21:50] Who said. That he was the truth. And the third person. Of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit. Is called in the Bible. The Spirit. Of truth.

And God. Being the true God. The God of truth. Truth. Never lies. His words. Are always. Reliable. They can always. Be counted on. They can always. Be trusted. And God. Says to his people.

That he requires. Truth. In the inward parts. Of our lives. He says. These words.

Behold. In Psalm 51. He says. Behold. Thou desirest. Truth. In the inward parts. And in the hidden part. Thou wilt make me. To know. Wisdom.

[22:51] Well. Why do we lie? Why. Do we. Lie? Why do we find it. So easy. To lie? Well. Let me give you. Three or four.

Reasons. Why. We lie. There are many. There are many different ways. Of telling lies. Aren't there? We often dress up. In other words.

What we call lying. We talk about. Telling fibs. We talk about. We. Quite lies. We talk about. Massaging. The truth. Winston Churchill. In the house. Of comments. Where you're not allowed. To call anybody. A liar. Said these words.

To somebody. Who he was listening to. He called. The gentleman. Out on the other side. Of the benches. And he said. That he was. Perpetrating. A terminological. Inexactitude.

[ 23 : 50 ] Yes. A rather long word. For. You're a liar. I don't know about you. I was. Never. Allowed. To call. Anybody. A liar. When I was a child.

Because it's a very serious claim. Isn't it? But. You know. The first reason. That we lie. We lie. To protect ourselves. Don't we? I hope.

I'm speaking. To. A group of people. This morning. Who. Will be truthful. With themselves. As they look into. As you look into. Your own hearts. But.

We lie. To protect ourselves. Don't we? When we have done something wrong. And we get caught. Our natural instinct. Is to defend ourselves. And to protect ourselves. And we want to protect ourselves. From the blame. And the guilt. And the embarrassment.

[ 24 : 44 ] And so we tell a lie. Papers have been filled recently. With party gate. Haven't they? Party gate really is all about.

Who's been telling the truth. And who's been telling lies. But you know. The bible tells us. That there are a lot of characters. That we can look at.

In the bible. People who professed faith in God. Who lied. Saul lied. Saul lied. Saul lied. Abraham lied. In their lives.

Peter lied. In his life. Saul in the bible lied. To Samuel. There was an instance. Where Saul was told. To destroy a group of people.

Called the Amalekites. Everything was to be destroyed. Cattle. And sheep. And everything. You can read about it. In 1st Samuel 15.

[ 25 : 40 ] In verses 13 to 15. But Saul disobeyed. The commandment of God. And then he met up.

And Samuel the prophet. Met up with him later on. And as he met Saul that day. He could hear the bleating of sheep.

And the lowing of the cattle. And he confronted Saul. And he says. What is this bleating of the sheep. And the cattle in my ears.

And Saul lied to Samuel. Saying that it was the soldiers. That had done it. Why did he lie? Because he had been disobedient.

To the Lord's commandments. And instructions. And he was trying to save. His own skin. Just like you and I do. When we're caught out. Have you done that?

[ 26 : 46 ] Well of course you have. We all have. Because we've all lied. Because it's convenient for us. Abraham lied.

Abraham lied also. When he went down to Egypt. And we don't have time to look at it. All of these. But if you look at a lot of these. Great heroes of the faith. You'll find that they lied. And the lives.

Abraham took his beautiful wife. Down to Egypt. And because he thought. That Pharaoh would take his wife. Because she was so beautiful. He schemed. And he told Pharaoh a lie.

To protect himself. She's not my wife. She's my sister. He lied. You remember Peter.

In the New Testament. When he was confronted. On the night. In which the Lord Jesus. Was betrayed. He was standing around that fire. And three times. He denied.

[ 27 : 42 ] That he knew the Lord Jesus. He lied. And then in the New Testament. Church. Ananias. And Sapphira.

They lied. To the early church. About their property. So you and I. Like them.

We lie to protect ourselves. Secondly. We lie. To gain an advantage. In life. Don't we? We think that by lying. We will gain money.

Or position. Or get ahead. Of somebody in life. That's why we do it. We lie.

When we falsify. Our income. On our tax return. We lie. When we make a false. Insurance claim. You know.

[ 28 : 37 ] I know people. Who just put an insurance claim in. Every year. Every year. When there's a bit of storm damage. Put it in. Claim the insurance. Nothing at all to do with the storm.

But they just lie. Because. They gain. Money from it. We may lie. In filling out. Our forms.

To get benefits. From the DWP. Or the government. We may lie. About our present income. When going for a new job. Just put another.

Five thousand pounds. On your present salary. When you're at the interview. And then claim a bigger salary. From the next employer. We lie. About these things. We lie. When we gild the lily. In our stories. When we exaggerate. We lie. When we overstate. Our experience. To get a new job. All to make.

[ 29 : 33 ] Or to gain. An advantage. In life. I don't know. Your lives. Individually. But have you lied.

To gain. An advantage. We lie. Thirdly. To impress others. Don't we? I'm sure you have done that. I'm sure you have lied.

To impress others. Perhaps you feel. Insecure. Or inexperienced. And you don't want. To be. Embarrassed. And so you claim. To have done.

Something. Before. Or have been. Somewhere. That you haven't been. You embellish. Your story. You stretch.

The truth. Call it. What you may. You want to look. Better. In somebody else's eyes. So you just lie. It's all just.

[ 30 : 29 ] So convenient. Isn't it? It's so easy. To do. It's so. Natural. To do. From our sinful hearts. What's the harm in it? You might say.

Well we lie. Fourthly. To. Harm. Others. You know. Joseph. In the Bible. Encountered that. With Potiphar's. Wife. When he. Refused. Her. Advances. She. She. She. She. She. Became. So. Angry. That.

She. Lied. About. Him. And. Joseph. Was. Thrown. Into. Prison. That. Injustice. That. Stemmed. From. Her. Lying. And.

She. Was. Spurned. And. She. Wanted. Revenge. And. So. She. Concocted. A story. She. Told. A lie. Or. A number. Of. Lies. To. Harm. Joseph. The.

[ 31 : 26 ] Religious. Leaders. Lied. About. The. Lord. Jesus. Himself. Didn't. They. They. Lied. About. What. He. Said. And. What. He. Did. On.

Many. Occasions. Because. They. Wanted. To. Harm. Him. They. Couldn't. Trap. Him. Because. He. Was. The. One. That. Didn't. Tell. Any. Lies. He. Was. Perfect. But.

They. Wanted. To. Harm. Him. And. Kill. Him. And. They. Can. I. Even. To. Get. False. Witnesses. To. Testify. Against. Him. And.

So. We. Lie. For. A. Number. Of. Reasons. To. Impress. Others. To. Harm. People. Because. It's. Convenient. For. Us. But.

There. Are. Results. Of. Lying. Aren't there? The. Results. Of. Lying. It may seem to us as a convenient quick fix.

[ 32 : 24 ] A sort of get out of jail card. A convenient escape just to save our own skin. To dodge a bullet as it were. To gain advantage or to pin the blame on someone else.

But there are serious ramifications when we lie. When we lie it harms. It does harm others. As we've already seen.

Proverbs 25 and 18 says. These words. Like a club. Or a sword. Or a sharp arrow. So is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbour.

You see. You see. We're not as Christians. To be harming each other. We are to be kind to one another.

We are to speak the truth in love. And so lying harms others. It also secondly destroys trust. Doesn't it? When we lie.

[ 33 : 30 ] It destroys people's confidence in us. If people lie to you. You will not trust them. You don't have confidence in them. They're not trustworthy. And if you know someone who is a liar.

You know you can't trust or rely on them. Telling the truth. Leads to long term good relationships. Truthful lips. The psalmist says. Endure forever. But a lying tongue lasts only for a moment. You see.

The simple fact of the matter is. That you can't run a business. You can't run a church. You can't run a country. Without a strong standard of honesty.

And integrity. And truthfulness. A healthy society. Cannot be built. Upon dishonesty.

[ 34 : 32 ] And the more that we cover up. Because lying. Is a form of deception. The more that we cover up. In our lives.

The more. It erodes a sense of trust. In others. From others. And thirdly.

And finally. Lying. Wrecks. Relationships. Doesn't it? You know. In whatever relationship. We can think about. Whether that's a marriage relationship.

Or a business relationship. Or a friendship relationship. Trust. Is vital. But trust is fragile. Isn't it? Secrets. And lies. Jeopardize. Trust. And can damage us. And our relationships.

[ 35 : 31 ] Sometimes irreparably. In an intimate relationship. Emotional honesty. Includes allowing our partner or a spouse.

To know who we are. Honesty is more than simply. Not lying. Deception or lying.

Can include. Using ambiguous statements. Or telling. Half the truth. Or withholding feelings.

Or information. That is important. To the other person. Who has a right to know. And when we do that. It affects our relationships.

Whether that's in marriage. Or in church. Or whatever relationship we have. Honesty. Is so important. To tell the truth. The whole truth.

[ 36 : 29 ] And nothing but the truth. And it requires courage. To be vulnerable.

And authentic. Augustine. A man from the first century. Said these words. I have had experience.

Of many. Who wish. To deceive. But no one. Who wished. To be. Deceived. I'm sure if I took a poll.

Of everybody here. And asked them. Do you like to be deceived? I'm sure. Everyone would say no. But we often deceive other people.

In our lives. And with our words. Lying. Lying. Ultimately. Bars us. From God's.

[ 37 : 27 ] Presence. That's what the Bible tells us. Listen to the words. Of John the Apostle. In 1st John. He says. Whoever says.

I know him. That is God. But does not. Keep his. Commandments. He. Is a liar.

And the truth. Is not. In him. And if you're here. This morning. I'm going to ask the question.

Does that apply. To you. That you say. That you claim to. Know God. And love God. But you don't.

Keep his commandments. You don't. Practice righteousness. You don't. Tell the truth. You practice lying. And deceit. And deception. In your life. The Bible says.

[ 38 : 24 ] That you're a liar. And the truth is not. In you. Someone has said.

It's not hard. To tell. A lie. But it's hard. To tell. Only. One. And isn't that true.

Once you start lying. It has that snowball effect. Doesn't it. Oh. What tangled. Webs. We weave.

When first. We practice.

To. Deceive. The Bible is very honest. About the failings. Of the great men. And women.

And we have referred to a few of them. This morning. In regards to lying. And I submit to you. That if they struggled. In this area. So we all struggle.

[ 39 : 22 ] In this area. So we all need. To take Paul's exhortation. That we find in Ephesians. And with this. I close.

He says these words. They're very strong words again. He says. In chapter. 4 and 17. He says. So I tell you this.

And then he says. And I. Insist on it. In the Lord. He says. Therefore. In the Lord. In the Lord. In the Lord. In the Lord. In the Lord. In the Lord. Therefore. Each of you. Must put off.

Falsehood. And speak truthfully. To your neighbor. For we are all members. Of one body.

He insists on it. So we must be people. Who. Not only say. We believe the truth. But practice it.

[ 40 : 19 ] In our lives. So if we are guilty. Of this sin. This morning. And I submit to you. That we all are. Then let's.

Confess our sin. Of lying. To God. And ask. His forgiveness. Through Christ. And then turn away. From lying.

In our lives. And only then. Will we be. Attempting to live. In light. Of this ninth. Commandment.

Which says. You shall not. Bear false. Witness. Against. Your neighbor. Let's pray together. Father.