

The Ninth Commandment Do Not Bear False Witness

1- Objectives

- ❖ A false witness is a lie
- ❖ Lying is a double sin that most often hides behind it another sin
- ❖ Half-Truths & Excessive Exaggeration; both are forms of lies

2- References

- ❖ The Ten Commandments for HH Pope Shenouda Volume 4
<http://www.copticpope.org/books/Tencomv4.PDF>

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3)
- ❖ “Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue” (Psalm 120: 2)

4- Lesson Outline

- ❖ The ninth Commandment is simply about not lying. The average person lies four times a day, or 1,460 lies a year, which are 88,000 lies by the age of 60. That is a lot of lying!
- ❖ God hates lying. He not only made it one of the Ten Commandments but the Bible is replete with verses on how God hates lying and what will happen to liars on the final Day of Judgment (Proverbs 6:16-19, Revelation 21:8).

Believing falsehoods is very harmful

- ❖ How do you feel when you buy something because the labeling made it seem like the world's greatest product and it wasn't what it turned out to be?
- ❖ How do you feel when you act on something based on information that you received and it turned out that information was not true?
- ❖ Have you ever been lied to by a dear friend? How did that affect your friendship?
- ❖ When we believe something to be true and it isn't, we get usually hurt; get mad and we feel used or abused. We lose trust in the person or entity that lied to us.
- ❖ Once trust is lost then it becomes hard to function in a relationship because it may take a while to rebuild the trust and depending on the situation, the trust may never be rebuilt.

How do people lie?

- ❖ The Church Fathers particularly St. Augustine says that lying is when your mind thinks or knows one thing but you speak something different with the intention of deceiving someone. This includes all of the slight variations we make to the truth and lumps them under the definition of a lie.
- ❖ Lying is a very easy thing to do especially when we lack control over our tongues. Our society has gotten so immersed in lying that it has become very hard to discern what the truth is.
- ❖ Sometimes it is not even a straight out black and white lie but a slight variation of the truth; this is seen by the commercials we see on TV and by news reports that are intended on getting to change your mind about a person or thing by gently swaying the truth.
- ❖ Furthermore, the devil has disguised lying now under the term “street smarts”, to lie in order to achieve success in the world is considered wise, and a smart thing to do.

Why do we lie?

- ❖ A defense mechanism that we use to cover up our guilt or wrongdoing so that we can escape punishment or rebuke.
- ❖ To protect our image or to come across as smart or successful
- ❖ A way for us to get what is unlawfully ours such as someone else's money, etc.

Why does God hate lying so much?

- ❖ God is truth and that is an inherent characteristic and nature of God. We, through grace, have become His children and through grace we struggle to reflect His characteristics which is truthfulness. A lie is a falsehood and therefore cannot exist where God or His children are. In order to imitate God we must be truthful.
- ❖ God wants us to have real relationships with one another. The Christian life is based upon honesty and transparency in our relationships. When we lie to each other we set up barriers between us and our neighbor and therefore can never really have true and meaningful relationships with one another.
- ❖ Remember that the purpose of our relationships with each other is to edify one another and bring each other to the knowledge and love of God and to help each other get to heaven. If there is falsehood in our relationships, the above can never be accomplished.
- ❖ Lying also brings many wounds and hurt in our relationships with others, which again goes against the purpose God has for us.
- ❖ Lying is a habit forming and as with all bad habits they tend to hurt us. If we are constantly lying to others we will end up lying to ourselves. In order to have a true relationship with God there must be honesty between us and Him.
- ❖ We must be honest about our weaknesses and continually examine ourselves and understand our weak nature and our wounds. That's the only way God can heal us. Maybe that's why liars really do not receive salvation because they never offer a true repentance (Revelation 21:8).

What about mercy lying?

The Fathers say that as much as possible we should not lie in such situations because of the inherent evil associated with a lie. We should not use what is evil to do what is right. They suggest in such situations to either remain silent, or to provide an answer which is not contrary to the truth.

What to do to stop lying?

- ❖ Pray that God give us grace not to lie.
- ❖ Really the best way to stop lying is to practice self control in the area of talking. The Bible says that in the abundance of words sin is present, many times when we get carried away with our talking we inadvertently lie. Learning to control our words is one way of limiting the chances in which we lie.

5- Conclusion

- ❖ Resort to proper methods to solve your problems since the rope of lying is short and is mostly revealed.
- ❖ Do not believe everything that is said. Moreover, do not judge without investigation.
- ❖ Learning to control our words is one way of limiting the chances in which we lie.

6- Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ You can play with the group the play of the telephone (Say a word to someone and each one in his turn will pass the word and then compare the 1st and last words) to emphasize

how the words you listen to is not revealing the truth and so investigation for the truth is the base and core of judgment.