

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 45 (HCLD 43)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 3.

Question: What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own,[1] especially in public judicature;[2] giving false evidence,[3] suborning false witnesses,[4] wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth;[5] passing unjust sentence,[6] calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked;[7] forgery,[8] concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause,[9] and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves,[10] or complaint to others;[11] speaking the truth unseasonably,[12] or maliciously to a wrong end,[13] or perverting it to a wrong meaning,[14] or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice;[15] speaking untruth,[16] lying,[17] slandering,[18] backbiting,[19] detracting,[20] tale bearing,[21] whispering,[22] scoffing,[23] reviling,[24] rash,[25] harsh,[26] and partial censuring;[27] misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;[28] flattering,[29] vainglorious boasting,[30] thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others;[31] denying the gifts and graces of God;[32] aggravating smaller faults;[33] hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession;[34] unnecessary discovering of infirmities;[35] raising false rumors,[36] receiving and countenancing evil reports,[37] and stopping our ears against just defense;[38] evil suspicion;[39] envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any,[40] endeavoring or desiring to impair it,[41] rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy;[42] scornful contempt,[43] fond admiration;[44] breach of lawful promises;[45] neglecting such things as are of good report,[46] and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering: What we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.[47]²

This is an awesome laundry list. This question in the Westminster Larger Catechism is preceded by a list of man's duties under the ninth commandment. This question speaks to the thing forbidden or the

¹ Heidelberg Catechism LD 43

Q112: What does the ninth Commandment require?

A112: That I bear false witness against no one,[a] twist no one's words,[b] be no backbiter or slanderer,[c] join in condemning no one unheard and rashly;[d] but that on pain of God's heavy wrath I avoid all lying and deceit [e] as the very works of the devil;[f] and that in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs I love, speak honestly and confess the truth;[g] also, insofar as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.[h]

a. Prov. 19:5, 9 b. Psa. 15:3 c. Rom. 1:28-30 d. Matt. 7:1-2; Luke 6:37 e. John 8:44 f. Prov. 12:22; 13:5 g. I Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25 h. I Peter 2:21, 23; 3:9; 4:8; John 7:24, 51; Col. 4:6

² 1. I Sam. 17:28; II Sam. 1:9-10, 15-16; 16:3 2. Lev. 19:15; Hab. 1:4 3. Prov. 6:16, 19; 19:5 4. Acts 6:13 5. Jer. 9:3, 5; Acts 24:2, 5; Psa. 3:1-4; 12:3-4 6. Prov. 17:15; I Kings 21:9-14 7. Isa. 5:23 8. Psa. 119:69; Luke 16:5-7; 19:8 9. Lev. 5:1; Acts 5:3, 8-9; II Tim. 4:6 10. I Kings 1:6; Lev. 19:17 11. Isa. 59:4 12. Prov. 29:11 13. I Sam. 22:9-10; Psa. 52:1 14. Psa. 56:5; John 2:19; Matt. 26:60-61 15. Gen. 3:5, 26:7, 9 16. Isa. 59:13 17. Lev. 19:11; Col. 3:9 18. Psa. 15:3 19. Psa. 15:3 20. James 4:11; Jer. 38:4 21. Lev. 19:16 22. Rom. 1:29-30 23. Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:29 24. I Cor. 6:10 25. Matt. 7:1 26. Acts 28:4 27. Gen. 38:24; Rom. 2:1 28. Neh. 6:6-8; Rom. 3:8; Psa. 69:10; I Sam. 1:13-15; II Sam. 10:3 29. Psa. 12:2-3 30. II Tim. 3:2 31. Luke 18:9, 11; Rom. 12:16; I Cor. 4:6; Acts 12:22; Exod. 4:10-14 32. Job 4:6, 27:5-6 33. Matt. 7:3-5 34. Prov. 28:13; 30:20; Gen. 3:12-13; 4:9; Jer. 2:35; II Kings 5:25 35. Gen. 9:22; Prov. 25:9-10 36. Exod. 23:1 37. Prov. 29:12 38. Acts 7:56-57; Job 31:13-14 39. I Cor. 13:5; I Tim. 6:4 40. Num. 11:29; Matt. 21:15 41. Ezra 4:12-13 42. Jer. 48:27 43. Psa. 35:15-16, 21; Matt. 27:28-29 44. Jude 1:16; Acts 12:22 45. Rom. 1:31; II Tim. 3:3 46. I Sam. 2:24 47. II Sam. 13:12-13; Prov. 5:8-9; 6:33

negative aspect, thus “thou shall not” is in view. This raises the ante so to speak and now we have the actual command of God. I have explained before my view of a superior speaking, and that as a superior their word being a command, even when not preceded with the words this is a command. This question first serves the same purpose to me of being a tool whereby to examine self and my own heart. It also goes into far more detail and would take enough space in its own right to be a complete book. So, like all other questions I will speak to those issues God places on my heart as I pray over and comment on this question. However, I pray all would spend more time here and pray over each command and its proof text as the Westminster Divines have given them to us. I cannot over emphasize the need for each of us to take this time in supplication before God to rightly consider the hidden sins we all carry with us for lack of such soul searching and time spent before God broken hearted for the condition of our soul.

These issues touch the most minute detail of our daily lives. Appropriate understanding of the forbidden things in God’s word are absolutely necessary to help us maintain proper perspective on the reality of sin and its price. It is these sins more than the so-called gross sins that bring destruction to the hedge of God’s grace and allows the world to cause so much turmoil in our lives. The current price of sin is human misery. I have spoken of this before, but it cannot be spoken of often enough as we all wonder why negative, and humanly speaking even devastating things happen to God’s people.

The slippery tongue here hinders prayer and allows Satan to rule in our homes and communities, and most importantly stains our witness of Him who gave His life for us, and who is returning for us. Then, we must also remember that God calls us not only to purity of action, but thought. How awesome the responsibility God has left in the hands of the created. Yet we argue about free will, denying petal two of the TULIP and softening the wonderful truth of petal three. We cringe at the thought of a God who would dare interfere in the life of His created in such a way as indicated by petal four. No the whole of the TULIP does not leap from the page here, but I think we can most clearly see the principle I have tried to teach here, that where one petal is seen, the other four will flow of necessity. We face a defeated enemy because of God’s grace. This grace wherein we stand only by justification by faith in Christ Jesus is sufficient for all our needs. Grace is not just the word free some way transformed into a theological word, it is life and apart from grace we have neither life nor the ability to sustain it. How true the great statement by grace alone is. The depth of emotion the word grace attains in the heart of the child of God cannot be reduced to mere words. Yet we can see the exact same thing when we speak of faith, or the Bible and other great doctrines. Why is it then we cannot see that the human foundation of these doctrines is found in the knowledge of sin, and so by grace living our lives and ordering our thoughts to remove the sulphuric aroma from the gates of hell that hover over our lives? Praise God for grace, and His most wonderful gift of faith, that we might use such as this work of the Westminster Divines coupled with the most ardent study of the Scriptures to become more like our Savior, the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In the exercise of faith given by grace from the hand of God, we find we can please God. Much as the human parent’s eyes tear, and their heart seems ready to burst at the accomplishments of their children, here we touch the heart of our Creator in doing that which is pleasing to Him by faith. It is thus written in the Bible three times, “The just live by faith.”

How often over the years I have listened to wanna-be saints complain they are not being fed, and continue to search for a church where their soul is fed. Children wake up and smell the sweet aroma of God’s word. The church is not a cafeteria for you to go and select that which pleases your palate today. It is the holy of holies so to speak, where after careful preparation you enter into the presence of God. Here in the pew, having examined self, and with the eye of faith and the help of the Holy Spirit, being properly bathed and clothed by grace through faith you have communion with your Creator, and feed indeed upon living water and the bread of life, even the Word of God. Surely with such proper preparation we like Isaiah will fall to our knees proclaiming I am a person of unclean lips. Here in this broken condition, our soul finds rest and is restored for the sake of our Lord. With so much sin still clinging to her children, is it any wonder the church seems to be so powerless in the face of the onslaught of hell today?

While we divide in an ever-continuing process of forming new churches because we disagree with the doctrine of the one we belong to, we lose sight of the real power of the individual and church. Doctrine does not feed, it is but the outside points of contact for all these sinful divisions in the church. God's word feeds us, but cannot be eaten with all of the sins still so firmly entrenched into our soul and thought process.

Words seem to fail me here, and I am not sure it is possible for another human being to convince a heart of the seriousness of *small* sins. Friends there are no *small permissible sins*. These are not commands for the so-called pious or self-righteous to consider. Here is the whole of our life in Christ. When we honestly begin to consider and confess these things we will find our spiritual life soaring on the wings of an eagle and our worship times increasing in length and depth. Here we will begin to experience the presence of Christ in our lives and understand this new creature we are in Christ. Apart from this detailed attention to the commands of God, we but play church games and miss the power of a new life. Here you will long for the personal piety of a day that seems to have passed. Not to the self-righteous judgment we see as being pious, but of being as pure as possible when we present ourselves before our King. Properly understood piety means a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Removal of all sin brings us to this place of purity and thus piety before God. These deeds did not gain the entrance, which is by grace through faith alone. These works are commanded by God and cheerfully entered into by a heart grateful for the love of God first directed toward man and never the reverse. The first-born of piety is prudence, which can be understood as self-control or the ability to consistently make right decisions.

Suggested Sermon Outline

Speak the Truth and Listen for the Truth

What Is required In the ninth command?

That I do not bear false witness against anyone, twist anyone's words, be a gossip or a slanderer, or condemn anyone lightly without a hearing. Rather I am required to avoid, under penalty of God's wrath, all lying and deceit as the works of the devil himself. In judicial and all other matters I am to love the truth, and to speak and confess it honestly. Indeed, insofar as I am able, I am to defend and promote my neighbor's good name.

I. God Rejects Falsehood

A. Truth matters to Jesus personally. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

B. God will not tolerate false testimony. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh ties shall not escape. (Proverbs 19:5)

C. Adjusting, manipulating, and twisting the truth into something different are still misrepresentation and fall under the prohibition against lying. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh, up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. (Psalm 3-5)

D. Distorting reality to create your own more convenient reality fits into a terrible category as God sees things. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, (Romans 1:29-30)

II. Concentrate on Truth

A. As you desire truth, mercy, and grace from God, be careful not to violate them in your own practice. Judge not, that ye be not judged. (Matthew 7: 1)

B. Departure from the truth is the characteristic of the evil one. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

C. The integrity of what you say matters to God. Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. (Proverbs 12:22)

III. Establish the Context for Truth

A. See that truth matters to you. A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. (Proverbs 13:5)

B. When believers lie or encourage untruthfulness, they become like those outside who are unsaved and do not know God. Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:11-12)

C. What begins in us spreads to others. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour for WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER. (Ephesians 4:25)

1. Develop a conscious awareness of the distinctions between truth and falsehood - TAKE PLEASURE IN BEING REALISTIC AND GENUINE. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; (1 Corinthians 13:6)

2. Practice framing reality with the best features of your soul - Avoid A SUSPICIOUS AND DESTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO LIFE. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

D. Communication is as much what is heard as what is said. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 043

Question 112

Dr. Edwin P. Elliott, Jr.