

WRITTEN WRITTEN IN STONE IN STONE

Speak Only Truth | Written in Stone

Exodus 20:1-2, 16, Proverbs 6:16-19, John 8:44, James 3:5-6, Proverbs 18:21

What is the 9th commandment and WHY does it matter?

God has set us free so we can live free. That means loving God with all of our hearts, minds, and souls. Isn't that what Jesus said? That way we can love others as God created us to love them... "as ourselves." We dive deeper into the Ten Commandments and discover loving others as ourselves mean we speak ONLY truth about others. The power of life and death is in the tongue, and we want to use ours to cultivate life! Jesus provides the long term solution. Just as the 10 Commandments didn't save the Israelites, they don't save us. But they do provide a framework to build a community of FREE people. Free for what? To follow, serve, & worship God!

Exodus 20:1-2, 16: *Then God gave the people all these instructions: 2 "I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. (Relational-personal God who has rescued us from slavery to FREEDOM) 16 "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.*

Proverbs 6:16-19: *"There are six things the Lord hates—no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family."*

We must not testify falsely against our neighbor. → Vertical → Horizontal → This is WRONG.

- **Is it ever ok to lie?** → Harmful: Joseph → Humorous: "no calories" → Helpful: To save lives: Rahab/Hebrew midwives) → Marriages
- In ancient times... eye witness testimony was the most important kind of evidence.
 - **JUST MERCY** - **Walter McMillian**, who is Black, was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of a young white woman who worked as a clerk in a dry cleaning store in **Monroeville, Alabama**. Mr. McMillian was held on **death row** prior to being convicted and sentenced to death. **His trial lasted only a day and a half**. Three witnesses testified against Mr. McMillian and the jury ignored multiple alibi witnesses, who were Black, who testified that he was at a church fish fry at the time of the crime. The trial judge overrode the jury's sentencing verdict for life and sentenced Mr. McMillian to death. - <https://eji.org/cases/walter-mcmillian/>
 - "For every 9 people executed in this country, one person on death row has been exonerated." - "Just Mercy"
 - Studies est. that **4-6% of people who are incarcerated are innocent**. = **120k innocent people in prison**
 - **27 / 44** = Innocent Project, **375 people** exonerated by DNA evidence → Perjury/false statements under oath
- **Who is our neighbor?** → Jesus answered that question... in the Good Samaritan parable. - Luke 22
- **How do we testify falsely against our neighbor?**
 - Gossip: 1 Timothy 5:13 → Lying → Libel (written) / slander (spoken) → Misrepresentation → Exaggeration → embellishment → Selective omission → Withholding the truth → Flattery: Psalm 12:2 → Deception: 1 John 3:7 → Slander: Lev. 19:16 → False teaching: 2 Peter 2:1
- **Why does this matter?** → Jewish Rabbi Tale Pic
- **Where does lying come from?** → "Did God really say that?"
 - **John 8:44:** *For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies."*
 - **Diabolos (διάβολος)** = derived from Greek verb "diaballo," which means "to slander" or "to accuse falsely." "Diabolos" is used to describe someone who engages in slander, false accusations, or malicious talk.
 - **Satan (ἰσῶ)** = a Hebrew word that means "adversary" or "accuser." It is derived from the root "יָשַׁן," which conveys the idea of opposition, accusation, or enmity.
 - **When we testify falsely, we are engaged in spiritual warfare = BUT FROM THE WRONG SIDE!**

How do we speak only truth? → Your version. → My version. → And then there is the TRUTH.

- **James 3:5-6:** *"In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself."*
- **Proverbs 18:21:** *"The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences."*

- **1. Control your tongue!**→Habitual liars...have so far veered from truth they don't even know they are anymore.
- **2. Stop listening to lies.**→“If you feel like you have to take a shower after every convo...”
- **3. Think before you speak.**→Your words matter. Don't waste them. Helpful? Add value to the convo?
- **4. Avoid exaggeration & hyperbole.**→I love to fish...avoid words like always, everyone, never.→Gold fish Pic
- **5. Fact check. Fact check. Fact check.**→Social media is a breeding ground for UNTRUTHS.
- **6. Check your motives.**→Am I trying to get someone to like me? Am I trying to get a job?
- **7. Admit when you don't know something.**→“I dont know” or “ill find out.” Instead of... “DL is the capital of CA.”
- **8. CAUTION: If you dont have something nice to say...DONT SAY IT.**→Not gossip, but unkind things.→U FAT!

Jesus transforms us through TRUTH.→Without TRUTH, we cannot be set free. But Truth can HURT, can't it?

- **1. Confess your sin to Jesus.**→Jesus forgives...through CONFESSION.→Denial derails reconciliation...
- **2. Align your life with Jesus.**→John 14:6→Align your life to TRUTH...and you will align your life to Jesus.
- **3. Build your life on the teachings of Jesus.**→Mt. 7:24-27→Who does Jesus say that i am?
- **4. SHARE JESUS with others!**→Give others access to the Truth that you have discovered.

→**When we speak only truth, we contribute to a society built on a solid foundation.**

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. In what ways have you personally been affected by false testimony, rumors, or gossip?
2. How does the real life story of Walter McMillan in “Just Mercy,” reflect the damage done through false testimony?
3. What was one practical way to speak truth only that resonated with me and why?
4. How does Jesus transform us through Truth? How does this reflect a process?
5. **PRAYER:** “Father, help us to speak only truth.”

TEACHING NUGGETS:

Why commandments? What is the purpose of the Law?

1. **Revealing God's Holiness:** Exodus 20:7-8 (NLT) - "You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name. Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."
2. **Establishing God's Covenant:** Exodus 34:28 (NLT) - "Moses remained there on the mountain with the Lord forty days and forty nights. In all that time, he ate no bread and drank no water. And the Lord wrote the terms of the covenant—the Ten Commandments—on the stone tablets."
3. **Guiding Moral and Ethical Behavior:** Exodus 20:12 (NLT) - "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you."
4. **Maintaining Social Order:** Exodus 21:23-25 (NLT) - "But if there is further injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot."
5. **Revealing God's Will:** Psalm 119:105 (NLT) - "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."
6. **Teaching Love and Compassion:** Leviticus 19:18 (NLT) - "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."
7. **Revealing Humanity's Sinfulness:** Romans 3:20 (NLT) - "For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are."
8. **Pointing to Christ:** Galatians 3:24 (NLT) - "Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith."

Who are we partnering with when we slander someone?

- **Diabolos (διάβολος)** = derived from Greek verb "diaballo," which means "to slander" or "to accuse falsely." "Diabolos" is used to describe someone who engages in slander, false accusations, or malicious talk.
- **Satan (ἑσῶν)** = a Hebrew word that means "adversary" or "accuser." It is derived from the root "ἑσῶν," which conveys the idea of opposition, accusation, or enmity.

Who does the Bible say that I am?

- The Bible says that I am A NEW CREATION. - 2 Corinthians 5:17
- The Bible says that I am RESCUED. - Colossians 1:13
- The Bible says that I am RAISED TO A NEW LIFE. - Romans 6:4
- The Bible says that I am BLESSED. - Ephesians 1:3
- The Bible says that I am FORGIVEN. - Ephesians 1:7
- The Bible says that I am JUSTIFIED. - Romans 3:24
- The Bible says that I am REDEEMED. - Colossians 1:14
- The Bible says that I am SAVED. - Romans 5:9
- The Bible says that I am PROTECTED. - Psalm 91
- The Bible says that I am HEALED. - Psalm 103:3
- The Bible says that I am SUPPLIED. - Philippians 4:19
- The Bible says that I am MORE THAN A CONQUERER. - Rom. 8:37
- The Bible says that I am DEAD TO SIN. - Romans 6:11
- The Bible says that I am ALIVE TO GOD. - Romans 8:13
- The Bible says that I am A CHILD OF GOD. - John 1:12
- The Bible says that I am GOD'S FRIEND. - John 15:15
- The Bible says that I am STRENGTHENED. - Philippians 4:13
- The Bible says that I am EMBOLDENED. - Ephesians 3:11-12
- The Bible says that I am COMFORTED. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- The Bible says that I am HEARD. - 1 John 5:14
- The Bible says that I am ANSWERED. - Jeremiah 33:3
- The Bible says that I am FREE. - Galatians 5:1
- The Bible says that I am NOT CONDEMNED. - Romans 8:1
- The Bible says that I am CHOSEN. - 1 Peter 1:1-2
- The Bible says that I am CALLED. - Romans 1:7
- The Bible says that I am A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN. - Philippians 3:20
- The Bible says that I am EQUIPPED. - Hebrews 13:20-21
- The Bible says that I am ADOPTED. - Ephesians 1:5
- The Bible says that I am ENRICHED. - 1 Corinthians 1:5
- The Bible says that I am PARDONED. - Psalm 103:3
- The Bible says that I am ENABLED. - Ephesians 3:16
- The Bible says that I am SANCTIFIED. - 1 Corinthians 6:11
- **The Bible says that I am LOVED. - 1 John 3:1**

VIDEOS:



QUOTES / SONGS:

- "Approximately **43% of the Bible is made up of narrative**, from historical narrative to parables. Roughly **33% of the Bible is poetry**, including songs, reflective poetry, and the passionate, politically resistant poetry of the prophets. The remaining **24% of the Bible is prose discourse**, including laws, sermons, letters, and even one essay." - **The Bible Project**
- "Having given five exhortations to honor God and elders, the Ten Words now turn their attention to the business of honoring one another as fellow image bearers. We progress from discussion of how we relate to our heavenly Parent, to our earthly parents (human authorities), to our brothers and sisters (our neighbors). Essentially, the last five words will speak to the proper treatment of siblings. (89–90)" - **Jenn Wilkin**
- For every nine people executed in this country, one person on death row has been exonerated. - **"Just Mercy"**

ARTICLES / BOOKS:

- **"Ten Words to Live By: Delighting in and Doing What God Commands"**: by Jen Wilkin
- Fisherman catches 67-pound goldfish: <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/fisherman-catches-giant-goldfish-carrot-scr/index.html>
- Equal Justice Initiative: <https://eji.org/cases/walter-mcmillian/>
- Innocent Project: <https://innocenceproject.org/dna-exonerations-in-the-united-states/>

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **Psalm 1:1** - Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
- **Psalm 1:2** - But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.
- **Psalm 1:3** - 3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.
- **Galatians 5:1** - So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.
- **John 10:10** - The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.
- **John 14:15** - "If you love me, obey my commandments.
- **Mark 12:29-31** - 29 Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. 30 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' 31 The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."
- **Matthew 5:17** - "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.
- **Exodus 20:16**: "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor." (One of the Ten Commandments)
- **Leviticus 19:16**: "Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people. 'Do not stand idly by when your neighbor's life is threatened. I am the Lord.'"
- **Psalm 12:2**: "People lie to each other; they flatter with their lips but harbor deception in their hearts."
- **Psalm 101:7**: "No one who cheats his neighbor will ever live in my house; no one who lies will remain in my presence.
- **Proverbs 6:16-19**: "There are six things the Lord hates—no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family."
- **Proverbs 12:22**: "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth."
- **Proverbs 18:21**: "The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences."
- **Proverbs 19:9**: "A false witness will not go unpunished, and a liar will be destroyed."

- **Zechariah 8:16:** "But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and that lead to peace."
- **Matthew 7:24-27:** "24 Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. 26 But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. 27 When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."
- **John 8:44:** "For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. **He has always hated the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.**"
- **James 3:5-6:** "In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself."
- **Ephesians 4:25:** "So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body."
- **1 Timothy 5:13:** "Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to."
- **Colossians 3:9-10:** "Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him."
- **1 John 3:7:** "Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous."
- **2 Peter 2:1:** "But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves."
- **Revelation 12:9-10:** "This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, **the one deceiving the whole world**—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, 'It has come at last—salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night.'"
- **Revelation 21:8:** "But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshippers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."
- **Exodus 20:1-17** - Then God gave the people all these instructions:
 - 2 "I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.
 - 3 "You must not have any other god but me.
 - 4 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea.
 - 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me.
 - 6 But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.
 - 7 "You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.
 - 8 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
 - 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work,
 - 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you.
 - 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.
 - 12 "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
 - 13 "You must not murder.
 - 14 "You must not commit adultery.
 - 15 "You must not steal.
 - 16 "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.
 - 17 "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."

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