

# Speak Truthfully

## The Ten Commandments – Week 9

**Main Text:** Exodus 20:16

**Key Truth:** The ninth commandment calls God's people to be known for truth. We honor God when we refuse to damage others with our words and instead use our speech to encourage, build up, and reflect His character.

## Getting Started

Most people think the ninth commandment simply says, "Don't lie." While that's certainly true, Pastor Todd pointed out that this commandment specifically addresses using lies or deceptive words to harm another person. As followers of Christ, our words should reflect the God of truth and bring life to those around us.

### Icebreaker

Who is someone you've known whose words consistently encouraged and built others up? What made them that way?

## 1. Speak Truth by Rejecting Slander, Shade, and Gossip

### Read

- Exodus 20:16
- Psalm 15:2-3
- Proverbs 12:22
- John 8:44

### Discuss

Pastor Todd explained that bearing false witness extends beyond a courtroom. We can damage someone's reputation in everyday conversations through slander, "throwing shade," or gossip.

- **Slander** is making false accusations with the intent to harm another person's reputation.

- **Shade** often mixes truth with exaggeration, deception, or misleading comments that leave others with the wrong impression.
- **Gossip** spreads information that may or may not be true without considering the damage it causes.

The enemy is called "the father of lies," and when we participate in these kinds of conversations, we reflect his character instead of God's. Followers of Christ are called to be people whose words can be trusted because they reflect the God who is Truth.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think gossip and slander can be so tempting?
2. What's the difference between speaking truth and damaging someone's reputation?
3. How have careless words affected relationships in your own life?
4. Which of these—slander, shade, or gossip—is the easiest to excuse in today's culture?
5. How can we lovingly stop gossip when we're part of a conversation?

## 2. Build Others Up Before You Speak

### Read

- Ephesians 4:25-32
- James 3:9-10
- Proverbs 15:1

### Discuss

God doesn't simply tell us what **not** to do. He also tells us what we **should** do.

Instead of tearing people down, our words should build others up, encourage them, and benefit those who hear. Pastor Todd introduced the helpful **THINK** filter to evaluate our conversations before we speak.

Before speaking, ask:

- **T — Is it True?**
- **H — Is it Helpful?**
- **I — Is it Inspiring?**
- **N — Is it Necessary?**
- **K — Is it Kind?**

Even if something is true, it doesn't automatically mean it should be said. God calls us to speak truth with love, wisdom, and kindness so that our words strengthen relationships instead of harming them.

## Discussion Questions

1. Which part of the THINK filter challenges you the most?
2. Why is it possible for something to be true but still not helpful to say?
3. How can speaking truth with kindness strengthen relationships?
4. Think about a recent conversation. Would your words have passed the THINK test?
5. What practical habit could help you pause before speaking this week?

## Living It Out

This week, ask God to make your words reflect His character.

- Pause before speaking and intentionally use the **THINK** filter.
- Refuse to participate in gossip or conversations that tear others down.
- Look for opportunities to intentionally encourage someone with truthful, life-giving words.
- If you've hurt someone with your words, seek forgiveness and pursue reconciliation.

## Memory Verse

### Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

*"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

## Closing Prayer

**Father**, thank You for being the God of truth. Forgive us for the times we've used our words carelessly or spoken in ways that have hurt others. Fill our hearts with Your truth so that our mouths overflow with encouragement, kindness, and grace. Help us reject slander, shade, and gossip, and give us the wisdom to pause and THINK before we speak. May our words build others up and point people to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.