

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Adult Bible Studies
Week #22

Exodus 20:16

March 12 & 13, 2024

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1. The 9th Commandment/Word
2. Context of the Commandments
 - a. They do not come from “out of nowhere” as it were, but from within the context of a relationship based on God’s love for people and God’s being with the people
 - b. God reveals here the fundamental aspects of:
 - i. A successful relationship with him
 - ii. Successful relationships with each other
 - c. A main concern of the commandments is the health of the community
 - d. The commandments encompass relationships involving God, Neighbor, and Nature
 - e. The commandments keep order in the world
 - f. Jesus actually elevates the status and demands of the commandments but rather pushes them to their deepest level – see Matthew 5:17-29 – “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.”
3. Specific Notes about the 9th Commandment
 - a. The original setting of this commandment is in courts of law
 - b. Later developments in Israel’s jurisprudence indicate the seriousness of this commandment. See Deuteronomy 19:15-20
 - c. The concern here is for a just and workable justice system that completely depends on truthfulness
 - d. An “expanded” sense of this—and there is ample example of this in the scriptures—is about truthfulness of any kind
 - i. Related concepts: Deception, slander, idle or empty talk, gossip, rumor
 - ii. In the version of the 10 Commandments found in Deuteronomy 5, the sense of the Hebrew is not as much about lying and untruth as it is about insincerity, emptiness, frivolity
 - e. Successful human relationships depend on simple honesty
 - f. Further development of this commandment leads to concern for constructive rather than destructive human speech
 - i. See James 3:1-18 & 4:11-12
 - ii. See Matthew 5:33-37
 - g. Note the classic spiritual discipline of silence. Practicing silence is a way to learn better control of speech and thereby align our words (meaning, tone, intent) with holy purposes
4. William Barclay (via Maxie Dunnam) – 9 kinds of lies: “the kinds that come from malice, of fear, for profit, of silence, of boasting, half-truth, to self, to God”

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. How might you “reverse” this commandment into a positive statement?
- B. How might you “expand” this commandment into a conversation about our speech in general?
- C. Have you ever been lied to? What has been your response?
- D. What are the negative consequences of false testimony?
- E. What are some of the risks when you actually tell the truth?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Resources:

- a. Interpretation Commentary on Exodus, Terence E. Fretheim, John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1991
- b. The Communicator’s Commentary Series, Old Testament, Exodus, Maxie D. Dunnam, Word, Inc., Waco, TX, 1987
- c. The Old Testament Library: Exodus, Brevard S. Childs, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1974