

## 9th Commandment Honor Truth

Let's turn to our Bibles, to the sermon text of Proverbs 28.13, as we are finishing up the Ten Commandments. Proverbs 28.13. We'll jump back over to Hosea after this. Proverbs 28.13, let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Let us pray. In this proverb, this truth, this truism, God Almighty, may our hearts reside and rest in Lord that we are called to confess our sins and not to lie or hide them, which is a violation of the ninth commandment, to bear false witness to the truth, in this matter, our own sins.

May you humble us, we pray, therefore, as we go through the sermon. Humble us anew and bring us, God, always to you, we pray, with hearts of confession and hearts of joy as well as we heard this morning. For you have given us your Spirit that we may feel conviction of sin in your Word that guide us and direct us back to Jesus our Lord and Savior.

Amen. So we live in a day and age of lies, it seems. I suppose you can say that to some degree in every age.

And I don't mean lies from politicians and businesses and the like. The way American law is designed for advertising, for example, and companies fudging numbers and the like and propaganda methods, I think you'll start seeing it's quite widespread that way, in that sense. This is worse, of course, when done among the people of God.

Christians use these methods and break the ninth commandment. And so as such, let's examine the law of God again to equip ourselves to examine our lives and our families and our friends as we are able to help and sustain one another to fulfill this commandment of the ninth commandment, in this particular expression of it, of course, here, to speak the truth with respect to our own lies, that we may be a light in the age of growing darkness.

## What is the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment?

So what is the ninth commandment? I have the first point here to cover some misconceptions and to give you some a broader view of the matter here.

It is not simply about taking oaths in a trial. Some people kind of argue that, I've run across this, when they try to make excuses for lying. They say, well, properly speaking, this commandment is about a trial, being a witness at a trial.

And the language there is you should not bear false witness against your neighbor. And yes, that's true. That word is used in those cases, but also used outside of that.

It doesn't have to be and only mean with respect to court cases. It's to intensify the commandment, to show the seriousness of it. The language is but part of the whole.

All of life is about bearing witness to the truth. That's what we're called to do. It's not our truth.

It's God's truth. It's how he made things and does things. And we must flee from this and cling to the truth.

It is about truth, the ninth commandment, although set, as we know, almost every commandment is. And the negative, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not. Because of our sin, you're gonna keep smacking us.

We do this with little kids and babies. And unfortunately, even with adults, stop it. Stop it.

You smack them. Don't, don't, don't. This is dangerous stuff.

And God, in giving the Ten Commandments, understands the status and the state in which we are in, which the Old Testament saints were in, like us, sinners. So he gave it in this form. But being in the negative doesn't mean there's not a positive.

The positive is implied. We see this with the rest of the Bible, as we know. When you realize that the Ten Commandments are but a summary of the law of God, and then you can realize there's a lot more going on in these commandments than just the bare words as such.

So, so the, here, the negative implies the positive. It's about the truth. To honor the truth.

To support it. To speak it. To defend it.

To sustain it. God is love, for example. God is just.

Man is a sinner. The numerical conception of Pi is 3.145. Fire is hot. Voting is part of our duty as citizens, and Washington was the first president of the United States.

Whether secular or religious truths, those are true, and we must believe them. We must sustain them. We must defend them, and we must use them as appropriate.

That's what this commandment is about. It's about veracity. God is the author of truth, and we are the servants of him and the truth.

We must have that mindset, because on the other side, we have the devil, who is the father of lies, as Christ tells the Pharisees in John 8.44. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, where he's a liar, and a father of it. And he says in that section that you follow the Father. You're a murderer from the beginning as he was, and he changes it from murder to lying.

The two went hand in hand. Often, and so he is telling them that basically that you are of your father, the devil, not only want to murder me as Satan does, but you even lie about me. And therefore Christians should be known as holy and truthful, the complete opposite of the devil.

This is our high calling in the ninth commandment, and we can, by God's Spirit, do this. It is about handling the truth of God correctly as well, not just having it and saying it, but

handling it and using it all right, because it's not ours to do with as we will. If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything, as Mark Twain quipped.

I think we all recognize this. We've seen movies like that, where people lie, and the lies build up, and they start tripping over himself, because he doesn't remember everything he made up. And that's exactly what happens.

You know the truth, you just forget about it, because it's gonna come back to you later when it comes to your mind, because it's part of who we are. Even unbelievers know this. Mark Twain recognizes this, although I'm sure he's lied, we've lied at times.

A lie defined. So I get this from Fisher's Commentary. He's a Puritan in the early 1600s.

There were hundreds of catechisms. Pastors, the Puritans and the Congregationalists wrote their own catechisms. Yeah, it's amazing.

In New England, and in England itself, they have all these. I like to collect a lot of them. You have access to a lot of them online.

I found Fisher's Commentary, where he goes even more in depth. So you have the main question, you know, what's chief end of man, glorify God, enjoy him forever, and then have that one or two or three other sub questions underneath that. That's how he designs it.

So he defines it as a voluntary, voluntarily to speak or express what we know to be false. It's intentional. It has to be intentional.

What we know to be false to speak or express what we know to be false or untrue. It is one thing to speak unwittingly of falsehood, or by accident, because of misinformation, because of ignorance. But another, of course, to what? Intentionally lie.

Question five he has here. May not persons utter what is untrue or false and yet not be guilty of a lie? Yes, and that either through ignorance or misinformation. So he wants to clarify this matter.

It's helpful clarification, of course. So that's on the one hand, what a lie is and what it's not, properly speaking. But there are also types of lies.

He has a list here. There are commonly ranked into three sorts, namely ludicrous, pernicious, and officious lies. It sounds kind of funny, ludicrous.

He means a joking kind of lies. I'm just kidding. Ha ha ha.

Probably did that when you're a teenager. Pernicious lies, of course, are hurtful both by intent and the effect of the lie. And then officious are good intention lies like not wanting to hurt someone's feelings, what we typically call wet lies.

So that's the commandment broadly presented here. And I have it broken down as the confession has it broken down, the negative and the positive. What you shouldn't be doing,

what does the ninth commandment forbid, and then what does the ninth commandment command by implication? Question 78 of the Shorter Catechism.

## **What is Forbidden in the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment?**

What is forbidden in the ninth commandment? The ninth commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name. And they put those descriptions there and it breaks up the sentence. That's how they wrote back then.

So you have actually three points here. You don't have it before you, I tell you. The ninth commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to the truth.

That's one. Or two, injurious to our own good name. And then three, our neighbor's good name.

That's what it's talking about. So I'm going to cover those three. Prejudicial to the truth, of course.

A lie that may not be directly harmful to somebody, but it's still a lie. It's still a lie if you're intending to make it a lie. Lying is wrong.

In other words, period. Now if, ands, or buts about it, as my mother used to tell me all the time. There's no excuses for that.

Don't lie. Full stop. Secondly, anything injurious to our neighbors with respect to the truth, right, our words and the like.

Proverbs 16, 6, excuse me, Proverbs 6, 16 through 19 lists seven abominations. And one of the abominations is a lying tongue, a false witness who speaks lies and one who sows discord among the brethren. So clearly that's about the neighbor.

Not just the truth between you and the truth, and you're lying about it, even to yourself, you can lie to yourself in that sense. But here towards our neighbor, that is one who sows discord among the brethren through half-truths and lies causing problems. Could be lies about the person involved, them in particular, or lies about the relationship, or lies about something related to them.

Whatever the case is, it is wrong. We should not be injurious to our neighbor in that way. Or injurious to our own good name.

Now this is something that took me a while to accept. I wasn't raised to think that way, although intuitively you do. Because again, made in the image of God, we have the law of God written on our hearts.

Even unbelievers recognize you've got to maintain a good name. You want to have a good reputation. That's what is covered under this commandment.

It's respect to truth. And so they have it here in the Shorter Catechism, reminding us that it is, there's a time and place to defend your good name. Of course, there's a time and place which you shouldn't or you can't, as the case may be.

That's true. But there are Christians who think it's suspect or even wrong to ever stand up and say, that's wrong. I didn't do XYZ.

Defending yourself. Somehow, it's not meek. Somehow, it's not proper.

And that's not the case at all. The Lord would have us to preserve our reputation, as well as others. As well, of course, and above all, His reputation.

His name. Proverbs 633 is one of the proof texts they use. 632 and 633.

So, the prior chapter that we were just back there, I mentioned to you. And I have it here before me. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding.

He who does so, destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonors he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away. Wounds and dishonor he will get.

It's a language of public honor he's talking about here. His reproach. That's a public idea.

His public shame will not be wiped away. That's what it's referring to. Public shame, excuse me, of course, you know, is your reputation.

Your good name. So, this is a negative. Going out with a woman of the night will bring shame upon you and dishonor of your name.

And that's certainly the case. We don't want that at all. We should not be doing that.

It's proper to, therefore, to preserve it. In other words, he is Solomon urging the young man here, consider your reputation, your good name. It's going to sully it.

This is a bad thing to do. And that's one proper motivation in this case. So, there's some more matters to think about.

That's the three parts. More broadly conceived of the Shorter Catechism. I'm going to go into some particulars here.

I think there are some somewhat timely, I hope, or applicable, or something you've not thought about before. We all know lying is wrong, but what about variations? And what other ways is this commandment violated in America or in our own lives, for example? One thing here, I get this from the Larger Catechism, is the timing of the truth. The timing of the truth.

To speak the truth unseasonably is a problem, or it can be a problem. Proverbs 29 11. Proverbs 29 11, we read, a fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.

When it comes to age differences, what's one of the things you see with little kids? Everything comes out of their mouth. But Daddy, it's true. It may be true, but it's not proper and relevant right here and in this company right now, right? That's what we're talking about in the funny stories that we could think of.

Maybe like Thanksgiving coming up with all the kids and the families there. Or, of course, the worst-case scenario with people just blabbing off their mouth. Adults who should know better in causing problems, instead of controlling themselves and being quiet.

The wise man holds them back. He holds back his feelings, not just feelings in the sense of whatever you're emoting at the time. He also means clearly words.

Express your feelings often in words. This is a proverb again, so as a proverb it covers all kinds of situations. Your feelings may be right, that's true, but your timing quite miserable.

It's not concerned about whether the feelings are correct or not, it's concerned more about timing. A wise man holds back because now is not the time. When your in-laws are over, this coming Thanksgiving, this Thursday, is not the time to start discussing issues you have with your wife, with your wife, on that day, even if it's in the back room.

You've got family to take care of. You've got to put all this stuff aside and deal with these things that day. That's a simple example.

It's not a gross sinner like, but you can imagine it can get much worse when it comes to matters of sin and causing scandals and the like. I've seen it in Bible studies where people are quite angry, upset, or whatever reason. They raise their voice, they start talking about the matter right then and there in front of everybody.

You're like, what's going on here? Why are we doing this? This is a bad time. The floor of the Presbyterian, of course, not a time to debate character flaws, although it could come up and you have to bring the guy back and let's talk about this, or it could be the time if you want to bring charges. Lying through omission.

I mentioned omissions before. Not doing what you are called to do. So that could be kind of sneaky, a sticking point, sneaky.

It could be a sticking point. It could be difficult to always know exactly what because we are called to do all kinds of things to sustain the truth, to defend the truth, but you're not called to defend the truth all the time. And this is what I mean.

You run across something on the internet. Do you have to jump on the point and correct the person? You'd be there all day. Okay, it's just all kinds of things going down on Facebook.

So there's a time and place for everything. So that which is commanded, as the larger Catechism reminds us, is always our duty, but our duty is not to be done at all times. Right? Our duty is not to be done at all times, like eating, working, and sleeping.

I literally can't do all those at the same time or all the time. And same with many other duties in the Christian life, like protecting the truth. You're not called to go out there on the highways and byways and deal with every political problem, every political lie.

You simply can't. You got a life, you got a job. That's what we're talking about.

That's why it gets kind of sticky here. Difficult. Lying through omission.

When exactly can that happen? That is not speaking up when you should speak up, for example. Lying through exaggeration. Question 143 talks about that, and then it goes to lack of repentance, where I get Proverbs 28 and 13, and then we'll finish up this first point.

There was a minister walking down the street when he came upon a group of about a dozen boys. All of them between the ages of 10 and 12. You've all probably seen that before.

He was maybe one of those. The group had surrounded a dog. Concernless, the boys were hurting the dog.

He went over and asked, what are you doing with that dog? One boy replied, dog was just an old neighborhood strain. We all want him. They all want access to the dog, but only one of us can take him home.

And so we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to keep the dog, he tells the minister. And of course the reverend was taken aback. You boys shouldn't be having contests telling lies, he says.

He then launches into a 10-minute sermon against lying, beginning with, don't you boys know it's a sin to lie, and ending with, why when I was your age, I never told a lie. And there was dead silence for about a minute, just as the reverend was beginning to think he had gotten his point across, the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said, all right, give him the dog. Okay.

You know, I know you can speak that way, and people do, and they don't properly mean I never lied. I don't usually expect that, but this is kind of the way we speak. Sometimes they do, though.

Sometimes they do. But we know, surely he lied at least once. Stretching the truth to prejudice it, of course.

You know, the fish I caught was this big, next year it was this big, and the year after that it was that big. Again, sometimes people do that because of poor memory. It's unintentional.

So we have to have some kind of mercy with respect to these things, and we talk to one another, because when we talk with respect to the Ninth Commandment, like after service tonight, you'll talk on the fly, and you may have to correct yourself a little later. We all understand this. We're not just pouncing on one another because, oh no, you've been lying right now.

It wasn't intentional. It's just, we're just talking more informally. It's different than putting your hand on the Bible and being very, very careful in how you speak.

That's the difference between an oath and the rest of life, in which we do make a reasonable effort to be honest. Lack of repentance, Proverbs 28, 13. He who covers his sins will not prosper.

Whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. So, excuse-making and the like is a problem. They don't want to admit their sins, their violations in thought, word, or deed, and this is a serious matter, and God will not prosper them.

They may have a temporary prosperity, of course, of their body. We know this of rich people and politicians in Hollywood, or even your own neighbor perhaps has a fair amount of money, and you know, he's a scoundrel in a lot of ways, but certainly in his soul, in his conscience, he will not prosper, and ultimately, if he does not repent, he will be judged by God Almighty, and we, by God's Holy Spirit upon us, have the conviction, we pray, that we would confess it, and not just confess it, but confess it properly, specificity, not just, yeah, kind of, yeah, I kind of repented. There are letters like that, when, you know, pastors, we've had scandals in the past, and even recently this year, in which they write these letters, and you read the letter, and it sounds very flowery, it sounds very holy, but you slow down, you read about it, and think about it, you realize he didn't give any particular confession of a particular sin.

Just a lot of hand-waving, we say, a lot of words. What's going on here? That's not a proper confession. It's got to be very specific.

I did this. I was wrong. Forgive me.

In Genesis 4, 9, then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother? And he said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? The good libertarian reproach. What are we talking about? And God says, no, I have none of that.

You are involved. We're involved with one another. Delayed repentance is another problem, and the like.

The fifth commandment and the ninth commandment overlap as well. Here we see how different commandments, as I pointed out, because the ten commandments are a summary, and various sins can fall under various commandments. Some sins fall under both commandments, two different commandments.

And here we have this. So we have in Luke 3, 14, for example. Likewise, the soldiers asked him, that is John the Baptist, saying, what shall we do? And so he said to them, do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, right? Ninth commandment, and be content with your wages.

So here you have a fifth commandment issue intersecting with the ninth commandment issue. He is a centurion. He is in charge of soldiers, and he himself has a certain authority in which he can declare, you're guilty.

I saw you do X, Y. He can lie and get away with it and cause all kinds of trouble. And it's doubly worse because he's got that kind of power when other people don't, right? That's the fifth commandment. He's a superior to an inferior.

He is over these people, like a police officer, more flexible than that, and therefore those in positions of influence and power, parents, grandparents, and the like, teachers, should be doubly careful with respect to the ninth commandment, and speaking the truth, and upholding the truth, and not lying. Judges, the military, presidents, and the like, can ruin lives with falsehoods. That is, they have this terrible power that is terrifying, awesome power to protect, should be, and to defend us, or they can use it to ruin our lives.

As we've seen, I know probably many stories in the law court system where people come out through frivolous lawsuits and ruin their life because they run out of all their money to use a lawyer to protect themselves. That's miserable. That's terrible.

That should not be the case at all. Clear violation of the ninth commandment. There's a flip side to that, though.

That makes sense to a lot of us. Oh, they got lots of power. They got lots of money.

They can make up whatever sounds really good because they're a smart lawyer. On the other hand, people who are inferior, in the sense of underneath someone else, like in the Me Too movement, can also lie and make it really bad and miserable for their bosses or for the men in their lives, and that's been known to be a case as well. Both cases, it's terrible.

Stop that. Don't do that. And then lastly here, this is under what is forbidden in the ninth commandment, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause.

We should not plead for an evil cause. Job 13.7, will you speak wickedly for God and talk deceitfully for him? And so this brings us back to the first table of the law, the third commandment. We're supposed to honor God's name and everything he has his name upon, all his ordinances, his word, his work, and his salvation for us, his worship, that we uphold and sustain it and not lie about him.

False theology is a violation of not just the third commandment, but also the ninth. Or, in practical application, and this is very hard for Christians, I don't know of any who've had to go through this, but I know it exists. I know Christians who have lost their jobs for standing for Jesus, as we know.

They lost their jobs because they wouldn't do the gay marriages and the like. Good for them. They didn't want to violate the ninth commandment.

That's what's going on here. That's what they're doing. Praise be to God.

But there are Christians we got to pray for. Lawyers, can you imagine being a defense lawyer? And they're like, here, you got to defend this person who killed their baby. You could lose your job.

You say, no, I don't know. These things can happen. And so we've got to pray for Christian attorneys, Christian lawyers, or whatever else, where people are put into such a tight bind or spot.

## **What is Commanded in the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment?**

And lastly here, what does the ninth commandment command or teach or direct us towards? What is required is the language of the Shorter Catechism, question 77. What is required in the ninth commandment? The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, of our own and our neighbor's good name, and especially in witness bearing. So that's there.

That's the ninth commandment. It's the language of the ninth commandment because it's highlighting apparently a problem they had in Israel. But it's not only witness bearing.

Zechariah 8.16 is one of the obvious passages that go over an obvious sin here or commandment here, what we're called to do. These are the things you shall do. Speak each man the truth to his neighbor.

Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace. Not just the politicians, not just the judges, not just the police officers, but you and each other. We are called to do this, and not just for Christians, as though only Christians should have the truth.

Again, I've run across some Christian groups who are trying to argue it's okay to bend the ninth commandment because the unbeliever doesn't deserve the truth. No, they do. Again, it's contextual, of course.

There are times not to say anything. That's true, but that's different than what I've been hearing anyway. Psalm 15.4 is another one.

I always remember this one. I just thought it was so stark. Psalm 15 describes a godly man and gives descriptions of what he is supposed to be and be like by God's Spirit upon him.

And we read in verse 4, he who swears to his own hurt and does not change. You give your word even if it hurts the bottom line. You give your word to buy a mower from a neighbor before inspecting it.

That's your fault. And you find out it's a dud. Oh, well, you gave your word.

You gave your word. Now, of course, you can't give your word towards sin. You can't give your word, and that would be like giving your word to kill your family, take your money, or whatever else the case is.

But in all kinds of things like this, this is an everyday thing. I did that once with a neighbor, although it worked out in this case. The mower worked.

Of course, I checked it first. But people don't sometimes. You've got to bite the bullet and admit it or admit to the guy your error in this case and ask for forgiveness for promising to buy something without even checking it out first, as the case may be.

Another fulfillment of this commandment, what we are called to do in the positive, what we're commanded, what we're required, is a charitable esteem of our neighbors, as the larger catechism summarizes. A charitable esteem of our neighbors. First Corinthians 13, 7, we read in that great chapter on love, it bears all things, it believes all things, it hopes all things, it endures all things.

Which is to say it doesn't assume the worst off the top of their head. Now, of course, it's based on evidence. Love in that chapter is described in very strong black-and-white terms because they obviously had a problem in Corinth about love, about humility, and the like, as we saw in the opening chapters there.

So I went through First Corinthians, and so Paul is really hammering home. He's not giving you all the caveats, which is like using a little common sense here. Obviously, if this guy's a mass murderer, you should probably not believe all things.

Obviously. Or trust him or anything like that. There's contrary evidence, of course, you should be cautious or maybe even be undecided.

Sometimes you just simply don't have enough information, and the circumstances don't require you to make an answer, and so you're just quiet. That's fine. But overall and in general, we typically have, and I've seen it, and we should continue to do this, have a charitable esteem of our neighbors. Again, both believers and unbelievers.

One of the last points I want to make here with respect to that which is commanded or required to speak the truth, to sustain the truth, is to speak and sustain the truth and support honesty and veracity by mutual support for one another in this regard. Mutual responsibility, because no man is an island, unlike Caleb who said, or Cain who said, am I my brother's keeper? Yes, you are.

We all are, to one degree in varying relationships, to be sure. We are called, whether as leaders or followers, workers or employees, to help one another, to uphold and sustain the truth, of course, with proper decorum. That is, if I go to my boss, I don't just start freaking out and yelling at him, what's your problem? Why don't you tell me? Here's the truth.

Why don't you bring this out and say, yes, excuse me, sir. I'd like to sit down. I have to explain a few things.

Proper decorum is what I mean there. But you say it, nevertheless, you say it clearly. One way we can do this is by discouraging flatterers.

Flatterers have to have more than one person involved, right? They flatter other people. We have this in Proverbs 26, 24 and verse 25, Proverbs 26, 24 and following, he who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself. When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart.

So love believes all things, with the caveat, Proverbs 26, 24. That there are those who have, dissimulation is the KJV word. It's used there again in Romans 12, for example.

Love is without dissimulation. A false appearance is what that word means. And I think the KJV translate that here as well.

He who hates, dissimulates or hides it with his lips. He's pretending otherwise. And he lays up deceit within himself.

He's deadly. He's dangerous. And one way he does this is he disguises it, and the one way he disguises is by being nice about it, of course.

If he has evil intent in his heart, he's not going to say it with his mouth. That's what disguising means. It must mean, therefore, he's lying some way.

Usually some kind of smooth words or flattering to make people feel good, so their guard is put down. A sickly, sweet, fawning, usually to gain something. And I think we've met at least one person like that.

Unfortunately, we have a stereotype about salesmen that way, although not all salesmen are that way. Just kind of sweetly smiling, like, what are you up to? What are you trying? Yeah, I know you're trying to sell me something. That's what these people, of course, they're trying to sell their hate and come after you.

No, we should discourage that amongst each other. To help others avoid an ill name or a bad name, Proverbs 5, 8 through 9. Proverbs 5, 8 through 9. Remove your way from, far from her, excuse me, that is the immoral woman, and do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your honor to others, and your years to a cruel one. So there we have here honor, your good name to others here in a public sense.

So Solomon is writing, this text is used in the Confessions, I recall, and Solomon's writing is to young men here. The whole chapter, Proverbs 5, is about young men controlling their urges, and he is therefore, what? Mutually encouraging them to do the right thing. He's showing us in his own letters here, King Solomon, of how to do the ninth commandment are right.

That it's not just myself, I'm controlling myself. That's a good thing. We ought to have this for the fruit of self-control, but also to help encourage others and to give them better direction, especially younger people here.

We are an example to them with respect to the ninth commandment. That he would not, what? Give your honor away to others. That is your good name.

Appealing to the reputation. Even churches have a duty to help other churches to maintain a good name. This is yet another argument for Presbyterianism, or Connectionalism, that we are connected to each other, and more than just kind of a kumbaya.

Yeah, I see you down the street. We're in the same... No, it's meaningful. There's some kind of consequence, and one of them, of course, is upholding the truth of God's Word, and warning when a pastor or church is going down the wrong path.

With lies, both in doctrine and in practice, when church leaders start watering down the truth, they should be warned to uphold the honor of Christ, of course. This is the calling that we all have. Unfortunately, in the American scene, they push too much about independent churches.

It may happen by a dint of circumstance, right? You're out in the middle of the country, and you become Presbyterian. Wyoming has the lowest population density, right? You really can't connect with anybody, functionally speaking. But, in the American scene, many people like to have their independency, because they can do what they want, and no one can tell them what to do.

I can say whatever I want. I have no accountability. The Ninth Commandment is about accountability.

Not just you, and the truth, and God, but you, and your neighbor, and the truth, and God. In fact, that's all the Commandments. Romans 1 18, excuse me, Romans 1 8. We can encourage one another, as Paul encourages, with the truth.

First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. That is in a good sense. This is a good thing.

You got a good reputation, and I'm praising you for that, and I thank the Lord God for this. This is a word of encouragement. This is also a fulfillment of the Ninth Commandment.

It's true. It's done in good season. It's a good time.

It's almost always a good time to give good news. I thank the Lord that He's working in you, and you have a good reputation, brothers and sisters. A word of encouragement, as we say, when the time is needed.

And all this, brothers and sisters, we are called to honor the truth, especially the truth of God's Word. We must be careful when speaking of the Lord and His Gospel, but especially the trust in Jesus and not in a lie, while also depending upon the Spirit of truth to preserve us, that we would be a light of truth in an age of lies. Let us pray.

Gracious Spirit of truth and light, sovereign power above, work in us and give us the conviction and strength we need to speak the truth when appropriate to the Lord. But also to have the wisdom to know when to be silent, to hold back our feelings and not vent them out at times. And whatever the case, we struggle with God.

May we not be discouraged, but always turn back to Jesus Christ, who is the King of kings and the God of truth, and the truth of the good news of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, who lived and died for us, and we can have that redemption to save us from the lies of the devil and our own lies in our own hearts. We ask God for more of this, we pray. Amen.