

Heidelberg Catechism 112 –Protect Your Neighbor’s Reputation

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: In Law 6, God requires that you preserve life. But God is not only concerned about preserving life. God is concerned about the purity in life (Law 7). But God was not only concerned about you living a pure life, so in Law 8 God requires a satisfied life. And to add to all those requirements concerning your life, today you will see in **Law 9 that God requires a reputable life** – both for you and for your neighbor. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

Prohibited Things in Law 9
Prescribed Things in Law 9.

Our goals are: That you will **learn that a lying lip is an abomination to the Lord because it hurts souls and humiliates Christ, and that you will learn to speak truth to honor Christ and help your brother.**

112 Q. WHAT IS GOD’S WILL FOR US IN THE NINTH COMMANDMENT?

A. God’s will is that I **never give false testimony** against anyone, **twist no one’s words**, not **gossip** or **slander**, nor join in **condemning anyone** without a hearing or without a just cause. Rather, in court and everywhere else, I should **avoid lying and deceit** of every kind; these are devices the devil himself uses, and they would call **down on me God’s intense anger**. I should **love the truth, speak it candidly**, and openly **acknowledge it**. And I should do what I can to **guard and advance my neighbor’s good name**.

Prohibited Things in Law 9

1. The source of lying is not your lips; the source of lying is your heart.

Specifically, watch out for hatred, and jealousy – 2 common causes for lying. Look at jealousy in Ananias and Sapphira’s life. Acts 5:3: But Peter said, "Ananias, why **has Satan filled your heart to lie** to the Holy Spirit...

2. God forbids lying words everywhere but especially in legal situations, as in a trial in court.

Lying is such a terrible sin that God links lying with the worst sins and judgments imaginable. Let these words shock you!

Revelation 21:8 –"**...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**, which is the second death."

Proverbs 25:18: **A man who bears false witness** against his neighbor is **like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow**.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, **strife, deceit**, evil-mindedness; **they are whisperers**, ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice **such things are deserving of death...**

Lying to those close to you (like your parents or spouse) is worse as you should love them more.

Remember how Jacob lied to Isaac his father (and hurt him) to rob Esau his brother! Remember how **Naboth** was murdered by Jezebel who used 2 scoundrels lying under oath. Words do kill! Even the pagan **Scythians** executed oath-breakers.

3. Consider some forms of lying by words that are often minimized or ignored!

a. God forbids you from twisting other people’s words so their intent or their meaning is changed.

God forbids you from **using part of what they** say or from **ignoring the context** of what they say.

b. God forbids gossip. Gossip is useless talk about another person. **The substance of what the gossiper says could be true, but if it is unnecessary, it’s gossip.** Gossip is with the intention to insult or embarrass.

“The scorpion takes its poison in its tail, the slanderer in his tongue.”

c. God forbids slander. The slanderer shows he has adopted the Devil (the chief slanderer) as father. The goal of the slanderer is to **hurt someone’s reputation**. When someone’s reputation is hurt, he may lose business or credit to which he is due.

John 8:44 - "**You are of your father the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. **When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources**, for he is a

liar and the father of it.

d. God forbids flattery. Flattery is often acceptable, but it is a lie. “You have the best voice in the world.” Flattery is telling others what they want to hear. Maybe you want to build someone’s self-esteem, but how does this help children later in life? Others flatter to gain some personal advantage.

e. God forbids white lies... like when the phone rings and you tell your children to say you are not at home. Learn to say you are busy, or you can’t or won’t come to the phone. Don’t lie.

4. What are forbidden actions in Law 8? (You can lie by actions?)

God forbids pretending-with the intent to deceive and gain some advantage, like pretending to like someone.

Prescribed Things in Law 9

1. What does God prescribed for keeping Law 9?

a. Embrace and love truth.

1Corinthians 13: 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, **but rejoices in the truth;**

If the Devil knows you reject lies and embrace truth, he will give up tempting in that area, like a love interest might stay around you for a while, even if you don’t like him, but after a while, he gets the message and moves on. **So keep quoting truth to the Devil and he will flee.**

b. Mean what you say – not equivocating – playing with words. Your words should match what is in your heart. So if you say you are going to do or not do something for or to your children, keep that promise. Even if it causes pain, discomfort, or costs time, or money, do as you promise or threaten. If you don’t do as you say, you are lying and teaching that truth and promises don’t matter. But they do!

Psalm 15:1 LORD, **who may abide in Your tabernacle?** Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 **He who walks uprightly,** And works righteousness, And **speaks the truth in his heart.**

c. Have the right intention when you speak-not having fingers crossed behind your back or having mental reservations as RC’s! ‘I said it but did not mean it.’ The Jesuits were the RC’s investigators of people who became Christians. They felt that they did not always have to hold to the truth in their investigations. They promised to do something but didn’t. It was like they had spiritual fingers crossed behind their backs - like little children cross their fingers behind their backs as their way out of not doing as they promised. But God knows the intents of your heart.

d. Think before you speak so you don’t spread lies or misinformation. Be quick to hear, slow to speak.

2. God prescribes that you:

a. Speak the truth when it is due, especially to protect the reputation and preserve the lives of your neighbors, especially in a court of law. But if you have to give testimony against someone, make sure you have fully learned the facts.

b. Speak the truth in gentleness and meekness even when it might hurt the other person. For instance, you know you might have to put your arms around someone when you tell him his relative died. You have to speak the truth, but you have to **be gentle**. Or if someone were going to die and he asked you if he were, don’t hide the truth from him. Speak it **in love**. It might help a stubborn one.

Proverbs 25:15...a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

c. Speak the truth so it will preserve the spiritual lives of those in sin and darkness.

Proverbs 2:17-18 – **Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,** and apply your mind to my knowledge, for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, **that they may be ready on your lips.**

If you don’t have the knowledge of the truth God requires which can lead to the salvation and sanctification of others, you are like the Old Testament man with stone in his hand ready to execute the passerby. If you have the Word of Life you can speak you will see that man rescued from the condemnation of death and given eternal life. Your tongue must be a tree of life.

Proverbs 12:22 **Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal**

truthfully are His delight.

Ephesians 4:25 - Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

d. Know there are serious consequences for lying. To emphasize the consequences of refusing to speak the truth, a liar was severely punished by God, sometimes with the death penalty. The liar got the same penalty as the innocent accused could have gotten because of the liar's testimony.

Leviticus 5:1 – If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter – if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

Remember Peter before the Sanhedrin, the Hebrew men before Nebuchadnezzar, and Jonah before the murderous Assyrians! If they did not speak the truth, **they would have denied Christ and denied others from hearing the Gospel.**

Acts 5:29 Peter... answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

Positively, consider great blessings that come from speaking the truth.

3. Some additional issues with speaking the truth.

a. While ordinarily withholding the truth is considered a lie, sometimes you don't have to speak the truth. You don't have to tell someone your PIN number for your ATM card. Withholding the truth here is a good moral act! And you don't have to tell anyone how much money you have in the bank.

b. Be selfless in speaking the truth. Selfishness kills truth telling. You are trained today not to speak up unless forced. Men have become preoccupied with pursuing personal pleasure rather than to be bothered with being a witness— especially to the police. **But a man may be hurt by silence as slander.** King David understood this and explained it well while under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 15. Speak up for babies who are being killed. (They lie when they say the baby is not a baby!) Speak the truth about perversions so man and women can be saved. Speak up against the lies of the evolutionists. Speak up against humanism and secularism. Know truth so you can speak truth.

c. Not all lying is sin. Just like killing sometimes is honorable and required to protect innocent life, so in order to protect innocent life, God told Samuel to lie, he told Israel to purposely deceive the nations in war, he honored Rahab for protecting the innocent by lying, and he rewarded the Egyptian midwives for lying to protect Jewish babies' lives.

Conclusion:

Love truth, speak truth, confess truth, promote truth and defend truth. Know that lying takes many prisoners but when you **speak the truth you set men free from false accusations, you cause the wicked to be punished, and you preserve others' reputations and lives.** Most of all, **when you speak the truth (There is salvation in Jesus) you set men free from their hopelessness so they can properly glorify the Lord.**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You are God child, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Reflect him.

2. You reflect him by spreading the truth of the Gospel so men can be rescued from sin and misery. Jesus said: "I **am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through Me."

3. But what about truth telling on daily basis? Will you tell the medical ethicist who says the unborn baby is a not human he is speaking a lie from the Devil's bowels. Will you tell the mother who lies to her husband to spare her children she is leading them to hell? Will you tell the lady who lies in order to advance in her job that she imitating the Snake's child? Will you tell the doctor who gives false testimony in court for money he will have to answer to a higher court on Judgment Day? Will you tell your professor in university self-love is sin and he must love God and man instead? I hope you will say, "Yes," and I hope you will tell the truth with courage and love.

If you are not a Christian, you have heard God considers lying one of the worst sins. Sins deserve death and hell. If, however, you claim Christ's perfect obedience as your obedience...and his death as punishment for your sins, then you can leave this building a brand-new man.