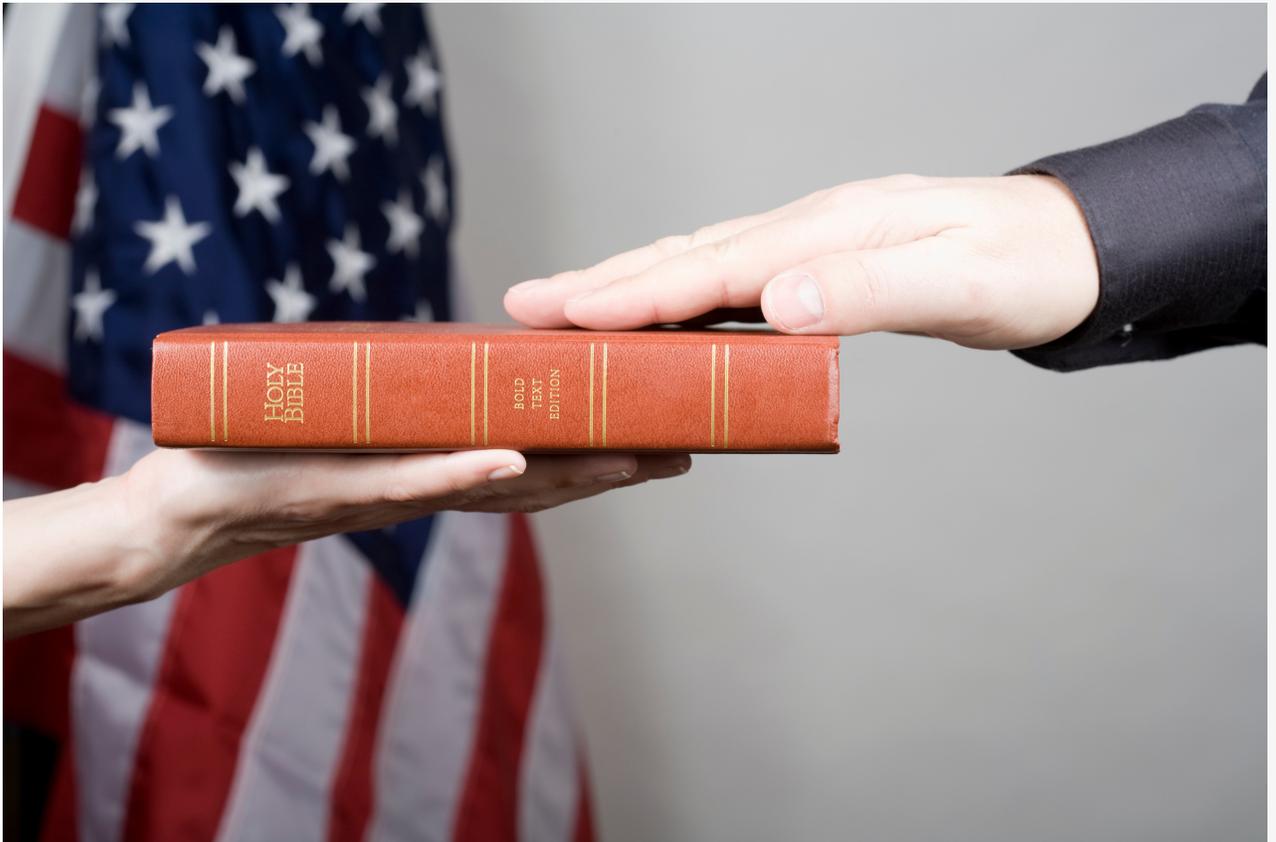


THE TEN PLEASURES

EXODUS 20:16

# THE PLEASURE OF TRUTH



**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

DAVID MURRAY  
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**FIRSTBYRONCRC.ORG**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Democrats complain about "disinformation" while the Republicans complain about "Fake news." Everyone feels the pain of a society in which lies abound and truth is rare. This lack of truth creates a crisis of confidence as we can't find anyone we can trust or rely on. We don't know what to believe or think or how to act. In frustration, we cry out, "**What is truth?**" and "**Where is truth?**"

## BACKGROUND

The ninth commandment, like many of the other commandments, highlight one of the the worst sins in the category. But being a false witness in court does not exhaust this commandment. It's just one of the more serious examples in this category of moral evil.

Each of the commandments reveal and reflect God's character. The ninth one reveals God as the God of truth. He is the creator, preserver, promoter, lover, and blesser of truth. Conversely, he is the sworn enemy of lies and the father of lies, the devil (John 8:44). We are called to receive and believe God's truth and also to reveal and reflect it in our lives. If we do, we will be as blessedly confident as God is.



What is truth?



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# 1. TRUTH IS RARE

We start by looking at what the Reformed confessions and catechisms teach about what this commandment requires and forbids. Here's a synthesis of the Heidelberg Catechism 112, Shorter Catechism 77-78, and Larger Catechism 144-145 as they summarize and simplify the Bible's teaching:

## SUMMARY

The ninth commandment requires the

- The preserving, maintaining, and promoting of
  - Truth
  - And of our own and our neighbor's good name,
    - especially in witness bearing (matters of judgment and justice)

## A WITNESS

All situations that involve judgment as to what the truth is: courts, tribunals, church discipline, family discipline, marital disputes.

### Required

- Appearing and standing for the truth
- Speaking the truth, and only the truth (heartily sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully)

### Forbidden

- Giving false evidence
- Suborning false witnesses
- Appearing and pleading for an evil cause
- Passing unjust sentence
- Calling evil good, and good evil
- Rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous (and vice versa)
- Forgery
- Concealing the truth
- Undue silence in a just cause

## A NEIGHBOR

### Required

- A charitable esteem of our neighbors
- Loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name
- Sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities
- Freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces
- Defending their innocency
- A ready receiving of a good report
- Unwillingness to accept an evil report concerning them
- Discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers



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## Forbidden

- Speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, tale bearing, scoffing,
- Rash and harsh censuring
- Misrepresenting intentions, words, and actions
- Thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others
- Denying the gifts and graces of God
- Aggravating smaller faults
- Hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession
- Unnecessary discovering of weaknesses
- Raising or receiving false rumors and evil reports
- Stopping our ears against just defense
- Evil suspicion
- Envy or grieving at the deserved credit of any
- Rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy
- Breach of lawful promises
- Holding our peace when iniquity calls for either a reproof or a complaint to others
- Speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end
- Whatever hurts our neighbor's good name

## OURSELVES

### Required

- Love and care of our own good name
- And defending it when need requires
- Studying and practicing of whatever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

### Forbidden

- Doing whatever injures our own good name
- Neglecting such things as are of good report
- Thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others
- Denying the gifts and graces of God

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**We live in a world of lies.** Weep and mourn over the loss of truth, our contribution to that loss, and the impact upon our world, our institutions, our families, our relationships, and our psyche.

**Worship the God of Truth.** We don't need to ask "What is truth?" because Jesus said, "I am the truth" (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who leads us into the truth (John 16:13).

**Tell the truth no matter the cost.** We will all be confronted with choices in our lives, where we have to choose between truth and money, truth and family, truth and our business, truth and friends, truth and church. At such times we need to hear this commandments authoritative voice.

TRUTH IS A TREASURE  
SO TREASURE THE TRUTH



Looks like telling the truth is not much fun. How is it a pleasure?



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## 2. TRUTH IS FREEDOM

There is a lie at the core of every enslaving addiction. It doesn't matter what kind of addiction it is – drink, drugs, food, porn, spending, people-pleasing, people-critiquing, control, digital technology, etc. – lies are at the heart of them all. That's why Jesus said to religious addicts, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32). The only way to deliver addicts is to rip out these lies and replace them with truth. Here's a sampling of the lies that addicts tell; and a sampling of the truths that can root them out and replace them.

### Lies About God

**Lie:** God is not Good. He's just being a spoilsport in forbidding this sin. The sin is good and God is bad.

**Truth:** God is good to all and does good to all. His law is an expression of his goodness (Ps. 145:9; Rom. 7:12).

**Lie:** God is not all-seeing. He can't really see me when I do this.

**Truth:** God sees all people, all things, all events, at all times (Ps. 139:1-16; Prov. 15:3)

**Lie:** God is not judge. He will not call me to account for this.

**Truth:** We will give account for every deed done or not done, in public and in private (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:16)

**Lie:** God is not Savior. I've sinned too much for God to save me. There's no point in even trying to be saved.

**Truth:** Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. (Rom. 10:13; 1 John 1:9; John 6:37)

**Lie:** God is not enough. God will not satisfy me as sin does.

**Truth:** There is more than enough in God to satisfy the hungriest and thirstiest soul (Ps. 63:3-5; John 7:37)

### Lies About Self

**Lie:** I don't have a problem. I mean I sin, even quite a lot, but it's not an addiction.

**Truth:** Whoever commits sin (lit. continues to practice sin) is a slave of sin (Rom. 6:16; John 8:34).

**Lie:** I'm not as bad as others.

**Truth:** Our standard of comparison is God's Word, not other people (2 Cor. 10:12).

**Lie:** It's not harming me.

**Truth:** Every sin hardens our hearts (Heb. 3:13) and ultimately ends in death (James 1:15).

**Lie:** I cannot change and I cannot escape.

**Truth:** God always provides an escape route and he can give real freedom to anyone (1 Cor. 10:13; John 8:36).

### Lies about Sin

**Lie:** This habit makes me happy.

**Truth:** Maybe, but it's a very brief and fleeting happiness that leaves a bitter taste (Heb. 11:24-26).

**Lie:** This helps me forget my past.

**Truth:** The most important thing is for God to forget your past (Heb. 8:12).

**Lie:** Now is not a good time to stop.

**Truth:** Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).



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## Lies About Others

**Lie:** Those condemning me and trying to stop me are my enemies.

**Truth:** Those who try to stop you sinning are actually your best friends and they're doing you a great kindness (Prov. 27:6; Ps. 141:5).

**Lie:** It's my parents'/abuser's/husband's/wife's fault.

**Truth:** When Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake, God blamed and punished all of them (Gen 3:14-19; Ezek. 18:20). The soul that sins, it shall die.

**Lie:** This doesn't affect others.

**Truth:** Do you need a Bible verse for this? Just ask those around you what the truth is.

Whatever you are addicted to, try to find the lies at its heart and then attack them with God's powerful truth. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Target lies.** Who are you telling lies to? What lies are you telling? How are these lies ensnaring and enslaving you? Identify these lies, zoom in on them, see their danger, then drone them with truth.

**Tell the truth.** I know someone who was abused as a child by his parents. For years he denied it, minimized it, excused it, explained it away, and above all, tried to forget it. He was getting sicker and sicker - spiritually, emotionally, physically, mentally. Telling himself the truth about what happened was initially extremely painful, but was the catalyst for long-term healing. He now helps others who have been abused and continually reminds them, "The truth will set you free."

TRUTH IS NOT FREE  
BUT IT FREES



I want freedom but truth sounds like hard work.  
What if truth promised you peace as well?



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## 3. TRUTH IS PEACE

### Peace of conscience

Twice in my life I've had major decisions to make about whether to tell the truth or cover up the truth. The first time it was a Christian denomination. The second time was a Christian institution. Both were cases that involved the sexual abuse of Christian women and both times the majority of Christians involved decided to choose the easier path of covering up the truth with lies. Going along with each cover-up would have been the easier path: less confrontation, less fighting, less stress, less anxiety, less sleep, less friends, less loss. But it would also have meant less peace of conscience.

Therefore, by God's grace alone, I chose the path of telling the truth. Whatever else I lost - my ministry, my reputation, my security, etc - I did not lose my peace of conscience (Acts 24:16). Someone once said, "Conscience is what hurts when everything else feels so good." It's also what feels so good when everything else feels so bad.

What a joy to have such peaceful conscience, a conscience informed by truth that that can look forward to the resurrection and final judgment with hope. In Pilgrim's Progress, Mr Honest arranged for Good-conscience to meet him at the Jordan to help him over to "the other side." We hope we will be able to do the same when we close our eyes for the last time. As an old Puritan said: "There is no pillow so soft as a good conscience." A good conscience can sleep in thunder.

### Peace of mind

**"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things"** (Phil. 4:8). Two slices of peace (7,9) sandwich the meat of verse eight. If we don't eat the meat of verse 8, we won't have the peace sandwich (7,9). If we let what is false, offensive, dishonest, filthy, ugly, and loathsome into our minds, we might as well sign up for a course on how to be hyper-anxious. The catechism teach us that the ninth commandment requires the "studying and practicing of whatever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report." Think about these things," commanded Paul. "Concentrate and focus on these subjects, form rigorous thinking habits along these lines." It's not an option. It's a command for our good.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Educate your conscience.** Educate your conscience with the Law of God. Martin Luther said, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God." Also, educate your conscience with the Gospel, so you can enjoy perfect and permanent peace (Heb. 10:22)

**Educate your mind.** The original meaning of 'educate' is 'to lead out.' We are not to be passively led about by others, but we're to actively lead our minds into what is true and good for personal peace.

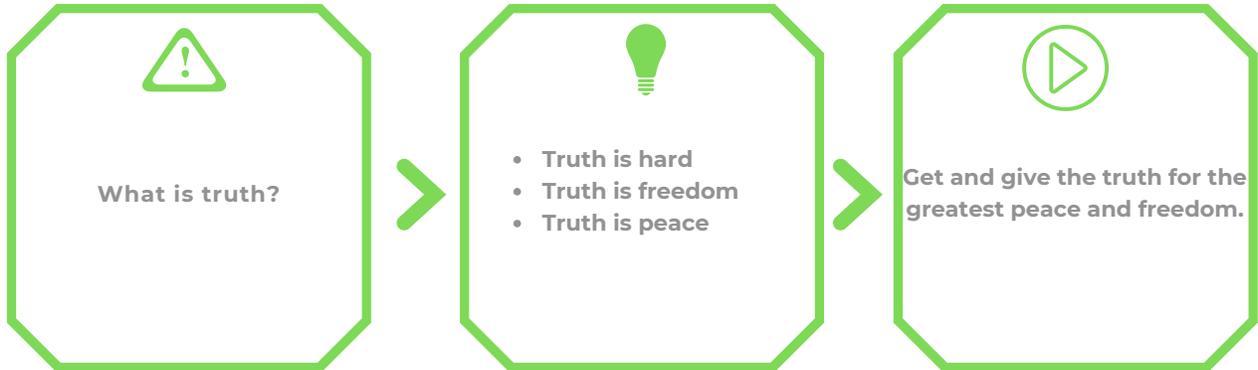
TRUE PEACE  
IS TRUTH PEACE



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the Story > Change others' stories



## SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

- **Children:** Remember, every lie makes the next one easier.
- **Teens:** Objective truth exists. "Your truth" and "my truth" do not exist. You've got the Truth, now give the Truth.
- **Parents:** Disciple with truth and discipline according to Truth.
- **Liars:** Remember Peter's triple lie and triple forgiveness that led to triple usefulness.
- **Discipleship:** Discipleship is about knowing, believing, speaking, and living the Truth in such a way that others want to know, believe, speak, and live the Truth.
- **Worship:** God desires that we worship him in Spirit and in Truth because God is truth (Jn. 4:23). Psalm 119 is one long praise of the God who is the Truth.
- **Jesus:** Our Savior is the perfect embodiment of this commandment. Knowing that we would lie from the moment we are born (Ps. 58:3; Jn. 8:44), he came as Truth in a world of lies, and not only lived a Truth-FULL life but died so that we who are lie-FULL may be forgiven.
- **Prayer:** God of Truth, give me Truth and truthfulness so that I can give the Truth to those who desperately need truth freedom and truth peace.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give some examples of how hard it is to know the truth about anything today?
2. How did the catechisms' teaching change your view of this commandment?
3. When did you (or someone you know) tell the truth despite the consequences or cost?
4. What lies are you telling yourself? What truth will set you free?
5. How will you change your media diet to keep this command?
6. How could you use this message to start a Gospel conversation this week?