

9th Commandment: "Liar, Liar Pants on Fire!"-Truth and Integrity of God's People

^{ESV} **Exodus 20:1** And God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ "You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³ "You shall not murder. ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ "You shall not steal. ¹⁶ "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." ¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin." ²¹ The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. ²² And the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven. ²³ You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. ²⁴ An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you. ²⁵ If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones, for if you wield your tool on it you profane it. ²⁶ And you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it.'

Jeremiah 23:15-40: Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: "Behold, I will feed them with bitter food and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land." ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. ¹⁷ They say continually to

those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.'" ¹⁸ For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened? ¹⁹ Behold, the storm of the LORD! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. ²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly. ²¹ "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. ²² But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds. ²³ "Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God afar off? ²⁴ Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. ²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' ²⁶ How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, ²⁷ who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. ²⁹ Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? ³⁰ Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal my words from one another. ³¹ Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, 'declares the LORD.' ³² Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD. ³³ "When one of this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you, 'What is the burden of the LORD?' you shall say to them, 'You are the burden, and I will cast you off, declares the LORD.' ³⁴ And as for the prophet, priest, or one of the people who says, 'The burden of the LORD,' I will punish that man and his household. ³⁵ Thus shall you say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' ³⁶ But 'the burden of the LORD' you shall mention no more, for the burden is every man's own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. ³⁷ Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' ³⁸ But if you say, 'The burden of the LORD,' thus says the LORD, 'Because you have said these words, "The burden of the LORD," when I sent to you, saying, "You shall not say, 'The burden of the LORD,'" ³⁹ therefore, behold, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city that I gave to you and your fathers. ⁴⁰ And I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten."

^{ESV} **Acts 5:1-11:** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "**Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?**" ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? **Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.**" ⁵ When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. ⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹ But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰ Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

John 8:42-46: Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?"

^{ESV} **Matthew 12:33-37:** "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. ³⁶ **I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, ³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.**"

^{ESV} **Revelation 14:1-5:** Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ It

is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

^{ESV} **Revelation 21:6-8:** And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Ephesians 4:17-32 ¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!- ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

LIVING TRUTHFULLY *CORAM DEO* IN AN AGE OF SPIN AND LIES

Rev. Charles R. Biggs

Heidelberg Catechism on the 9th Commandment: Question 112. What is required in the ninth commandment? *Answer*. That I bear false witness [a] against no man, nor falsify [b] any man's words; that I be no backbiter, [c] nor slanderer; that I do not judge, nor join [d] in condemning any man rashly, or unheard; but that I [e] avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works [f] of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God; likewise, that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly [g] and confess it; also that I defend and promote, [h] as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbor. [a]: Prov. 19:5,9; Prov. 21:28[b]: Psa. 15:3[c]: Rom. 1:29,30[d]: Mat. 7:1ff; Luke 6:37[e]: Lev. 19:11[f]: Prov. 12:22; Prov. 13:5[g]: 1Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25 [h]: 1Pet. 4:8

I. Lies, Lies, Lies! Living Coram Deo in an Age of Spin

a. "Pinocchio Nation"- Introductory Comments

Bella DePaulo, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, has spent years studying the social implications of lying. In one of her studies, 77 college students and 70 members of a local community were required to keep diaries for one week noting their social interactions and chronicling their lies. Participants were also asked to keep track of their own reactions to their lies and to record the extent to which they felt guilty.

The results revealed that all participants lied. Their lies were self-serving and were employed either to enhance the liar's status or protect him from embarrassment, disapproval or conflict. Only one out of four lies was told to protect someone else's feelings. [<http://www.earthtym.net/ref-charismatic.htm>]

Ralph Keyes, a prominent social and political commentator, in 'The Post-Truth Era' writes: Lying has become such an immutable part of political vernacular that the only accepted premise in a discussion on the subject is who lies most. "To politicians," Keyes said, "the question 'Will it fly?' is much more important than 'Is it true?'"

His further insights:

* The most common two lies are "I'm fine" and "I'm sorry, I can't come to the phone right now." Somewhere in the top 10 is "No, that dress doesn't make you look fat at all."

* Men lie to impress; women, to oblige. Wrote Keyes, "Men specialize in self-aggrandizing lies" such as " 'I just swung a big deal -- huge'; women in charitable ones" like " 'Love the dress' or fibs that are self-protective" including " 'I eat mostly low-fat foods.' "

* The most commonplace lies often are told to protect the liar as well as the lied to. We answer the offhand inquiry about our health with "I'm fine" because no one wants to know the vivid particulars of irritable bowel syndrome.

In his research, Keyes heard lying euphemized in many ways, though long after the book is history, he likely will recall a psychiatrist who said of a habitually lying patient, "He is someone for whom the truth is temporarily unavailable."

In "*The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*," Ralph Keyes...argues that deception has become the American way of life. We lie, he says, often with no real reason. According to one study, 28 percent of conversations among friends contained conscious lies; 77 percent among strangers.

Yet God says in Scripture:

^{ESV} **Psalm 63:11** But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

^{ESV} **Psalm 116:11** I said in my alarm, "All mankind are liars."

b. Not just our time period, but a human condition. Thomas Watson wrote:

"The tongue which at first was made to be an organ of God's praise, is now become an instrument of unrighteousness. This commandment binds the tongue to its good behavior. God has set two natural fences to keep in the tongue, the teeth and the lips; and this commandment is a third fence set about it, that it should not break forth into evil."- Ten Commandments, pg. 169.

c. **3rd Commandment: Slandering God's Name/9th Commandment: Slandering Neighbor's Name** (9th commandment is the first commandment that actually says "neighbor")

d. "Bearing false witness" and Lying

i. Courtroom imagery

The Church Father Jerome wrote: "When you speak, let your word be as authentic as your oath." (from 'Ten Commandments', Watson).

In ancient Israel, the city gates, the gathering of the elders was the place where justice was served and the laws were upheld among the people of God. Justice and the courtroom setting was part of the Israelite life. A person could only be tried and punished by death for instance, only on the witness or testimony of two or three witnesses. Here are examples of the courtroom atmosphere if you will of ancient Israel and why bearing false witness was so important before God.

^{ESV} **Exodus 23:1** "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.

^{ESV} **Numbers 35:30** "If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 17:6** On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 17:7** The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 19:15** "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. ¹⁶ If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. ¹⁸ The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. ²⁰ And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you.

^{ESV} **Hosea 4:1** *Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.*

We do not live in a Theocracy as Israel did, but these principles of bearing truthful witness, or telling the truth reminds us of the importance of using the principles as God's guide to living in the Church today. We bear witness of the truth before God and man as the Church, and particularly in church courts, such

as the session (local court), presbytery (regional court), and General Assembly (the supreme court).

As Israel lived Coram Deo before the face of God in assembly as a people, so the Church, the people of God in the New Covenant in Christ, live truthfully with one another, putting away falsehood before the face of God and man.

We live as if each word we mutter is an oath, where we have sworn allegiance to the truth in God's world.

- ii. **“Bearing false witness” before Whom?** Living **Coram Deo**: before God's face the Great Judge (all actions, all words, everything we say)- Hebrews 4:12-13; Matthew 12:33-37: “Every careless word.”

^{ESV} **Proverbs 12:22** Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.

Proverbs 6:12-19: A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, ¹³ winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, ¹⁴ with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord; ¹⁵ therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing. ¹⁶ There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

^{ESV} **Proverbs 25:18** A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a war club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow.

e. Why and How we lie?

- i. **Garden of Eden**: “Did God actually say?” The root of all lying.
- ii. **The Devil is the Father of lies** (John 8) and the Accuser of the Brethren who accuses us day and night before God (Rev. 12:10).
 1. Lying to God (vows, oaths): Matthew 5
 2. Lying to each other (Eph. 4-5): “We are members one of another.”
 3. Watch our mouths! Truth, truth, truth

4. Seek the truth as far as you are able! (1 Corinthians 13:6-7:

[Love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

iii. Lying to ourselves

^{ESV} **1 John 1:10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{ESV} **1 John 2:4** Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

^{ESV} **1 John 4:20** If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

^{ESV} **1 John 5:10** Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

1. About our sinful condition before God (thinking higher of ourselves than we ought)
2. About identity

Ford also points an accusing finger at the impersonal or "virtual" nature of **online communication for this new wave of liars**. The online variety begin by creating a false name and follow through with a completely manufactured identity. They feel no compunction to tell the truth because they feel distanced from the harm they inflict and, more important, imagine they're less likely to be caught. It follows the whole "look me straight in the eye" logic. For thousands of young male braggarts, the Net has become the high school locker room where sexual boasting is a part of passage into manhood.- **Dr. Charles Ford, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Alabama in Birmingham and author of *Lies! Lies! Lies!!! The Psychology of Deceit***. [<http://www.earthtym.net/ref-charismatic.htm>]

3. About what people think of us
4. About thinking suspicious thoughts of our neighbors
5. About thinking people are out to get you

"These people are frequently very narcissistic," says Dr. Charles Ford, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Alabama in Birmingham and author of *Lies! Lies! Lies!!! The Psychology of Deceit*.

"They feel the world revolves around them. They feel they are entitled to reshape reality to meet their own needs," he says.

While it's generally held that cheaters never prosper, it's sadly true that the most skillful liars are often successful in relationships and at work.

"This is the age of narcissism," says Ford. **"People are more self-centered, more involved with themselves. The breakdown of the nuclear and the extended family is producing more children who are self-absorbed."**

He says **they believe that because you only go around once in this life you might as well get as much as you can even if that means stretching the truth."**

"And now, the lying game.: From Clinton to Archer, the combination of charm and deceit is powerful."

by David Graham, Life Writer, Toronto Star, July 23, 2001.

<http://www.earthtym.net/ref-charismatic.htm> (Emphasis ours.)

f. When we lie?

i. Deceit from the heart

^{ESV} **Proverbs 17:4** An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.

ii. Untruth

1. "Baldface lies" or libel (lying openly and without shame knowing better and knowing that what you are saying is untrue).
2. "White lies"- Very sincerely yours...Thank you very much (with sarcasm)...I really *like you*- - yea right!

Ralph Keyes in 'The Post-Truth Era' calls these:
"Enhanced Truth"

Neo-truth. Soft truth. Faux truth. Truth lite."

3. Etiquette and Respect is not lying

iii. **“Covering” for another who is guilty**

iv. **Silence**: Not on the surface, but it means that no one can merely be NEUTRAL with regard to our neighbor. If our neighbor is spoken against, betrayed, and slandered we have a responsibility to protect them as much as possible, not merely sit idly by.

v. **Manipulation**

1. Crying to get your way!
2. Acting defeated and moping until somebody allows you to do what you want to do!

^{ESV} **Proverbs 21:6** The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.

vi. **Acceptance**

vii. **Honor**

viii. **Flattery**

^{ESV} **Proverbs 26:28** A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

ix. **“I was only teasing/joking!”**

^{ESV} **Proverbs 26:18** Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death ¹⁹ is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!"

x. **Judging others rashly without sufficient information or understanding:**

^{ESV} **Matthew 7:1-3: "Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"**

xi. **Gossip (“Talebearing”)**

1. Certain talkative personalities must remember the sin that so easily besets them (cf. Heb. 3:12).
2. Reputation and Name of another/Martin Luther wrote in his Larger Catechism: “Reputation is something quickly stolen, but not quickly returned.”

xii. In general: Watch your mouth!

g. Hypocrisy, classically considered – the MASK!

- i. Saying one thing...doing another!
- ii. "Do what I say, not what I do."
- iii. Outwardly religious, thinking of yourself as better than others!

^{ESV} **Matthew 23:27** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

h. Teachers and the Truth

- i. Jeremiah 23; James 3
- ii. Those in positions of teaching others need to take this all the more serious by speaking only what God says for them to say.
- iii. Relativism in the Church Today?

Mike Horton tellingly reveals the problem in the evangelical church today in 'The Law of Perfect Freedom', pg. 229; he writes: "Is the Church any different [from the world]? What place does truth have in a church that has had Benny Hinn at the top of a best-seller list for months? (Note: this book was written back in the early 1990s)

Where does truth rate in a church that pushes theology- -the study of God- - aside in order to sell God to self-seeking consumers? How can we talk about being truthful in our personal relationships, rooting out ecclesiastically acceptable sin of gossip and slander, if we are not first of all concerned with defending truth at the most precious level?

We speak often of the relativism of secular culture while we relativize truth in our own Christian circles. Surely it is here where truth-telling begins, with the most important issues involved and the highest stakes imaginable."

Os Guinness in his book 'Time for Truth: Living Free in a World of Lies, Hype, and Spin' writes concerning relativism in our culture today: "In both popular and elite circles in the West a very different opinion, loosely called the postmodern movement, is becoming dominant. Within it, truth is dead.

Truth in any objective sense, truth that is independent of the mind of the knower, no longer exists. At best, truth is relative—it's all a matter of interpretation and it all depends on the perspective. At worst, truth is "socially constructed"—merely a matter of human convention and a testament to the community that believes it and the power that established it. (pg. 12).

He gives three examples of this using an umpire's judgment on the playing field:

I call them the way they are- Objective Truth

I call them the way I see it- Moderate Relativism (more subjective)

They ain't nothing till I call them- Radical Relativism (extremely subjective)

Not "Is it true?" but "Whose truth is it?"

- i. **"To lie or not to lie...that is the question."** The "Lie of Necessity" (J. Douma, pg. 325ff), ***Or, Lying that loves and benefits my neighbor.***
 - i. "Come out, come out, wherever you are!" You are not a "liar, liar with pants on fire" if you lie during games; you would be foolish not to have a poker face so to speak 😊 But don't play games with truth in real life- -only when you're playing a game!
 - ii. **Deception, not lying:** In times of war? Would you hide a Jew in Nazi Germany?

Some like Augustine have said "no", some say "yes".

"No!": Augustine wrote: "This person may die in body, but not in soul, whereas one who lies dies in his soul. God destroys everyone who speaks falsehood (Ps. 5:6). No lie proceeds from the truth (1 John 2:21).

"Yes!": Shiprah and Puah in Exodus 1 lie to Pharaoh ***bravely in order to save the lives of children (their neighbors).*** These women are described by the Bible as "fearing God and being blessed by God" (Ex. 1:15-21).

"Yes!": Rahab spoke a falsehood to the king of Jericho when she hid the spies (Josh. 2:4-6). She is commended for her faith in Hebrews 11:31.

(Contrast these whose faith is commended for lying in order to protect and love their neighbor with Abraham who lied to

Pharaoh saying Sarah was his sister in order to save and love himself! This is not commended as anything more than a lie.)

“Yes!”: God teaches military deception to Joshua in 8:1-26 and in David against the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:22-25). Military deception is a falsehood in abnormal circumstances of war and not peace.

“Yes!”: **Lies of Necessity seem to be Biblically warranted.**

After struggling with the possible misuse and abuse of his teaching, J. Douma gives this wise advice: “[Comparing the 9th commandment with the others to make the point] We must honor our parents (fifth commandment), but it can be necessary to deny them obedience for the sake of Christ. We must be subject to government, but if the state conducts itself tyrannically, it is not impermissible for the right of revolution to be invoked. Murder is forbidden (sixth commandment), but the Israelite is free of bloodguilt if he catches an intruder and fatally wounds him (Ex. 22:2). We may not steal (eight commandment), but Yahweh permitted the Israelites to rob the Egyptians just before the Exodus (Ex. 3:22; 11:2; 12:35-36). Jesus’ comment about the priests who work in the temple on the Sabbath can be applied to other situations: the law is “broken,” but without guilt (David violated the law, as well as Christ in eating the consecrated bread)...

However, a lie of necessity may be used only in dire circumstances, that is to say, only in situations where life is at stake, either our neighbor’s or our own. This does not refer to various difficult situations, where we can escape our problems by speaking falsehood. Even though we incur no guilt when we tell a lie of necessity, we do make use of a sinister and dangerous means.” J. Douma, ‘The Ten Commandments’, pg. 329-330.

- iii. So if Mom asks you “Do I look nice today?” or “Am I getting old?” or if your wife asks “Do I still look pretty to you?” (You better say YES! –without pause or thinking!)

II. Telling the Truth...and Keeping Our Word

- a. “Having put off falsehood”...in Christ
- b. “The Truth shall set you free”- in Christ you are free to tell the truth and live honestly before God and man.
- c. “Speak the truth in love...” in Christ

- i. Do you “tell it like it is”, or do you think about when and to whom you are speaking, and prayerfully and carefully speak to that person the truth in love?
- d. Speaking truth in love, not in selfishness or with a desire to get one’s way merely.
- e. Keep your word before God (what comes out of your mouth will be judged by God).

III. **The Word Made Flesh (John 1:1-14)**

- a. Christ was lied about, betrayed, slandered by wicked people with wicked lips in his crucifixion and suffering for lying sinners like we!
- b. When we are accused, Jesus is our Advocate before the Father. Who is it to condemn?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died- more than that, who was raised- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Jesus says: “***I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life***; no one comes to the Father except through me.”

^{ESV} **John 8:32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”