

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.  
**Deuteronomy 5:20**

### **Obtaining Good Things in a Good Way**

<p><b>Main idea:</b> the God Who designed us to be speaking creatures requires that we use that speech for the good of our neighbor.</p>
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**Introduction:** The intensification of difficulty at the end of the Ten Commandments. The untamable tongue and incurable heart expose the greatness of unbelievers' sin and the tenacity of believers' remaining sin.

1. **The purpose of words:** image and bless the speaking God (cf. James 3:8–12)
  - a. This is what we were created for, and this is what we were redeemed for
  - b. The two great commandments go together in our hearts and on our lips; if we are not keeping both, then we are keeping neither.
2. **How the eighth leads to the ninth:** a good name better than great riches.
  - a. Ways of stealing the goodness of a name: gossip—both whispering and slandering; exaggeration; partial truth; withholding praise/credit.
  - b. Causes of stealing a good name: envy, pride, ambition.
3. **Preservation and promotion of truth**
  - a. One of the great ways of imitating God, who cannot lie (cf. Titus 1:2)
  - b. One of the great traps into imitating Satan (cf. John 8:44)
  - c. Causes of lying include those from the first main point, but especially unbelief... the idea that God needs us to do what He can't in order to obtain the desired outcome

**Conclusion:** What a man is overflows through his mouth. Praise and trust in Jesus, for what overflowed from His mouth. And praise and pursue Jesus for what shall ultimately only overflow from yours.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

Deuteronomy 5, verse 20. These are God's words. You shall not bear false witness. Against your neighbor.

Amen. So far. Reading of gods inspired and? And Aaron tort.

In the wisdom of God. He has. Made the Ten Commandments to progress. Uh, not so much in difficulty in and of itself. We knew our hearts. Well, if we understood the law of God rightly, we would find. The law impossible? Apart from the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Uh, but just as anything would have been humiliation for the Lord Jesus, but he took that which men would feel is humiliating by the. The cult of the donkey? So also, he gives us at the end of the Ten Commandments. Uh, he gives us those Commandments. By which we perceive how far we fall short.

And thus. Throws us upon his Mercy alarms us to the greatness of our sin, and our guilt sends us flying to Christ. Makes us to appreciate all the more the Perfection of Christ's righteousness. And that he was perfect. In all the law, including these. But we come now to the ninth commandment and then Lord willing next Lord's Day to the tenth commandment.

To the untameable tongue. And the incurable heart. As we remember from James. The tongue being, that which no man can tame. And then from Jeremiah, the heart being deceitful above all things. A hunting, tracking word being used there. For completely tracked over. Uh, so. Um. So convoluted and confused and multiplied are the intentions and desires of our heart.

That we can't even sort out which direction it was going. Uh, but then deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, so that, uh, if we could know it. What we would see is that that which is unknowable is also unfixable. We would come to that's what desperately wicked means.

It means. Uh, without remedy. Uh, so we come this, uh, this Lord's Day in verse 20. To hear God address. About the use of our tongue, the use of our words, and as we do so, we. Think about the. Purpose of our words. Uh, and we will consider how the eighth commandment from which we are coming.

Uh, and the ninth commandment into which we come this week. Related that bearing false witness is actually a special form. A specific form of stealing. Uh, namely, the stealing of a good name. And then we'll see. And consider that, just as in all of the Commandments, where something is forbidden, the opposite is required.

That this really does require the preservation and promotion of Truth between man and man, which. How our catechism puts. First, then the purpose of words. Uh, God, created by speaking words. He didn't have to do so. Uh, he does. Call his son, the second person of the godhead, the word.

From all eternity from which we learn and understand that there is something in. The personal properties of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who has begotten of the father and proceeds. From him. That is. The original from which God invented the idea of words. Uh, granting to us to be able to communicate ourselves.

Uh, animals make sounds. They even. Communicate about things, but they do not communicate themselves to one another. God, God, created by speaking in part because his purpose in creation is Redemption that Christ might be glorified, both as the Creator and the Redeemer. Uh, he uses words in particular because he is going to make.

Image bearers who are going to use words as well, and so the first purpose of words. Is that we would image God well that we would speak according to how he speaks. And we'll think a little bit more about that. Speaking according to how he speaks when we come to the third Point, preservation and promotion of Truth.

Unjust that we would image God, but we were created to know him to love him to adore him to find our blessedness in him and express that blessedness. Our words exist for the praise of God, and this especially. Is what makes our tongue sins so heinous? Because. The tongue, the mouth.

Our speech is designed for the praise of our God. And that which is? Set apart for the praise of God and in consecrated speech, such as that which takes place in worship. In our secret Worship in our family worship and especially in the public worship. And then, to take that and to use it as an instrument of wickedness when we are outside of worship is to despise the God whom we hope to worship with our mouths.

Children, do you remember what the greatest commandment is or the first great commandment is? You shall love the Lord your God. With all your heart with all your soul with all your mind and with all your strength. And what is the second great commandment? You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Now, these two things are always tied together. If you do not love the Lord your God with all your hearts or mind and strength, you don't actually love your neighbor properly. Because you're supposed to love your neighbor as one who has made in the image of God. And the greatest part of loving your neighbor is Desiring and helping him in the knowledge of God and love unto him.

Knowing his love unto us and? And loving him back. And so it is impossible properly to love your neighbor without loving God. But. If you don't love your neighbor, you also can't say that you love God. For your neighbor was made in God's image. How can you say you love God when you despise the one who is made in His Image?

No. If you say that you love God or think that you love God, but you despise or hate your neighbor, what you love is? Some, something you've imagined or devised in your mind, but not the true and living God. Because the true and living God is the one in Whose image your neighbor was created.

Well, just as in. The great Commandments, the first and second great commandment, loving God and loving neighbor. Go together. Uh, so also in this particular commandment. Now the place that we really hear about. This is in James chapter 3, which we've already referred to a couple of places where it says no man can tame the tongue.

It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison. That we bless our God and Father. And whether we curse men. Who have been made in the similitude. Another word for image. And the similitude likeness of God. Out of the same mouth. Proceed blessing. And cursing. My brethren. These things ought not to be served.

Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree my brethren bear olives or a grapevine bear figs? No spring yields both salt water and fresh. When we moved to the South. One of the things we would hear sometime. Sometimes with particularly a younger child.

A younger child would speak in what we learned in the South to call an ugly manner. Uh, someone would say to him, and usually it was a hymn, although.

Uh, the Lord have mercy on us, even the fairer and gentler. Sex is now quite crude and crass, and how they talk often.

God, have mercy. But someone would say to the young man. I hope you don't kiss your mama with that mouth. Well, James is saying. Something that's similar in style, but infinitely greater in intensity isn't. That if we? If we demean or attack or curse? Our neighbor, or even worse, our brother.

That God the Holy Spirit here in James chapter 3 says, I hope you aren't planning on praising your God with that mouth. I hope you aren't planning on praising your father with that mouth. So you see by the logic with which the Holy Spirit applies that this commandment in that particular context, and we see that logic in tying the two tables of the law, which we've been doing all the way through.

The purpose of words in second place, how the eighth commandment leads to the ninth commandment, the scripture says. A good name is better than great riches. But it is so easy. To steal someone's good name. By the way, we speak doesn't even have to be with a lie. Can just be with.

Insinuating implications. Refraining. Uh, from? From saying something and implying in a meaningful way? Our hearts. Uh, so wicked, and one of the things we desire most of all in our fleshliness is to be praised because we put ourselves in the place of God. And the one who was obsessed with his own praise rather than Desiring the Lord's praise how easy it is for us then.

How easy it is. For you. To use your mouth as an ever so subtle instrument of manipulation. And thus steal, that which the scripture says is better than great riches. Uh, more culpable. And.

Uh, more culpable and more evil than if you had learned how to get on your computer and hack into their bank account and drain their Investments. And yet, how often? We do this without feeling a tinge of guilt. About it. Well, may the Lord the Holy Spirit apply to us.

The remembering of his law and the opening of that law. Uh. Uh, in the preaching, may he write its truth on our hearts so that we will be afflicted in our conscience when we use our mouth that way. Uh, it is a dreadful way of stealing wealth. It's by whispering or direct slandering exaggeration of things partial truths, withholding praise, or credit where the praise and credit is due.

We do this because of envy and pride and ambition. And so we see. Uh, the logic, even in the flow of the eighth commandment into the ninth Amendment. Well, we've considered. The purpose of our words? Being led to do so. By the way, the Holy Spirit opens and applies.

This particular commandment in James 3, we've considered how the eighth commandment leads into the ninth. And then in the last place, and this is especially expanding upon our Imaging God with our words. God is the great speaker, and so when we want to know what good speech looks like, we imitate him.

And the first thing that we remember here is that as Titus 1, 2 says, God cannot lie. Liars, of course, are among the, uh. Among those who are cast into the Lake of Fire in the Book of Revelation, Liars go to hell. And that's because it's a lake that's prepared for the devil and his angels.

And the devil is not only a liar, Jesus says, but he is the father of it. So we have the father of truth, telling the one who cannot lie Titus 1, verse 2, and we have the one who when he lies he speaks from his own, and people have variously translated that speaks his own language, speaks out of his own character.

Has a corner on the lying Market. All of the law shares of lying belong to him, and so one of the great ways that we must imitate God who cannot lie. Is by the preservation and promotion of Truth. Our God only tells the truth. In fact. Lying is the way to.

Fall into the Trap of imitating Satan. He is a liar and the father of it. But why is it that we lie? Well. Uh, we lie because we don't love God. And because we don't love our neighbor. But especially, we lie because we don't trust God. We view truth, not something as being from God, and always for our good, because it's from him.

But rather, we often view truth as something that is inconvenient or dangerous might get you killed. Might get you despised? Might lose you some. Some property, some wealth. Uh, and rather than telling the truth, because God is a truth teller, and we entrust ourselves entirely to him. What happens in our unbelief is we start to think that the outcome depends upon us.

As soon as we start manipulating the outcome. We are ready to lie. Because lying becomes a way of obtaining the outcome that we want. But God doesn't need us to lie. In order to produce the proper outcome. God demands that we tell the truth. And relieve the outcome. To him.

In conclusion, then. Uh, we remember the scripture that tells us that what we're describing here aren't just lessons in understanding how to image God and how to behave with our mouths toward him and towards others. What comes out of our mouth? The scripture tells us overflows from our heart.

And so, what comes out of our mouth exposes us and gives us opportunity to be exposed before God and to confess our sin to find the extent to which we still need to put the old man to death and to be conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ, but praise God.

We may Rejoice that Jesus always overflowed truth from his mouth. Praise of God, edifying words, sometimes hard words. But always edifying words. And we praise Him for what overflowed from his mouth. And we trust in him to be our righteousness. Rejoicing that as incurable as our tongues are, no man can tame the tongue.

Yet, there is one man, the god man who perfectly used his tongue. You belong to God. In Jesus Christ, you are counted before him as if you had never slept with your tongue once. I know that many of you. Have. Not sure if trauma is the right word, but the memory of things that you have said and the ways that you have said them even many years ago still haunts you?

But it ought not haunt you before the Lord. Because you are counted and accepted with God based upon Christ and therefore have Christ has used his tongue. And not only that, the main thing about you, if you are a Christian. Is not what God has saved you from, although he's much glorified for that praise God.

But the main thing is what he has saved you unto, and he is conforming you to his son. And so, as you. As you do what, no man can do. The whole Christian Life is impossible. James 3 isn't saying, well, no man can tamed the tongue. So let's speak, however.

We want. The whole Christian Life is impossible, but the whole Christian life is also. Absolutely certain. Uh, to end in success. You will one day use your mouth perfectly, as Christ has always used his mouth perfectly. And so, trusting in him

and employing the means of his grace as you put your sin to death, you may do so in Hope rather than frustration and Desperation.

So, praise and trust Jesus. Trust in Jesus for what overflowed from his mouth and then praise and pursue Jesus for what will ultimately? Only overflow from your mouth. Amen, praise God. Let's pray.

Thank you, Father, for giving your son to be our righteousness, that he who is the word you made to be flesh. But not fleshly. Like, we are. Uh, and we pray that you would forgive us for his sake. And that you would give us of his spirit that we would think and feel and use our mouths.

In a manner that imitates and comes from your son, our Lord Jesus, through whom we ask it. Amen.