

## NOTES

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

**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. 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, 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. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 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. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on 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."

## COMMENTARY

**Bear False Witness** | While this has often been interpreted casually as a command against lying, this law has a more specific setting in mind: trial courts! Bearing false witness is more akin to character assassination, lying under oath, or false accusations.

This doesn't mean lying is condoned in the Scriptures, however. Deceit, dishonesty, and distorting the truth are all condemned. God's people get to know and speak truth that sets us free. We no longer have to be afraid of what's true because of the gospel. Therefore, in every area of our lives - including the courtroom! - we get to be a people of the truth who bear a true testimony about Jesus Christ.

**Surrounding Cultures** | The Code of Hammurabi addresses those who give false testimony. Based on those laws, false witnesses / accusers were to receive the punishment that the defendant *would have* received had they been found guilty.

**Why False Testimony Is Wrong** | If you consider what trials would have been like in ancient Israel, the kinds of evidence available today are quite different! Security cameras had not yet been invented. Forensic science wasn't a thing. Paper trails and cell tower triangulation wasn't possible. In other words, witness testimony in trials was crucial. Credibility was key.

So if it was common practice among a community of people to bear false witness in order to secure a desired verdict, they could never be assured that justice was being served. Those with less connections, less status, or less resources would most likely get the short end of the stick regularly.

God calls his people (then and now!) to be an honest community built on truth and justice in a way that bears witness to his own unique holiness.

## OBSERVE SCRIPTURE.

Read Ex. 23:1-3 and Deut. 19:15-21. What is required of witnesses?

| Why do requirements exist? What can happen due to false testimony?

| What would happen to someone who *brought* false testimony? Why?

Read Matthew 18:15-17. What role do witnesses play in the church?

| Why would the command to not bear false witness be important here?

Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:8. How does Paul explain the church's role in knowing and deciding justice *inside* the church? ...*outside* of it?

| What is Paul calling the church to do beyond *not* bearing false witness?

## SEE YOURSELF.

When are you most tempted to omit, deny, or change the truth?

| Why? What's the worst thing that could happen if you were honest?

| On the flip side, what's the cost of being dishonest? Which is worse?

What false things have been said about you? What was the impact?

## BEHOLD GOD.

Mark 14:55-65. How did false testimony play a role in Jesus' death?

| Read John 5:30-47. Who and what has borne witness about Jesus?

| Read Luke 21:8-13 and 24:44-49. How are we now Jesus' witness?

Read Romans 8:31-34. How does the gospel speak to the spiritual accusations of sin and Satan makes against you? ...against others?

| How does this free and equip you to be truthful no matter the cost?