



December 30, 2022

One of the Most Broken of the Ten

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

For many, life goes on as normal in this world around us. However, for those who yield their lives to God and strive to obey Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth, life isn't normal.

Someone asked me a day or so ago, "With so many unlawful things uncovered, why doesn't there seem to be any leaders being indicted and resigning here in the U.S.?"

That's a question that deserves an answer.

One of the most broken of God's Ten Commandments is the 9th Commandment, "*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*" (Ex. 20:16) This is repeated in the restating of the command in Deut. 5:20. We hear the spin on the so-called news programs that miss-state and exaggerate and even obviously lie about events and statements made by individuals. In the political wars and skirmishes it seems that everything is fair game and telling falsehoods and taking things out of context is almost expected and taken for granted. Some say "politics is a blood sport!" It should not be this way.

Allegations of sexual assault have abounded over the years. Some of them have been documented as to having taken place. Others are simply made with no substantiation or proof of any kind. There is a tendency to pronounce those accused as guilty until proven innocent. Accusers can have various motives for bringing forth accusations. Seeking monetary compensation, seeking publicity, getting revenge, getting power and control over someone, etc. can all be factors. I know that there are real victims of sexual and other abuse and the perpetrators

of this abuse should be made to admit their crimes and atone for them or suffer consequences. It can be challenging when it is a "she said" versus a "he said" situation even in dealing with marital conflicts and conflicts between family and church members.

Our loving God wants to promote right relationships and healing in relationships among human beings. When we give in to over-reactions, inaccurate labeling, jumping to erroneous conclusions, imputing motives, jumping in before hearing the matter completely etc. these are all forms of bearing false witness.

Yielding to behaviors that hurt relationships and create barriers and sow ill are condemned in the Scriptures. *"These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him . . . A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren."* (Proverbs 6:16, 19) This is a strong statement and a warning! When humans make themselves an enemy of the LORD, the fruits are bad in their lives and the lives of those they influence. All too often sowing discord has become the norm in various parts of society.

A mature person will evaluate what is said and try to sort out truth from error. The apostle Paul speaks to this, *"that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--"* (Ephesians 4:14-15)

There is a real need to resist these common trends in society and to refrain from spreading rumors and allegations and/or engaging in rumor mongering. Will our words promote love, or ill will and defamation? Paul also instructed the disciples, *"Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another."* (Eph. 4:25)

The laws governing ancient Israel involved seeking truth and exposing false witnesses. Deut. 19:15-19: *"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. 16 "If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, 17 "then both men in the controversy shall*

stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. 18 "And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, 19 "then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you."

We need the approach of really seeking truth to be used more often in our courts, and the court of public opinion.

There is a warning about the tendency of people to believe lies and sensational displays, especially for those living in the last days. *"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie."* (2 Thess. 2:9-11) We need to continually seek the truth and separate truth from lies and deceptions. Then we'll be armed with the tools and approach to confront and reject the lies that will assault us in the future and sadly will lead many astray. May we diligently be making sure we do not break God's entire Ten Commandments and being acutely aware of this one so commonly broken in this world we live in.

Some thoughts to consider as we near the end of another week, and look forward to God's Sabbath. Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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