***Lights in the World - PH52-02  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:16***

This is our study of lights in the world, section number 28. We are studying Philippians 2:14-16 via Exodus 20:1-17. The ninth moral principle, which we have been studying, forbids giving false testimony before a judge. This is known generally as perjury. In the broader sense, we have pointed out that this principle forbids slander; slanted news reporting; misleading advertising; and, lying in general. The reason for this is that perjury undermines the whole system of justice in a free nation, and it is actually viewed in the Bible as an act of blasphemy against God.

We find the principle of true witness established for us in such passages as Deuteronomy 19:15, where we read, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins; at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established."

This passage is a general declaration that witnesses are required. These are eyewitnesses, not hearsay witnesses. Eyewitnesses who can testify to what they have actually seen and actually heard are required for a judge (a court of law) to be able to do its business of dispensing justice.

The psalmist recognized the helplessness of a person who is confronted with the testimony of false witnesses. Psalm 35:9: "And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord. It shall rejoice in His salvation. All my bones shall say, 'Lord, who is like unto you, who delivers the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoils him. False witnesses did rise up. They laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul'."

There is nothing that is so destructive to a person's soul as to have somebody bear false witness; to be falsely accused; to have things said about you that are not true; or, to be attacked in a way that you do not deserve to be attacked, or as the result of your kindness. That's what the psalmist here was decrying. The book of Proverbs, which is the epitome of divine viewpoint, repeatedly condemns the violation of the ninth moral principle. Proverbs again and again says this (Proverbs 6:19, Proverbs 12:17, Proverbs 14:5, Proverbs 25:18, Proverbs 19:28, Proverbs 14:25, Proverbs 21:28). The book of Proverbs condemns false testimony.

**Ways of Giving False Testimony**

In order to make this practical, I want to try to reduce this to some of the common ways, again, that you and I can be guilty of false testimony. We want to conclude our study of this principle as it relates to courts and to the law. But first of all, since a judge has to have a true testimony, here are some of the ways that we can give false testimony or that we get into the habit of giving false testimony.

1. The first one is the false testimony that comes of **malice**. In Exodus 23:1, this is the point of condemnation when it says, "Thou shalt not raise a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." An unrighteous witness means in the sense of being a malicious witness; that is, spreading falsehood that has been invented with the distinct purpose of doing injury to somebody. The Bible, for this reason, tells us in Proverbs 20:19 that you should not associate with a gossip. If you find somebody, whether it's a believer or an unbeliever, who is a gossip who deals in malicious talk, the Bible says you should cut yourself off from that individual. Just don't associate. Find yourself other people to include in the circle of your acquaintances and of your associations, but cut off from the person who is a malicious gossip.

The apostle Paul associates malicious gossip with idlers and busybodies (1 Timothy 5:13). These are people who have nothing to do. They are people who violate the privacy of other people's priesthood who are poking their noses in other people's business and are malicious gossips. So a malicious gossip (a malicious slanderer) is the first way of violating the ninth moral principle.

1. A second way of giving false testimony is of **fear**. A false witness can escape the consequences of an act by giving a testimony which is not true. We have seen that in government circles. When the Watergate burglars were caught, a ripple of fear rolled through the highest echelons (we now realize) of the American government. For now, something had taken place which could expose illegality within the Department of Justice itself, and under the auspices of the head of the department. So out of fear, false testimony was given. Why? In order to cover the tracks of the falsehood.

This begins in childhood. This is what every kid does when his parent catches him doing something wrong. Out of fear of admitting that he's guilty, he lies about it, and he gives false testimony to his mother. His mother says, "Have you been in the jelly jar?" He says, "No, I haven't," as he wipes it off of his mouth and onto his clothes. He, out of fear, will insist on lying, or giving false testimony. It begins in childhood; it will continue into adulthood; and, there's only one thing that stops it. That is when you build into your soul a spiritual maturity structure. When you get a spiritual maturity structure, you finally come to the position where you are able to act upon the principle that the truth is what you deal with all the time. You don't have to remember what you said. You are acting in accordance to the principles of the Word of God. When you do follow the principle of false testimony out of fear, then you have the nagging fear of being trapped in the future in your own lie.

1. A third way of giving false witness is that of **carelessness**–indifference to the accuracy of your remarks. This is something that comes home to all of us. This is what causes a wife to keep interrupting her husband while he's telling a story, and to correct the details of what he has been saying, because he's padding the story. He's making his part look better than it was. He's building up his exploits, and making himself look fantastically better. People do this all the time. Sloppy reporting in your children is a thing that should be immediately dealt with because children are prone to make this kind of building up of their exploits–this kind of making themselves look better. It's just carelessness. Sometimes you don't even do it deliberately. Sometimes you just want to hold the attention of your crowd and make a bigger impression. But you make it look bigger and you make it more impressive, and people say, "No kidding?" What you're looking for is the pupils or their eyes to dilate. So you expand the role. That is carelessness, and it is giving false testimony.
2. Another one very closely related to that is that of **boasting**. This is deliberate. It is telling the personal experiences in an exaggerated way to put ourselves in a more heroic light. We say we did something, or we say we said something, which really what we mean is, "This is what I wish I had said on that occasion." Maybe it's some situation in which you're scared to death, and you get out by the skin of your teeth. Somebody says, "Weren't you scared?" And you say, "Not really. I thought about faith rest, and I just faith rested it with the Lord, and I really wasn't afraid. After it was all over, I got a little afraid, thinking back on it." "Thinking back on it"–that sounds good. That kind of courageous personality is boasting. It's giving false testimony. You knew you were scared. You could tell you were scared because you were so scared that your hair was falling out. Yet you wanted to make the impression that you were all calm and collected about it. Beware of expanding your exploits.
3. Another one is false testimony for **profit**. It's not too hard to understand. This is the high pressure salesman technique. This is advertising a product falsely in order to make a sale. Success in business which is sought through lies soon results in the loss and the ruination of your business. So there is a great deal of falsehood that is conveyed in the way of false testimony simply for personal profit.
4. Another way of giving false testimony that comes under this commandment is **silence**–the false testimony of silence. An easy way for you to avoid trouble is not to speak up about something you know. You don't get involved. Or better yet, if you've got a testimony to give that could have a telling effect, you make a deal with the other side and say, "I won't talk if you come through." That is lying by silence. That is a violation of the ninth moral principle through silence, equally condemned with giving a false testimony in the Old Testament. Leviticus 5:1 specifically addresses itself to this kind of violation of the ninth moral principle. Moses says, "And if a soul sins, and hears the voice of oath, and is a witness, whether he had seen or known of it, if he does not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity." The Bible says if you have been party to something as a witness, and you do not come forth and declare what you know, then you have lied by silence.
5. Another way is the false testimony of **half-truth**, and a lot of us justify ourselves on the basis of the half-truth technique. It is possible to tell the truth in such a way as to give a false impression. I heard of a man one time who was applying for employment. On the application form, it asked about his parents–living or deceased. He came to his father, and he marked deceased. His father had been hanged as a horse thief. The next question was, "How did your father die?" He was applying for a position in a bank. He thought, "If I tell him that my father died as a horse thief, they'll never hire me." So instead he wrote on his application form, "My father was attending a public function when the platform upon which he was standing collapsed and he was killed." Did he tell the truth or not? It was just as true as could be. That's exactly what happened. That's what happened to his dad. He stood right there; the platform collapsed; and, he got killed. Well, this is what is violating the ninth moral principle by half-truths, and we like to be cute and do it all the time.

Using a partial truth as the setting for falsehood makes the falsehood very hard to spot. The cults do this all the time. That's why you have noticed that the cults will often be very exact in areas like prophecy. You will say, "Man, that is fantastic how true they are and how accurate they are." Yet, there is a half-truth (a partial truth) which is simply the setting for a core of extreme falsehoods (false doctrine). That is false testimony. That's why the cults themselves are under the condemnation and the judgment of God–because of the violations in their whole setup of this principle. In the New Testament church, this principle was violated by those who were taking the doctrine of grace and distorting it into a principle of license to do whatever they wanted it to be. Christian love is often today distorted into a sentimentality which is devoid of doctrine. That's a half-truth.

1. Another way of violating this principle is by **false testimony to yourself**. This is the hardest of all kinds of testimonies to be honest with. How many times have you looked into a mirror and lied to yourself? This is the most natural inclination of our old sin natures. We want to see ourselves in a certain idealized way. We want to put an idealized interpretation upon something we have done or said. We justify in ourselves what we soundly condemn in other people. Most of the self-deception that you and I often deal in is this deception upon ourselves. It's a major reason that people with bad practices; bad attitudes; and, bad habits can't change. When you confront the person with a bad practice or a bad attitude, he evades admitting what he has done or what he is by justifying it; by realizing it; or, by simply passing over it and rationalizing it away, so, consequently, the person never can get rid of this thing that works against him. This is the person who, when he gets into a debate and he finds that he has made a foolish statement or taken an idiotic position, then goes off on a tangent in order to justify his idiocy. That is false testimony to yourself, and it violates this principles.
2. We can also **lie (give false testimony) to God**. We try to conceal things from God. How often have we put on a front of spirituality because we think that this way we'll gain points with God, and gain His favor and blessing. How many times have we done something (like give money to a cause) because we love the Lord's work, and we want to see the thing go on, but in the back of our mind, we have the idea that if I do this, God will come through for me on this business deal I'm cooking up. That is a false testimony to God. The idiotic thing about that is that the omniscience of God knows exactly what you're doing, and it's not going to get you anywhere. Yet, we follow this folly all the time of trying to deceive an omniscient God.

So here are nine ways that are very practical, commonplace experiences that all of us face day-by-day, and they are ways in which we are guilty of violating the ninth commandment. When we do this, we have created the condition that makes it impossible for a judge to be able to dispense justice in a court of law. Let's look at judges for a moment as we tie up this principle.

**Judges**

Civil order ultimately rests upon the decisions of judges. When people have a disagreement between themselves, the time ultimately has to come when a judge has to say, "You're right, and you're wrong. Here's the disposition of this case." Judicial decisions have to be based upon the testimony of true witnesses if justice is to be served. A citizen cannot take the law into his own hands and dispense his own justice. That's what the mafia does. That's why the mafia will not admit to being murderers. Why? Well, because they'll say to you, "We don't murder people who don't deserve to be murdered. When we murder somebody, it's because he's got it coming. We are dispensing justice. Therefore, it can't be called murder." That is a situation of citizens taking the law into their own hands, and bypassing the decisions of a neutral party. Justice flows from an impartial source separate from those who are involved in the conflict, and thus separate from their feelings and their opinions.

The decision of a judge, however, has to be backed by the power of the state. That's what we have in Romans 13:4. This is the recognition that the state should enforce the decision of the courts. Paul says, "For he (that is, the magistrate) is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid, for he doesn't bear the sword (the power of execution) in vain. For he is a minister of God, and avenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil." So the Bible recognizes that the state has the right to execute the orders and the decisions of the judge properly arrived at under the testimony of true witnesses. The decision of the judge may not always be to your liking, but you don't then take the thing into your own hands. You still must appeal your case within the confines of the court structure.

One thing that is important to realize that the Bible teaches us concerning judges is that they are the representatives of God. Romans 13:1-5 declare that very thing to us. This passage declares to us that rulers and the dispensers of judges are a terror to those who do evil, but that they have been appointed by God. They have been ordained by God. So Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore, whosoever resists the power resists the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment." So the Bible is clear that a judge should act upon true testimony, and then his decisions are to be viewed as an act of God's. The judge, in other words, is not the representative of the most powerful or the most influential party.

The book of Deuteronomy, in declaring to the Jews how they would conduct themselves in legal matters within the land, made a very special point of this. Deuteronomy 1:17: "Moses said to the people, 'You shall not respect persons in judgment, but you shall hear the small as well as the great. You shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's.'" The judge is acting in behalf of God. "The cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I'll hear it." Ultimately, the Supreme Court in Israel at the time of Moses was Moses himself. So the Bible teaches us, first of all, that legal processes (courts) are ordinances of God.

Another important thing to realize is that a judge must operate on the testimony of witnesses only–verifiable and corroborated testimony. Also, he must recognize, and we must recognize, that the judge acts in behalf of Almighty God. So when the judge passes down a decision under those conditions, he has spoken for God. Therefore, to resist; to hold in contempt; or, to reject what a properly constituted of court of law has decided is to be resisting God Himself. A lot of people apparently have never learned that. If the judge is not fair, and he represents an interest group (a class; a political party; or, an ideology), rather than people and justice, then the courts become a farce.

This is what you have under state communism. Where the courts actually represent the state, the state seeks to impose its will upon people through the courts. And, it does. The purges under Stalin were some of the classic examples where the court was told by Stalin, "We want to get rid of so-and-so, so-and-so, and so-and-so. You try them; you judge them; and, you bring in the guilty verdict. The courts there are dispensers not of justice of God, but they are dispensers of the will of men.

That's why it's important to recognize that a judge is representing the power of God. He is not to be viewed as representing human power. That is a very dangerous attitude. The judge who views himself as a representative of people is open to bribes because he will then seek to take advantage of that position. He has no fear. Judges appointed should possess the divine viewpoint of the Bible and the morality of the Bible to execute justice. However, judges usually reflect the level of morality and the spiritual outlook of the society.

So the Bible is full of warnings to judges against bribes, perjury, and miscarriages of justice. In the Old Testament, we have many passages that warn the judge that he is God's representative and to act accordingly (Exodus 23:6-8, Leviticus 19:15, Leviticus 24:22, Deuteronomy 1:12-18, Deuteronomy 16:18-20, Deuteronomy 25:1, Deuteronomy 27:25). The people of Israel understood this.

**Courts**

Then there is the matter of courts. In the Old Testament, the civil courts were attended by the priests. Priests were attached to the courts because the court, like the judge, was viewed as a religious institution. Not only was the judge God's representative, but the court was God's instrument of dispensing God's viewpoint. So the lawyers that we read about in the Bible were actually men who were experts in the Law of Moses. They were experts in the Old Testament laws, guidelines, and morality. When citizens do not view the courts as divine establishments, then the enforcement of law has to be by sheer terror and sheer coercion which, again, is the case in the communist system. There is no response on the part of the individual that this is an institution of God that is dealing with me.

We have a series of courts (lesser courts; higher courts; and, ultimately, to a Supreme Court) in order to appeal cases up. This was an idea that was introduced into Israel by Jethro who was Moses's father-in-law. You can read about that in Exodus 18:13-26. It was introduced at the time simply because Moses was finding himself overwhelmed with the cases that were being brought to him. So a system of graded courts was established.

We learn something about court procedures from the Bible on the basis of the guidelines that the Lord gave to Israel. For one thing, court had to be held in open session. The Jews were forbidden to hold secret trials. For this reason, we read about the courts being held at the city gate. This meant that it was out in the open public. There were no secret trials. Deuteronomy 21:19, Deuteronomy 22:15, Amos 5:12-15, and Zachariah 8:16 all decry secret trials. The tyrant is the one who wants to run secret trials.

Also, punishments in the Old Testament were public. They were not allowed to execute a person privately. It had to be a public execution. We have come away from that in this country. The execution is not so public, and consequently, neither is the terror upon those who have taken the same step and made the same mistake as, perhaps, the murderer or the kidnapper or the child molester. The punishment is secret. It's not public. Others are not able to be warned by that. But the Scriptures took the position that when a person was executed, it was going to be a public event, and all would be thereby warned of the consequences of such an act.

The courts had to and did keep written records. We have this Job 31:35. There were records of the charges and records of the proceedings, so they could go back and see what was declared. We think we're so modern, and we're so updated, and we're so smart in what we do in our day. But the truth of the matter is that most of what we have learned in the matters of dispensing justice was because we read the Bible and we saw how God, when he ruled over a theocracy (a nation over which He was the ruler and king), how He guided His people so that justice was commonplace, and the inevitable event.

**Contempt of Court**

Also, contempt for court was forbidden. We have this in Exodus 22:28. You could not hold a court in contempt. It was God's representative. You could not hold the judge in contempt. But if you rejected the court and the actions of the court, Deuteronomy 17:12-13 declared that you were to be executed. Now, we're not that severe with contempt of court today, but in the Old Testament, contempt of court was viewed as a capital crime.

The witnesses had to take an oath (Exodus 22:10-11). Of course, we've already indicated that the penalty for perjury, after you did take an oath, was whatever would have been the consequence to the person had the judge acted upon your false testimony. This included the situation where if the judge, upon your false testimony, would have executed the accused, then you as a perjurer would have been taken out and executed. So people gave a second thought before they were ready to give false testimonies. If exposed, the penalty would be placed upon them (Leviticus 6:1-7).

**The Testimonies of Witnesses**

Some of what the Jews did (some of their procedures of court) we have learned from the records which are an interpretation of the rabbis called the Mishnah (the writings of the Mishnah). The Mishnah had some very interesting factors because it directed that witnesses had to be interrogated separately, and they could not give any hearsay evidence. The witnesses were interrogated separately, and then their testimonies were matched. If they found that they contradicted each other, both witnesses and testimony were thrown out. This was why they had such a problem at the secret trial of Jesus (which they should not have run) of getting a case against Him because they had to follow the practice of interrogating witnesses separately, and they couldn't get them to agree. They were contradicting each other. Consequently, they had to throw out the testimony.

This is exactly the thing we do today, and it is the soundest kind of procedure. In the Old Testament, cases (disputes) could be appealed to a court above the one that had judged you if it was a lower court. The Supreme Court was generally a person like Moses; the judges of a nation; or, ultimately, later when they had a king, it was the king. That was who the supreme judge was. It was the king. The most important function of the chief executive, as a matter of fact (that of the king) was acting as the final court of appeals. If you study American history, you will discover that in the early days of our country, there was a great deal of confusion as to what the Supreme Court was supposed to do. The reason for that was because of that biblical heritage of those people who viewed the chief executive of the nation as the final judge.

For a long time, the president of the United States was simply viewed as the chief judge. He was not the person who was supposed to institute programs and come up with solutions. His job of exercising the veto was to sit there and watch Congress, and every time Congress did something, he would go through the law books, and maybe say, "That's wrong. I veto this bill." He didn't care whether the program was good or whether he approved it or anything like that. His job was checking the law books as president and seeing where the Congress had done something which was illegal. Finally, our government shifted over to where final decisions in matters of dispute were delivered to the Supreme Court. Then the presidency changed, and the whole nature of our government changed. Incidentally, that concept is still preserved in his pardon power. That's why the president can override everybody and everything by simply declaring a pardon. It is in his power. Why? Because this is a holdover from the ancient view that the ultimate judge in any nation is the king–the chief executive.

**Solomon**

So it was with Israel. You have all heard the story of Solomon. You've heard that when Solomon came to power as a young man, God said to him, "Now, Solomon, you ask me for anything that you want, and I will give you that thing." All of you know that Solomon asked to be a smart boy. Usually when we think of Solomon, the parents say, "Now, you see, Solomon was a wonderful boy. He said, 'Make me smart in arithmetic; geography; social studies; Bible; and, all that stuff.'" We think that Solomon became a man of great intellect and great academic power. Well, you're wrong. That isn't what Solomon asked God for. Solomon didn't ask God just for smarts.

Solomon asked God to make him the world's greatest Supreme Court. That's what Solomon asked. He asked for wisdom to discern justice. He put it in point-blank words. He says, "God, who is great enough to rule so great a people as You have? Now once I become king, I have the final say. I am the ultimate judge. So, dear God, make me a man of fantastic discernment. Make me a Supreme Court such as the world has never seen." His fame spread on the basis of discernment that he demonstrated when cases were brought to him that lower courts simply didn't know what in the world to do with, like the women who claimed the same baby. That's what Solomon asked for.

1 Kings 3:9 says, "Give, therefore, your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this great people?" Verse 11: "And God said to him, 'Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life; neither have you asked for riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of you enemies; but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice.'" That puts a whole different light upon what young Solomon was asking for. And God says, "You will indeed be the greatest judge that has ever lived. You will be so smart; you will have such insight; and, you will be able to put your finger on justice just automatically, Solomon, as long as you are in fellowship."

Later on, he fell out of fellowship. Most people remember Solomon not for his justice, but for the fact that he had 1,000 wives. They remember him for the fact that the Queen of Sheba said, "I cannot believe what I hear about this man." So she comes all the way on a long journey to visit him. And after she watches him; listens to him; attend his courts; and, hears his decisions, she says, "I want to tell you that everything that I've heard about you is not only true, but the half has not been told about you. That's how great your mind is. That's how good you are as a judge." That's what his fame rested on–not all of his wives; all of his wealth; his building projects; and, all those things which indeed he did do, and which were fabulous in themselves.

So Solomon's wisdom inspired confidence in the people and in justice. Under his rule, the nation prospered fantastically. As a matter of fact, we use the term "court," and when you think about a king, what is it that a king holds? He holds court. But usually people think about a king's court as a social function and as a place of social meeting. But the very word that we use, again, indicates to us the biblical view that the supreme judge of the land, the final magistrate, is the chief executive–the king, whoever he may be.

**Speedy Trial**

Another thing that the Bible laid forth in the matter of court procedure is speedy trial. In Israel 7:26, King Artaxerxes is directing Ezra, giving him instructions for the return of the Jews to Palestine after their years of captivity in Babylon. And one of the things that King Artaxerxes advises Ezra on as good administrative procedure is speedy trial. Have the trial and execute the punishments, with no fooling around. We are sometimes shocked how, in the old west, somebody would be tried for stealing a horse. As a horse thief, he'd be convicted on the evidence, and they would take him out, and five minutes later, he'd be dead. Well, we try to give a little more leeway now to be sure that we as humans have not made an error. But that was not exactly wrong.

The principle of Scripture is speedy trial (not rotting away in a dungeon someplace), and then speedy execution. Of course, in the Old Testament, the Jews didn't have prisons. Even though Artaxerxes here mentioned imprisonment, that was alien to the Jewish system. The Jews did not have prisons. The Jews dispensed justice immediately in one way or another.

So a true social order views the decisions of a court, properly constituted and properly arrived at, as the decisions of God. That's our position as believers. Therefore, we need a pure testimony to know the truth as God knows the truth. If judges do not act in keeping with the laws of God and the principles of the Word of God, then they will act according to the views of men. That is a satanic viewpoint.

**Human Frailties and Weaknesses**

There is one additional way of false testimony that I want to stress again that we've touched upon. That is the specific exaggeration of human frailties and human weaknesses. This is one of the principle violations, perhaps, of the ninth moral principle. How often have you and I been guilty of demanding sinless perfection of the people that we deal with? 1 John 1:8 declares to us the fallacy of that attitude: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Okay, we have sin: your husband has sin; your wife has sin; your children have sin; and, your associates in every phase of life have sin. Therefore, they have frailties and they have weakness. To exaggerate those is to lie before God–to bear false testimony. It may be to exaggerate it to others; to exaggerate it to yourself; or, in any other direction. The point is that exaggerating frailties of other people violates this principle.

Here's the reason we do this. Here you are, and here is somebody else. There is an old sin nature in this person. You have an old sin nature. Now, when you meet this gal over here hear that has an old sin nature that is compatible with you, then everything is happy. She's smiling and you're smiling. But if you find that your old sin nature reacts against her old sin nature, then you're no longer smiling. You're grim and you're indignant. One of the ways that you want to dispose of this person is by exaggerating his frailties. Why? Because his old sin nature is not compatible with your old sin nature.

Now, one of the things you want to be careful about when you marry somebody is to explore their old sin nature, and find one that is compatible to yours. This is because when you both decide to operate on your old sin natures, you might as well at least get in stride. There is no misery like old sin natures that are fighting one another. For you to find someone whose old sin nature displeases you and who rubs raw against your old sin nature, the natural reaction is to eliminate him. How? Exaggerate his weaknesses. And if he doesn't have weaknesses, make him think he has weaknesses.

This is like when you step on somebody's foot, and you say, "Oh, I'm sorry." They say, "That's alright." Then you add, "That you have such big feet." Now they look down. Now they think they've got a weakness, and they're going to act on something that you've made them think they have. You can exaggerate, and you can cut people down and eliminate them deliberately. That violates this commandment because you are bearing false testimony to them.

Carnal Christians, consequently, have a low tolerance level for children; for their neighbors; for their spouses; for their friends; for their church members; and, for church leaders. That is because there are carnal and they exaggerate the weaknesses of other people. This is completely against the principle of the Word of God.

Instead, Galatians 6:2-5 gives us the tender response: "Bear one another's burdens (weaknesses and shortcomings), and so fulfil the Law of Christ. For if a man thinks of himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." If you think your old sin nature is something special compared to somebody else's old sin nature, you're just kidding yourself. "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden." It is bad enough that we have weaknesses. Those are the burdens we are going to bear unless we solve those weaknesses and we resolve those shortcomings through doctrine. It is worse when somebody else takes advantage and exaggerates the weakness beyond what it is.

May I remind you of something else? Some time ago, I gave you a long list of maybe 25 to 30 characteristics that people have. We showed you how on one side, an undesirable characteristic was simply a negative expression on the part of a person which was having a self-destructive effect. But that same quality in the person, when brought under the guidance and the perspective of doctrine, becomes a positive quality. And thus the person who is a busy body, when brought under the control and the direction of doctrine, would actually be a person who has a concern for the needs of other people, and he can become a very tremendous person in searching out and accomplishing the needs of other people. A person who is arrogant may be a person who, under the control of doctrine, is a person who has a will and a self-esteem that inspires other people in a good direction. A person that you think is bossy because he is expressing a negative aspect of this quality, when brought under the control of doctrine, you may find to be the leader who will stand in the gap when all others have fallen, because he has the drive to take command. He may be a splendid commander under the direction of doctrine where he was seeming to be a tyrant before.

So you go through your mind and you think of qualities that are weaknesses that you can exaggerate as human frailties and thus bear false witness against people. You might give it a little thought and say, "What would happen to this person if doctrine took root into his thinking, and affected this quality?" Then you can usually see how it can be projected into a very valuable quality that God would bless; God would use; and, others would bless.

Principle number nine: "Thou shalt not bear false witness" in any subtle way; in any deliberate way; or, in any open way. The truth is what God operates on because He Himself is truth.

We have one more principle. It's the one that's the longest in the Hebrew, and we're going to begin that one next week.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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