

# Respecting Truth

## Lesson 31 Summary

### Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will explore the Eighth Commandment and its relation to the daily life of young people.
- The participants will examine the harm that failure to tell the truth can cause and the power that words have.

### Content Summary

1. The Eighth Commandment, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor,” includes the sins of lying, deception, hypocrisy, and slander. But the heart of the Commandment isn’t about forbidding certain acts; it is about being a person of integrity who respects and lives the truth.
2. Fortunately, by nature we are inclined toward the truth. Morally we are obliged to seek the truth, especially religious truth. And once we know what is true, we must live by it. Jesus tells us that he is the way, the truth, and the life (see John 14:6). As followers of Jesus, we are bound by the truth of the Gospel.
3. Because we as humans have a natural tendency to tell the truth, we have to be motivated to tell a lie. Some people lie to cover up something they did wrong, to avoid punishment, or to make themselves appear more important. Well-meaning people sometimes lie to avoid confronting someone with an unpleasant truth.
4. Getting away with a lie can still hurt and wound others, even if they never find out you lied to them.
5. Spreading a negative rumor about someone never serves any good purpose. And if you pass on or create a rumor or story that is not true, you are “bearing false witness against your neighbor,” an even more serious sin called calumny, or slander.
6. We are morally obligated to make reparation, or amends, for sins against the truth. Owning up to our lies may be more difficult than telling the truth in the first place. But we must try to undo the harm we have caused.
7. Sometimes it is inappropriate to reveal the truth to someone who asks for it. The welfare and safety of others, respect for privacy, and the common good are sufficient reasons for being silent or discreet about the truth.
8. Sometimes confidentiality requires secrecy.
9. Telling the truth is as important in society as it is among individuals. We need to be able to trust other people in our community and beyond.

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