



YOUTH INSTRUCTION CLASS

LESSON 18: THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Introduction

What is the eighth commandment that God gave to His people? What is God protecting by the eighth commandment (Pr 22:1)?

Besides our own body (5th), our wife or husband (6th), and our property (7th), we have once more treasure which is indispensable to us, namely, our honor and good name . . . God will not have our neighbor deprived of his reputation, honor, and character any more than of his money and possessions.

- Luther's *Large Catechism*

Injuring a Person's Good Name (Reputation)

- What does it mean to "have a good name" (reputation)? Why do you think having a good reputation is important? Why do think God feels it is important enough to protect it with a commandment?
- We hurt someone else's good name when we *bear false witness* against them. *False witness is any talk about someone else that can ruin his reputation.* Often, but not always, it involves some sort of lying.

A person's good name can be injured by:

Matthew 26:59-62	(356)	Lying about someone in court
Ephesians 4:25	(359)	_____
Proverbs 11:13	(361)	_____
James 4:11	(364)	_____

- *Gossip* is "a report (often malicious) about the behavior of other people." Can you give an example of gossip? How can it hurt people?
- *Slander* is "words falsely spoken that damage the reputation of another."



- Even telling the truth about our neighbor is sinful if our intention is to hurt him or if by our words we could damage his reputation. (God does not want us to tell secrets or tattletale about someone else when doing so would hurt them. This is sometimes called *betrayal*.)
- If you see someone else sinning, should you gossip about it to others? What should you do? See Matthew 18:15-18 (373).
- Luther's *Large Catechism*: "Let this be your rule that you should not be quick to spread slander and gossip about your neighbor but admonish him privately so that he may amend. Likewise, if someone should whisper to you what this or that person has done, teach him, if he saw the wrongdoing, to go and reprove the man personally otherwise to hold his tongue . . . The individual is to be dealt with personally and not gossiped about behind his back . . . All this refers to secret sins. But where the sin is public, you may testify publicly concerning him. In such a case there is no question of slander or injustice or false witness."

For an example of a "private" sin see 2 Sam 12:1-14. For an example of a "public" sin see Mt 14:1-4.

Protecting Our Neighbor's Good Name

What can we do to protect our neighbor's reputation?

Proverbs 31:8-9 (369) _____

1 Samuel 19:4 (366) _____

1 Corinthians 13:5-7 (371) _____

- We want to use our tongues to speak only good of everyone and to cover our neighbor's sins and weaknesses.
- Luther's *Large Catechism*: "It is a particularly fine noble virtue always to put the best construction upon all we may hear about our neighbor, as long as it is not a notorious evil, and to defend him against the poisonous tongues of those who are busy wherever they can pry out and pounce on something to criticize in their neighbor, misconstruing and twisting things in the worst way."

**SPEAK WELL OF
ONE ANOTHER!**

Review Questions

1. Evaluate: It is okay to tell "white lies" or "fibs."
2. How might it be possible to bear false witness by withholding the truth from our neighbor?
3. What does it mean to "betray" our neighbor?
4. What does it mean to "slander" our neighbor?
5. What does it mean to "defend" our neighbor?
6. What does it mean to "speak well of" our neighbor?
7. How have we sinned against this commandment?
8. How did Jesus keep this commandment perfectly?

1 Peter 2:22-23 (376)

Assignment

- Memorize the Eighth Commandment with Explanation (p. 83)