

# Take It Home!

## Tall Tales

### The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.



Face it, this commandment isn't about reforming our little white lies to save our own face, it's about our participation in societal systems that can only function for the benefit of all with the truth. Whether it's the neighborhood or the courtroom, business negotiations or economic class interaction, Twitter or Facebook, the reputation and welfare of others is in our hands and God values it. We may point our fingers at others on this one, but God wants us to open our eyes to what happens even when we remain silent when others are being attacked. Luther points out in the Large Catechism that we could bring "abundant blessings" into our communities if we could only recognize the opportunity to defend, speak well, and explain. Fault finding does nothing to bring transformative grace into action. Like harnessing a horse for productive work, we are charged with harnessing our tongue to produce good for others.

### Daily Reading

Quiet your mind with some silence and then meditate on one of these texts per day with the freedom to bounce back to a text later in the week as you feel inclined.

Zechariah 8:16, 17

1 Corinthians 12:22-26

Colossians 3:8-10

James 4:11,12

Proverbs 31:8,9

Ephesians 4:15&16

### Daily Thought Direction

Let your thoughts follow the direction of one of the thought guides. Jot down your thoughts day to day so you can see the journey God is guiding. Make note of needs for praise, thanks, confession and calls for help - then have that prayer conversation.

- How are your attitudes towards people formed and influenced? Is your answer the same if it's an individual or a demographic group?
- Who is influenced by your commentary? What impact could you bring by shifting your conversation patterns to defense of others, speaking well of others, explaining in a constructive way.
- Is God calling you to evaluate your information source (news outlet, social media use, neighborhood chitchat)?
- How can you groom your children as defenders of the powerless, and teach them the art of the constructive perspective? (Hint: start with your in-house conversations and check for sarcasm and put-downs.)
- Brainstorm specific ways our society (institutions, systems, and close relationships) would be different if words were truthful, trustworthy, and helpful.

### Points to talk to God about...

confess, ask for help, thanks, praise