



## *Eighth Commandment*

We all like to be in “the know.” For many of us staying informed is critical to much of the work that we do. Social media parades the carefully curated details of our friends’ (also our “friends”) lives, giving us a picture of what’s going on in their lives, though perhaps not all that truly accurate of a picture.

**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.

At times, having this limited view of the lives of others can tempt us to want to know more in a way that can be all too easily warped. We may begin with a desire to know our friends in an honest fashion. They are our friends after all, and having friendships means knowing one another. Yet, when this desire is twisted into a desire to see the darker side of someone’s life in order to make our own lives seem better, our hearts are led into dangerous territory.

Paul instructs the Thessalonian church to watch how they speak about and to one another saying, “And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” Further, James notes that “With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.” (James 3:9-10)

In all things, we are to think the best possible of our neighbors. We are called to give them the benefit of the doubt, seeking to view their actions in the best light possible.

## *Thoughts for Reflection*

In what situations do you struggle with gossip? How can you actively seek to think and speak the best of your neighbors?