

## ‘DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS’ and ‘DO NOT COVET’

Final Week of a 5-Week Series, “Prosperity’s 10 Commandments”

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*So, there was this farmer, and he was driving his cart of vegetables to the market when he got hit head on by a truck. And he sustained some severe injuries. He was in the hospital for quite a while. And then he was suing, not only the driver, but the trucking company. And so, he was on the witness stand, and the lawyer said, "So, when the officer arrived, did they ask you how you were doing?"*

*And the farmer said, "Yes."*

*And he said, "What was your reply?"*

*"Well, I told the officer I never felt better in my life."*

*And the lawyer says, "Well, then how can you, if you said that, be now suing for some serious damages? Can you explain that?"*

*And the farmer said, "Yeah, well, when the officer arrived, you know, my horse had been thrown and my dog had been thrown and I had been thrown. And I was bleeding there in the ditch. And then I noticed the officer walked up to my horse, who had had both his legs broken and was wincing in agony. And he took out his gun, put it to his head, and put him out of his misery. And then he walked over to my dog, who had a broken back and was in a lot of pain and groaning. And he put his gun to his head and put him out of his misery. Then he walked over to me and he said, 'So how you feeling?' And I thought under the circumstances it was in my best interest to say, 'I never felt better in my life!'" [Congregants laugh]*

Alright. [Laughs]

So the ninth command is **THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR**. To bear false witness means to not lie; to not misrepresent; or to manipulate or exaggerate or create a false impression. To not bear false witness means, also, not to gossip; not to spread rumors; not to betray others. I mean, this commandment is really talking about being truthful and being honest in all of our relationships and all of our interactions.

You know, sometimes it's not easy for us to be totally honest all the time and never lie. How many people were ever asked a question, and it was uncomfortable for you to be totally honest and totally truthful? Anybody ever had that experience? You know, kind of like: "How do I look in this outfit?" [Congregants laugh] Or, "Did you like that gift I gave you for your birthday of the painting of dogs playing poker?" [Congregants laugh] Or, "Don't you think that my baby is the cutest baby that you've ever seen?"

You know, being honest -- being truthful -- is one of the things we want to talk about as we wrap up our five-week series on the Ten Commandments. You know, it was inspired by Georgiana Tree West, who was a minister; wrote the book in 1944. And she really says that the Ten Commandments are the cardinal laws: the foundational laws of how to live our lives spiritually.

And just at face value, all the things it says are powerful, important lessons for living. But we can actually go deeper spiritually. And when we understand and apply them, they actually deepen our connection and relationship with God, and they actually open our lives to the flow of God's goodness and abundance.

You know, Week #1, there was the first commandment, which is, **Thou shalt have no other gods before me** ... which really means that God is our source. That is the source of all of our good, and it means that

God should be our priority. God should be the most important thing that we turn to first -- to seek, to ask, to listen, to connect -- because all things flow from God. God is the source.

The second commandment is to **Create no graven images or idols to worship**. And even though God is our source, and all abundance comes from God, sometimes we can put other things first ... like money, thinking money is our source. That power or status -- these things will bring us joy and happiness. And it distances us from our connection to God and putting God first.

The third commandment is **Do not take the Lord's name in vain**. And that really tells us about the power of our words, you know. That God said, "Let there be light" and there was light, and shows the example that we really speak our experiences and our situations into existence by the words that we use. And the most important one we need to be careful of is the words that we attach to "I AM." Saying "*I am poor,*" or "*I am a hot mess,*" or "*I am a loser,*" really identifies the Spirit of God within us -- our "I AM" -- with a lot of negativity. And that's just not the truth! It's a misuse of that power. So we need to speak words of positivity, words of abundance, words of joy and happiness.

Then it was **Keep the Sabbath holy**. And that is saying: realize the value and the importance of rest. That even for our bodies, even for our minds, even for our spirits, there needs to be a time of quiet for renewal -- for rejuvenation in all areas of our lives, and especially our level of creativity. You know that rest is an important part. Like, we do our work and it's an important part of the creative process. We do what is ours to do, but then we hand it over to God to allow that to be done and to refrain.

And then we looked at to **Honor our mother and father**. When you think about it, our parents are clearly the first relationship we ever had, and it kind of affects all the other relationships. So to honor and to love and appreciate the role that our parents played in providing for us and giving us the foundation we need. And even if our parents weren't as good as we wanted them to be, still honor and still thank them for the role that they played in our lives.

You know, **Thou shalt not kill** is not only the obvious thing ... but the spiritual message is, not only not kill, but bring more life into life. You know, I saw a poster once and it said, "*Withholding love kills.*" That when we close our heart and consciously withhold love from others, it is deadening our experience of life. Tithing is another thing; the law of giving and receiving. As we give, we put things into motion in life and it creates more life, more increase in abundance. And when we serve others, it circulates and brings us greater connection and a greater level of joy.

And last week we looked at **Do not commit adultery**. And that is about a misuse of our -- not just sexual energy -- but our life energy. You know, sometimes we leak energy by investing it in things that just aren't healthy, aren't positive, aren't productive. And the way to cure that is to get clear how you really want to spend your energy. Get clear how you want to focus your life, your actions, your thoughts, and your intentions.

And last week we also looked at **Thou shall not steal**. You know, stealing is trying to look for something for nothing. And the truth is, that's not how life works. It is the Law of Attraction, the Law of Compensation, the Law of Cause and Effect. That we need to not try and get something for nothing. We need to work and apply the principles to attract more abundance in our lives.

Today we're going to look at commandment number nine: **THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR** and the tenth, **DO NO COVET**.

And so, in some ways I think we all tell some untruths. We all tell some lies sometimes. And the thing is: that we don't always want to own it; we try to rationalize it. "*I really wasn't lying, you know; I was just bending the truth slightly.*" [Laughs] "*You know, it was mostly true!*" Or, you know, "*It was just a little white lie!*" You know, we have all kinds of different excuses.

And sometimes we lie because we want to have a personal gain. We lie because we want to avoid getting in trouble. Sometimes we lie thinking we're protecting someone else's feelings or you know, protecting ourselves in some way.

Brad Blanton wrote a book called *Radical Honesty*, and he said that all forms of lying -- and for whatever reasons we're lying -- that all lying is harmful. All lying damages our respect and relationship for ourselves, as well as affecting the relationship and the people that we are connected to.

Interestingly, he said that all lies cause harm, but there's one type of lie that is even more harmful than we realize. And that's lies of omission. It is a lie of not telling people the truth that really should know the truth. Withholding information that's vital and important in that role -- in that relationship. That withholding it, he says, causes more damage.

But honesty and telling the truth is actually the opposite. It is healing! You know, it brings greater connection, greater awareness, greater understanding and greater closeness. And he says that, even though honesty is kind of hard or really hard, that it is always the best choice.

And so here are the things he says that improves any relationship. He says that relationships will get closer and fear with more honesty. Relationships will improve over time when honesty is practiced consistently. The quality of our friendships and associations will improve. That our mental health, as well as our physical health, will get better. We'll have less stress. We will feel better, feel better about ourselves. And we'll actually trust and feel more confident in ourselves as we are more honest. He says that, the more honest we are, the more other people will begin to trust us and the more we will live more authentically.

This commandment teaches us two things, one on the literal level and one on the spiritual level.

And so the first one is to look at our relationship and how much we practice honesty in our lives. And so the question for all of us is: Where in our lives are we not being as honest and truthful as we can be? And who in our lives is it time for us to be more honest with, whether it's our primary relationship or a family or a friend or someone in our work?

You know the realities for us, as human beings: being honest scares us to a certain level. I mean, there is a fear that the person might hate us; a fear that they might reject us; a fear that they may think less of us; or that we might look foolish or get rejected.

Now, speaking honestly with kindness and love, he says, will always lead to some positive result. Even if the relationship changes; even if there's a rough patch, you know; even if it takes some time to process, he said honesty is absolutely vital if we want to live our best life. Honesty is absolutely vital if we want to be our best self. If we want to be true to ourselves, we have to have more honesty. If we want to live more authentically, honesty needs to be there.

Joseph Sugarman wrote a book called *Success Forces*, and he says every time we're honest, you know -- every time we're honest -- he said the force will draw you towards peace, success, and happiness. And every time you lie or withhold, that that force will draw you further and further away from peace, success, and happiness.

How many people know that, if you were more honest in different areas of your life, that your life would improve and you would feel a greater sense of happiness and peace? Anybody?

And so here are the three things. Number one is: first, pay attention to where you're honest and pay attention where you have a hard time being honest. Second is: then ask yourself why. Why am I afraid to be more honest? What do I think that result is going to be? And then the third one is: to just practice being more honest in those areas that scare you, as well as practice being honest in is that don't scare

you. You know, if we all want a better life, we need to not bear false witness. We need to not be dishonest about ourselves and within our relationships and all the key areas where we interact with people.

Now, that was a literal level. Now let's look at the spiritual level. You know, spiritually, *"Do not bear false witness"* means do not buy into the appearance of lack or troubles or situations in your life that don't feel as positive or ideal as we'd like. Don't get stuck there and think life is never going to get better and there's no answer or solution for this situation. Don't ever think that things are hopeless and that our problems are too big.

And so how many people, you know, I've heard of or remember *The Man of La Mancha*, that musical? It was just like one of my favorites when I first started watching theater. It's about this old guy named Alonso Quijano. People think he's kind of nuts and kind of crazy. And he becomes this knight, dubbing himself Don Quixote de la Mancha. Anyway, he sees beauty where other people see ugliness. And they think he's crazy, but there's kind of some wisdom in what he's saying. And my favorite line is when he says to his sidekick, Sancho, *"Facts are the enemy of the truth."* [Congregants laugh]

Facts are the enemy of the truth! Sometimes we get so caught up in the facts -- in the details -- that we don't always have the perspective to focus on the higher truth. That's why Jesus said, *"Do not judge by appearances, but judge by righteous judgment."* Don't judge by the details and the facts of what's going on. Go to a higher place, you know, and that's where we need to bear witness.

You know, sometimes the facts can seem overwhelming. Our situations can feel hopeless. Or it feels like this thing's never going to work out. And so, it's important for us to not let that control us. And we need to bear witness to the truth: that God is our source; that God is greater than this thing. That there is a solution and answer; even though I can't see it right now, Spirit has that. God is my provider, God is the Creator. With God, all things are possible. You know, that our situations are not hopeless. We need to make sure that we don't bear witness to lack and limitation, but we bear witness to the truth of God's goodness and abundance.

A perfect example of this is the feeding of the 5,000 – you know, 5,000 people hungry, and only two or three fish. The facts didn't look good. The appearances didn't look good. But Jesus did not buy into that. He did a few things that were just powerful. The first thing he had them do was to sit down. So, in a situation where things aren't going well, we need to, like, calm down and relax.

And then the second thing he did was he looked up. He didn't look at the details on the problem. He looked to a higher consciousness -- to a higher place -- for possibilities and solutions.

And then he took what he had; he acknowledged that good was there. Sometimes when things aren't going that well, we think what we have is not enough. You know, we start putting down what it is that we have, because we don't have what we want. But he acknowledged the good that was there, blessed it, and opened a space for a solution ... opened a space for things to multiply and increase. And then he gave it out; he shared it. He put it into action. And it was transformed in an amazing and wonderful way.

Do not bear witness to lack, but bear witness to the truth of God's presence. So I ask you: Do you have a "Feeding of the 5,000" situation in your life? That the facts don't look as good as you'd like? And what are you bearing witness to? To the lack and limitation? Or are you willing to bear witness to the truth that God is your source; that all things are working together for your highest good; that God means us for good and good things will come forth from it.

*"I am here to bear witness to the truth of God's abundance in all situations. I am here to bear witness to the truth of God in all situations."*

Let's affirm that together: [with congregation] *"I am here to bear witness to the truth of God's abundance in all situations."*

Take a deep breath.

*"I am here to bear witness to the presence and power of God in my life."*

Together: [with congregation] *"I am here to bear witness to the presence and power of God in my life."*

*"I am here to bear witness."*

Together: [with congregation] *"I am here to bear witness."*

We are here to bear witness to the power of honesty and the power of the truth and the abundance and goodness of God in all situations.

Now the tenth commandment says, **THOU SHALT NOT COVET** thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; or male or female slave; or donkey or ox; or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

How many people have ever had even a moment or two where you thought, *"Man, I wish I was living that person's life"*? Anybody ever have that? Okay, apparently just myself, apparently! [Congregants laugh] But sometimes we can think that, *"Man, I wish I was as successful as that guy."* You know, *"I wish I had as much wealth. I wish I had as nice a house. You know, I wish I had as much, you know, physical strength and athletic ability."* Whatever it is, you know, we sometimes have those situations.

Now if you look at it, coveting -- having a desire for someone else's stuff -- does not sound as bad as killing or adultery or lying or stealing. It doesn't sound as bad ... but apparently it is! And that's why it's Number #10!

And the thing about it is: it is all in the idea of thought. It is the idea that you want someone else's stuff; the idea that there is not enough. It is the inner realm of trying to create an activity of cause and effect, and that is what is behind lying. That is the idea behind killing or adultery. It is the idea of coveting!

And coveting really is about misdirected desire. There's nothing wrong with desiring something. In fact, it's a good and important part of the creative process. But where it goes awry is: we have that desire, but we don't look to God or spiritual law or faith to fulfill that desire. We look by getting what someone else already has. And the idea is: it's not even just getting what they have; it is even the idea of believing that that's how life works. That that is some good idea, because it's not steeped in faith; it's not steeped in love. It's steeped in selfishness; it is steeped in an idea of lack.

Let me give you an idea of coveting, and it's a bit of an extreme idea, but just go with me on it. How many people remember *The Lord of the Rings*? Everybody remember the Lord? You remember Gollum or Sméagol? He coveted the ring. You know, he was just ... he would manipulate; he would lie; he would do whatever it took, because that's what he wanted. You know, and again, whether he got it or not, that it is that thought process in our heads and minds: *"I think that someone else has my good."*

Ever have the thought -- have you ever felt -- like, when someone else succeeds, that means, you know, *"I fail. If they have more, that means I have less."* You know, we have this idea. Anybody ever have the moment and experience, because there's a sign of covetousness that we don't always acknowledge, but we have a hard time being happy for someone when they succeed. At some level, that is an idea of coveting. It's like, *"Oh, man; they took mine."* If we're really honest, those thoughts are pretty deep within ourselves. And they tend to lead to unhappiness and emptiness, rather than joy and fulfillment.

Instead of saying, *"Wow! They succeeded! That means there's lots of abundance and I can attract my good, too!"*, we go to a place of feeling bad because they are doing well.

Coveting limits and kind of short circuits the process of creation and manifestation in our lives. So here are five ways for us to overcome that mindset of coveting.

The first one is to remember God. Remember that God is our source. Remember, you know, that we live and move and have our very being in the abundance of God's peace and love and joy. To remember God; put God first. God is our source.

The second thing is to remember who you are. You're a child of God. You are the light of the world. You are the temple of the living God. You are a powerful spiritual being. That's the truth of who you are! You don't need other people's stuff; you are a powerhouse. And two things about that to remember is -- well, that means, one: you are a co-creator of God. You are a co-creator! And the second one is: you are fully responsible for your life. You have all the resources, and we sometimes forget that. It's to be fully responsible. *"I am a co-creator"; that "I am a powerful spiritual being."*

The third is, to use the power of our desire is to think very clear about what is it that I want. What is it that I want to create? What is it that I want to achieve? Who is it that I want to become? What is the difference that I want to make? We will not covet other people's stuff when we know we're powerful and we're clear about what it is that we want to have or attract and create.

And then the fourth thing is to utilize the power of our consciousness. You know, we could pray for something and just get it. So, let's say we pray to win the lottery. We win the lottery. The studies show that, after a year, people who win the lottery don't have that money and they're not as happy. Do you know why? Because it's not just the thing. The question is: Do you have the consciousness to handle and manage those things in life? So instead of just praying for success or a new relationship or a new job, pray for the consciousness of someone who maintains and handles success. Pray for the consciousness of someone who knows that I handle and be in a healthy, fulfilling relationship. It is the consciousness that is more important than the thing.

Someone could just come and hand you whatever it is you want right now. But the question is: Is your consciousness really ready for it? To manage it, to support it, to maintain it, if you were given that right now? Michael Beckwith says, *"You can have anything you want in life, but first you must become it in consciousness."* So praying for the consciousness of the thing that you want to have or create is a vital and powerful and important thing.

And the last one is to get away from coveting is be a giver. Be a helper. Help other people achieve. Have other people do great and wonderful things, and you'll realize how blessed our lives are. You know, the good things will happen to them; good things will happen to us. And that circulation of goodness will flow and increase in our lives. We will not be wanting their stuff because, when we help them create their stuff, it'll start increasing more good in our own lives.

*So the Mother Superior was on her deathbed after a long, long life of great service. The other sisters saw that she was in discomfort, so they offered her a glass of warm milk. And so, when they went back to warm up the milk, they noticed a bottle of whiskey that was given last Christmas; of course, never used. And they know that the Mother Superior has never had a drop of alcohol in her life. And it was kind of tough, but they preferred the greater concern of her discomfort being eased, and so they poured a couple of shots of whiskey in the milk. So, they held it up to her mouth; she took a sip. And then she took another sip and another sip, and the next thing you know, it was done. And she was asking for a second glass of warm milk. And she downed that down too.*

*And then as the time came closer for her passing, the other sisters came and they said, "Mother Superior, you know, you're not going to be with us that much longer. Is there any wisdom you have? Is there any guidance you have that'll help us after you've gone?"*

*And she smiled and she said, "Yes. Don't ever sell that cow!" [Laughs with congregants]*

That is a certain level of wisdom! [Laughs] But the real wisdom is the wisdom in the Ten Commandments. On a literal level, they are powerful and helpful for our lives and how we conduct ourselves. But at a spiritual level, they take us deeper and really do open -- when we understand and apply them -- the flow of God's goodness and abundance.

Commandment #9 -- Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. And it is saying: instead, bear witness to the power of being more honest and truthful in our regular lives. And bear witness to the power of the truth -- regardless of what the facts or the circumstances or appearances say -- that God is your source. That all things will work together for your highest good.

And Commandment #10 -- Do not covet anything from your neighbor." And what it is saying is: that to use your power as a powerful spiritual being, use your desire; use your consciousness; and become a giver and you'll realize there'll be no need to ever covet because you can create whatever it is you desire.

And those are the lessons from the Ten Commandments. God bless you all!

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