

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Eighth Commandment is “Do not bear false witness against your neighbor”. In simpler terms, “Do not lie.” In positive terms, “Be truthful”.

We are called to be truthful because God is Truth itself, and we are created in His image. Jesus Christ says, “I am the Truth.” Therefore, we are called not only to speak the truth and not lie, but to BE the truth, to live the truth, to live faithfully and truthfully with integrity and honesty at all times.

It is easy to think that an outright lie is the only form of being untruthful, but when we think about it, we can see that there are many forms of being deceitful. Gossip which intends harm to another is a form of lying because it betrays the full truth about the person. Detraction is to speak the truth about a person, but with the intention to harm their reputation. Calumny is to lie about a person intentionally to harm them.

Flattery and adulation are a form of lying because they seek to please a person with a slanted view of the truth. Bragging and boasting slant the truth in favor of our own pride and self esteem.

Lying extends to all forms of deceitfulness which causes harm to another person or to Truth, Beauty and Goodness itself. Therefore, to create a form of art, write an article or produce drama or film which is dishonest in the way it portrays life is a lie. To produce a work that promotes immorality and does not teach the truth is to lie.

To present an image of oneself which is untrue through a false resume, a wrong impression, an artificial image of oneself or to lie about one’s accomplishments is to break the sacredness of truth.

Finally, one’s reputation and ability to inspire trust is based in one’s truthfulness. To lie is to break trust and bring chaos and doubt to a relationship. Lying is therefore a form of violence against Truth.

Instead, we are to be open, honest and transparent about all things. This honesty is balanced with temperance--while one must be honest, not all things must be revealed. Modesty and discretion demand silence at times, and charity often demands silence so that a relationship can be maintained or restored.

Most of all, we are to live lives of openness and honesty so that we might in this way love God who is Truth and love others to whom we have the responsibility of honesty.

Your Pastor,  
Fr. Longenecker