



The Eighth Commandment— Little Words/Big Impact

THE ME OTHERS SEE

What is a reputation? You can't see, feel, hear, taste, or smell it, but everyone has one. And most people care a lot about it: "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold" (Proverbs 22:1).

Your reputation is *about you*. It is what others think and speak of you. A good reputation makes you welcome, trusted, and accepted, and a bad reputation does just the opposite. A reputation impacts how you will get along with other people.

Read each statement. If you **Agree** circle the **A**. If you **Disagree** circle the **D**. Then write a sentence to explain your choice.

A D Reputations just happen.

A D A reputation is hard to change.

A D Reputations are often based on opinions rather than facts.

A D What you say can hurt someone's reputation, but there is nothing you can do to help it.

A D Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.



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.

HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF

Consider this: Think of your good qualities, talents, and personality. Describe what you would like your reputation to be.

Consider this: Think about your attitude toward other people. How do you speak about them and how do you affect their reputations?

A SERIOUS CONCERN

God knows how important and also how fragile a reputation can be, and so He gives us this commandment.

The book of Proverbs further explains this commandment. Draw lines between phrases in these boxes to match up actions, adjectives, and proverbs that go together.

A Person Who Tells:	Is:	See:
what is unreliable	unkind	Proverbs 11:13
what is personal	untrustworthy	Proverbs 17:9
what is negative	unfaithful	Proverbs 18:2

HOW GOD SEES US

What is your reputation with God? Look at the Eighth Commandment as a mental checklist. Think about times you have said things that hurt other people. How do you look from the viewpoint of the Law? (See James 3:2.)

None of us are perfect. According to the Law, we are not loving or lovable. Unworthy though we are, God still loves us. He redeemed us and made us worthy to be called His children once again, through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. How do you look from the viewpoint of the Gospel? (See 2 Corinthians 5:17.)



The love of God leads us to lovingly speak well of others. Love defends when others accuse. Love speaks kindly when others find fault. Love speaks positively when others speak negatively. Love looks for kind explanation in the face of suggested wrong. And love is silent when there is no clear good to say.

WHAT'S THE REMEDY?

Read **James 3**. The Bible tells us that words can be like a deadly poison. In God's Word we also find the antidote to that poison. Reread **verse 17** and complete the following sentence:

Through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, we can speak words that are

In each of the following situations, write a response that considers God's will for our words and shows compassion.

1. Poison: "My mom can't drive us to the mall. All she ever does is complain about how tired she is."

Antidote: _____

2. Poison: "What's the matter with you, Marcus? You can catch a cold but you sure can't catch a football."

Antidote: _____

3. Poison: "I can't wait to tell you what I saw. Jason got all the answers wrong on the test. He was so embarrassed."

Antidote: _____

4. Poison: "Did you hear that Kelly's father was arrested. She says he's innocent. But why would they accuse him if he didn't do it?"

Antidote: _____

5. Poison: "Don't invite Sierra. She's such a nervous klutz and never has anything to say."

Antidote: _____

6. Poison: "You broke it! Well, just blame it on Charlie. No one ever trusts him anyway."

Antidote: _____

7. Poison: "Marcy made the cheerleading squad. It sure can't be that she's good at it. It's probably because her dad is rich."

Antidote: _____

TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

1 Corinthians 13:6: Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

Colossians 4:6: Let your conversation be always full of grace ... so that you may know how to answer everyone.

The Eighth Commandment and its explanation.