

# LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

## *The Eighth Commandment*



by

**Thomas F. Fischer**



1892 E. Auburn Road  
Rochester Hills, MI 48307  
(248) 852-5510 GLCRH.org

## The Eighth Commandment

**“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”**

*What does this mean?*

“We should fear, love, and trust in 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.”

### I The Eighth Commandment—Protecting Reputation

A. What Is “Reputation”?

1. The general \_\_\_\_\_ of a person by the public (pinioon)
2. A description of one’s \_\_\_\_\_ (haracterc)
3. A personal possession, not usually discovered until \_\_\_\_\_ (ostl)

Source: *“The Foolish Dictionary”*

B. Why Is One’s Reputation So Important?

1. Reputation can \_\_\_\_\_ us or break us (kame)
2. One spends their \_\_\_\_\_ life building their reputation. (erntie)
3. One’s reputation is the most \_\_\_\_\_ thing one has. (ragilef)

### II Violations Of The Eighth Commandment

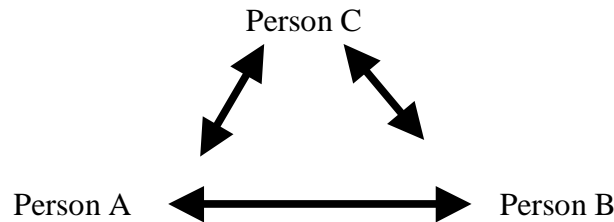
A. \_\_\_\_\_ (ngily)

B. \_\_\_\_\_-ing (ppossig)

Luther re: gossipers and backbiters

“Those who are called backbiters are not content just to know but rush ahead and judge. Learning a bit of gossip about someone else, they spread it into every corner, relishing and delighting in it like pigs that roll in the mud and root around in it with their snouts.” Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*, “Eighth Commandment,” Tappert Edition, p. 401 #267.

C. Triangling



D. Betraying A \_\_\_\_\_ (onfidceenc)

1. Exceptions: When a person's \_\_\_\_\_ is in danger (efli)
2. When in doubt, talk (hypothetically) to a \_\_\_\_\_ (astorp)  
or counselor.

E. Slander:

1. words falsely spoken that damage the reputation of another
2. an abusive attack on a person's character or good name

F. Defamation Of Character:

1. charge falsely or with malicious intent
2. attack the good name and reputation of someone

“God forbids you to speak evil about another person even though, to you certain knowledge, he is guilty.” Luther, Large Catechism, p. 401 #269

### III Some Biblical Quotations Regarding This Commandment

A. Matthew 18:8-9—Be \_\_\_\_\_-ful (reca)

v. 8 “If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

9 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”

B. Matthew 18:12-14—Be \_\_\_\_\_-ing (orgfiv)

v. 12 “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?

13 And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

14 In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

### IV The Importance Of Upholding Others' Reputations

A. Martin Luther:

”You should not be quick to spread slander and gossip about your neighbor but admonish him privately so that he may amend.

Likewise, if someone should whisper to you what this or that person has done, teaching him, if he saw the wrongdoing, to go and reprove the man personally, otherwise to hold his tongue.”

*Large Catechism, p. 402, #276*

B. Jesus: “*Three-Step Process To Uphold Others’ Reputation*” (Matt. 18:15ff.)

1. Step One: Go \_\_\_\_\_-ly to your brother (ridect)

v. 15 “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”

2. Step Two: Go again, this time with \_\_\_\_\_ (itnesswes)

v. 16 “But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

3. Step Three: Tell it to the \_\_\_\_\_(hurhcc)

v. 17 “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

4. Always be ready to \_\_\_\_\_ (giorfev)

vv. 21-22 “Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’” (NIV)

C. St. Paul: Remember always be a \_\_\_\_\_ (inahcrist)

1 “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are *spiritual* should restore him *gently*. But watch yourself, or you also may *be tempted*. 2 *Carry each other's burdens*, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take *pride* in himself, *without comparing* himself to somebody else.”

Galatians 6:1-4 (NIV)

1. Who should do correcting of others?

Those who are \_\_\_\_\_ (ualpsirit)

2. How should it be done? \_\_\_\_\_ (lgenty)

3. What danger(s) are there when we correct others?

We may be \_\_\_\_\_ -ed (ttmpee) to...

\* \_\_\_\_\_ (depri)

\* inflated self- \_\_\_\_\_ -ance (ortp)

\* not carry others' \_\_\_\_\_ (urdbens)

\* comparing ourselves to \_\_\_\_\_ (therso)

\* other temptations:

D. James: Insights from James, chapter three.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

James 3:3-10 (NIV)

**James' Advice In Summary...**

1. What things does James teach about the use of the tongue?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why should we avoid a "loose" tongue?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What does being able to "hold one's tongue" demonstrate about a person?

## **How To Deal With Gossip\***

- 1) Ignore it when possible.
- 2) Correct it when appropriate: Go directly to your friend. (cf. Matthew 18)
- 3) Confront it when necessary: Even if info is true, ask "why the person needs to spread such talk."

### 4) Some "Do's" and "Don'ts"

#### *Do's....*

1. Do it one-on-one
2. Do it alone
3. Do it without attacking, being defensive
4. Do try to build trust and safe face
5. Do forgive

#### *Don't's*

1. Don't retaliate by adding more rumors
2. Don't maintain friendships with those you can't trust
3. Don't hang on to your anger
4. Don't give your time to people who cut you down.
5. Don't tell others you don't know well things that could damage others.

### 5) Other Things On Which To Focus....

1. Build your own self-esteem
2. Think positively—you're a child of God!
3. Reject gossip by avoiding gossip and gossipers
4. Do what David did—PRAY!!!

## **Remember,**

- 1) "sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can cause a lot more pain!"  
and
- 2) People who don't gossip make the best friends in the world.

\* Inspired from "*Carenotes for Teens*" by Christina A. Adams.  
Copyright 1995, St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, Indiana.



## V. How To Keep This Commandment

A. \_\_\_\_\_ the central message of this commandment. (nwko)

“The sum and substance of this commandment [is] No one shall harm his neighbor, whether friend or foe, with his tongue. No one shall speak evil of him, whether truly or falsely, unless it is done with proper authority or for his improvement. A person should use his tongue to *speak only good* of everyone, to cover his neighbor’s sins and infirmities, to overlook them, and to cloak and veil them with his own honor.”

I Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

B. Do what this commandment \_\_\_\_\_ (ysas)

*“Defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.”*

### **For Reflection:**

- 1) List at least three reasons people gossip?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How would your life change if you had bad reputation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What’s the hardest thing about dealing with gossips?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What are the most important qualities a friend can have?

***Review: “The Eighth Commandment”***

**Part I: True Or False. *The Eighth Commandment.*** Place a “T” (*True*) or “F” (*False*) before each question below.

- \_\_\_ 1. We can expect that people will gossip about us, especially if we do good things.
- \_\_\_ 2. When Jesus was put on trial, many lied about Him.
- \_\_\_ 3. We should tell everyone how bad people are, but *only* when it’s true.
- \_\_\_ 4. When our neighbor who sins against us won’t listen to us, it’s OK for us to tell the whole world, even if it hurts our neighbors’ reputation.
- \_\_\_ 5. Because we don’t want to hurt our neighbor, we should never say anything bad about them, especially in a court of law.
- \_\_\_ 6. It’s easy and fun to correct and reprimand our neighbor properly.
- \_\_\_ 7. We can speak ill of people because Jesus did it too.
- \_\_\_ 8. If we can’t control our tongue, Jesus said we should cut it off.
- \_\_\_ 9. According to James 3:3-5, the tongue is like the rudder of a ship.
- \_\_\_ 10. The Bible tells us that because we are Christians and love each other so much, we don’t have to worry about breaking the Eighth Commandment.

**Part II: Multiple Choice.** Write the letter of the correct answer before each question below.

- \_\_\_ 10. When people mocked Jesus as a criminal on the cross, they...
  - a. Were right. He was a criminal and deserved to be crucified.
  - b. People broke the Eighth Commandment by lying about Him.
  - c. Both of the above
  - d. None of the above.
- \_\_\_ 11. When someone sins against us, we should....
  - a. Get angry
  - b. Tell all our friends what a jerk they are.
  - c. not tell a soul
  - d. confront them gently
- \_\_\_ 12. When confronting people, we should expect that...
  - a. They will appreciate our kind concern for their error.
  - b. In their anger and outrage, they may lie about us.
  - c. Both of the above
  - d. None of the above.

- \_\_\_ 13. Perhaps the greatest harm we can do someone else is...
- a. To kill them
  - b. Take away all they have
  - c. Ignore them
  - d. Speak falsely about them and ruin their reputation
- \_\_\_ 14. According to James 3, the most powerful weapon a person has is their...
- a. fist
  - b. feet
  - c. heart
  - d. tongue
  - e. faith
  - f. none of the above
- \_\_\_ 15. According to James 3, the “tongue” can be...
- a. a fire
  - b. full of poison
  - c. used to praise God.
  - d. all of the above.
- \_\_\_ 16. According to Luther, when someone does something wrong we should...
- a. cloak and cover it
  - b. make a big scene about it to everyone
  - c. tell our parents immediately!
  - d. none of the above
- \_\_\_ 17. People who gossip...
- a. need to “get a life.”
  - b. destroy others
  - c. make poor friends
  - d. gossip about you and others, too.
  - e. can’t be trusted with confidences
  - f. all of the above.
- \_\_\_ 18. When someone apologizes for gossiping about you or your friends,
- a. you only need to give them one more chance to be forgiven.
  - b. don’t forgive them
  - c. forgive them “seventy times seven”
  - d. tell them to go away.
- \_\_\_ 19. When someone asks you for gossip about someone else, the best thing to say is,
- a. nothing...ignore it, if possible
  - b. spill the beans—tell all the details, even the things you’re not sure of.
  - c. “You’re a creep and an idiot to go around like this!”
  - d. anything that will uphold their reputation without lying.
  - e. A and C
  - f. A, C and D.
  - g. A, B and C.
  - h. All of the above.
  - i. none of the above.
- \_\_\_ 20. I have never, ever in my whole life broken this commandment.