The eighth commandment of the Decalogue is one of the clearest and most direct: *“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”* (Exodus 20:16). Throughout the history of the Church, this commandment has been understood as a condemnation of lying in all its forms. But what does this mean in everyday life? Why is lying so serious? How can we live according to the truth in a world where falsehood seems to be a common and accepted strategy?

In this article, we will explore the deep meaning of this commandment, its relevance in Christian life, and how we can apply it daily, especially in the age of misinformation, social media, and the crisis of trust in institutions.

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1. Truth in Scripture: An Attribute of God

Truth is not just an abstract concept but a reality that finds its source in God Himself. Jesus tells us: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”* (John 14:6). Therefore, when we live in truth, we live in God. When we lie, we distance ourselves from Him.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that *“truth as the virtue of acting and speaking rightly is called veracity, sincerity, or honesty”* (CCC 2468). Lying, on the other hand, distances us from our identity as children of God and enslaves us to falsehood. In fact, Satan is called *“the father of lies”* (John 8:44), emphasizing the seriousness of all distortions of truth.

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2. False Testimony and Lies: More Than a Sin, an Injustice

The commandment warns us against *false testimony*, that is, lying that directly harms our neighbor, especially in a legal context. However, the Church’s teaching extends this prohibition to all forms of lying, as it breaks trust between people and weakens the social fabric.

Saint Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between different types of lies:

- **Joking lies:** those told for fun, without intent to harm.
- **Officious lies:** told to avoid harm or to protect someone.

- **Malicious lies:** told with the intent of harming another person.

Although some may seem less serious, Saint Thomas insists that all lies are sinful because *“they are contrary to truth and, therefore, to God”* (Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 110, a. 3).

Saint Augustine, for his part, argues that lying is evil in itself because *“it corrupts speech, which is the means by which we communicate and seek truth.”* In other words, lying is a betrayal of our human dignity.

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3. The Culture of Lying: A Modern-Day Evil

We live in an era where lying is not only common but often seen as necessary or even virtuous. *Fake news*, manipulation of information, moral relativism, and a lack of transparency in governments and the media have created an unprecedented crisis of trust.

Some examples of how lying has infiltrated society:

- **On social media:** Many create a false image of themselves to gain approval.
- **In politics and the media:** Distorted narratives are presented to manipulate public opinion.
- **In everyday life:** From exaggerating résumés to evading taxes, lying seems to have become the norm.

As Christians, we are called to swim against this tide and to be witnesses of the truth.

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4. The Truth That Sets Us Free: Living Without Lies

Jesus tells us: *“The truth will set you free”* (John 8:32). But how can we live this truth in practice?

A) Sincerity in Daily Life

1. **Avoid all forms of deception,** even those that seem harmless.
2. **Be consistent between what we believe, say, and do.**
3. **Do not spread rumors or slander,** especially on social media.

4. **Avoid hypocrisy,** which is a form of lying where we pretend to be what we are not.

B) Honesty in Work and Business

1. **Do not deceive in trade or contracts.** A Christian must be upright in business dealings.
2. **Be transparent in the use of money and resources.**
3. **Fulfill promises and commitments.**

C) Faithfulness to Truth in Family and Social Life

1. **Teach children the importance of truth.**
2. **Do not lie in marriage,** not even in “small things.”
3. **Be witnesses of truth in the community,** denouncing injustice and promoting transparency.

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5. Repairing the Damage: A Necessary Step

Lying is not only a sin but also causes harm to others. Therefore, the Church teaches that whoever has lied has a moral obligation to repair the damage caused (CCC 2487). This may involve:

- **Publicly retracting** if the lie affected others.
- **Asking for forgiveness from those who were harmed.**
- **Doing everything possible to restore the truth.**

A Christian who has fallen into lying must go to confession, where Christ, *“the Way, the Truth, and the Life,”* grants us the grace to start anew.

Conclusion: A Call to Be Light in the Darkness

The commandment *“You shall not bear false witness nor lie”* is not just a moralistic rule but a call to live in the truth of Christ. In a society that has normalized lying, Christians are called to be *the salt of the earth and the light of the world* (Matthew 5:13-14), witnessing with our lives that truth is not only possible but truly sets us free.

Let us live with sincerity, honesty, and the certainty that God is Absolute Truth. And let us always remember the words of Saint Paul: *“Therefore, putting away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another”* (Ephesians 4:25).

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Truth, help us to be faithful witnesses of the Truth that is her Son. Amen.