

Bless His Holy Name

By André Crouch

Old Orchard Church

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Q. 143. *Which is the 9th commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment is, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

Q. 145. *What are the sins forbidden in the 9th commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the 9th commandment are...thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves....

—Westminster Larger Catechism (1648)

Celebrating Jesus Christ, Lord of Our Conscience

Praise is due you, O Lord,
Master of the Universe,
Infinite Goodness and pure Holiness.

For you did for us what we could not do:
You washed the spot of sin from our hand,
And answered the accusations of our conscience.

O God, you made peace with us
By the blood spilled in an ancient execution.
You effected the Great Exchange:
For trusting you,
I am given Christ's righteousness;
For obeying you,
He is given my damnation.
He dies, and I live.

Trusting, O Lord, I come.
Despairing of my never-completed works,
I cling to the finished work of him
who died and now lives for me.
Fill me with joy as I worship,
So that more and more I may ignore
My never-ending accusations against myself
Even as I strive toward your holiness.



Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Nahum 1:1-6

Gospel Reading: Luke 15:14-24

Today's Sermon

“Song of Salvation”
Isaiah 12

Mark Tucker, associate pastor, preaching

Real Change Requires an Inside Look

Certain groups of people come to mind as I write. First, *those who are trying hard to do what the Bible commands but feel frustrated*. You are doing all you know to do—not perfectly of course, but sincerely. And yet things just aren't right inside, and you know it. You feel more pressure than joy. God isn't changing either you or things in your world the way you ask Him to. You wonder if He listens to your prayers, or if He simply doesn't care about your struggles.

Worries over money or children, hurt caused by a friend or spouse, fears about whether you can handle whatever problems may arise tomorrow—all keep you awake at night. Tears are for the night, the Bible says, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). But the sunrise brings no relief for you, just more pressure. You don't know what else to do to find those green pastures and still waters. You plug along but with a weight on your back that keeps you feeling heavy.

My message to you is, THERE'S HOPE! More effort isn't the answer. Continued obedience is required, of course, but looking for more hoops to jump through before God becomes real is not the way. Freedom and quiet rest can replace the pressure and churning in your soul. **But finding peace requires an honest look into your life at some hard things.** Jumping through more hoops is sometimes easier than facing troubling things inside. But an inside look can lead to real change, from the inside out.

Second, I think of *those who are doing quite well and feel content and happy most of the time*. You really do love the Lord, you have proved Him real and faithful in hard times. Time in His Word is often a rich experience. Prayer is far more than mere ritual in your life. You like your church, you're blessed with good friends and family, you feel satisfied with your work, and you enjoy your leisure time. Your life is not without tensions, but God gives you the strength to press on with confidence. By the grace of God, life is good.

My message to you is, THERE'S MORE! Gratefully enjoy the blessings of God and live out the maturity He's developed in you—but don't settle for it. Don't let your legitimate comfort become complacency or your joy slip into smugness. There is more to knowing God than the most mature Christian has ever envisioned. Be willing to have the steadiness in your life disrupted if knowing God better requires it. The good fight is fought with a sweaty passion that develops only when the evenness of our soul is upset. God wants to change good disciples into powerfully loving servants who leave an indelible mark on people they touch. **But His method of changing us, from the inside out, can be disturbing.** Be open to new levels of struggle.

—Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (1988)

