



Course 3, Session 4 Student Notes: Honest Promotion, No False Witness

The Guardrail That Keeps It Holy

Big Idea: Every inflated claim and fake scarcity is a small false witness. Honesty is not only right, it is the better long game, because trust compounds.

How to use these notes. These are yours to study on your own, before or after the session. Read each section slowly. Under every principle there is a **Notes** space to write what stands out to you, and a **Reflect** question to answer honestly in writing. Keep your Bible nearby. Take about 30 minutes, and end in prayer. Bring your notes and questions to the group.

Open in Prayer

Before you begin, pray this simple prayer, or your own: "Father, You are a God of truth and You detest a lie. Make my marketing completely honest, even when honesty costs me. Purge every exaggeration and false urgency from my work. Amen."

The Scripture for This Session

Read these slowly, out loud if you can:

- **Exodus 20:16**, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."
- **Proverbs 12:22**, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight."

Reflect: What is a marketing claim or tactic you have seen that you knew, in your gut, was a lie? Have any like it crept into your own marketing?

The Big Picture

We have spent three sessions making our marketing more effective: knowing our audience, telling true stories, being plain. Tonight is the guardrail that keeps all of that holy. Everything we say must be true. Effectiveness without honesty is just manipulation, and we will not build the Kingdom on a lie.

The principle comes straight from the Ten Commandments: you shall not bear false witness. We usually think of that as a courtroom rule. But its reach is the whole of life, and that includes your ad copy, your testimonials, your fine print, your sales page, and your social media. Every claim you make is a kind of witness, and God's command is that your testimony be true. Over this session we will look at four truths about honest promotion, then study the ninth commandment as it applies right inside your marketplace. Read each one, write your notes, and answer the reflection.

Principle 1: Every Claim You Make Is a Witness.

When you say “this works,” “customers love it,” or “limited time only,” you are testifying. You are giving evidence and asking someone to act on it. That is exactly what a witness does. The ninth commandment says that evidence must be true.

Think about who your neighbor is in business. It is your customer. And your witness is every claim you make to them. When you tell a customer what your product will do, you are bearing witness. When you describe your past results, you are testifying. This reframes the whole thing. Marketing is not a separate world with looser rules. It is one more place where God has told His people to tell the truth to their neighbor. If you would not say it under oath, do not say it in an ad.

Reflect: If every claim in your marketing were spoken under oath, which ones would you have to change?

Notes:

Principle 2: Name the Everyday Lies, and Refuse Them.

Let us name the everyday lies of marketing, because they have become so normal that we barely notice them. The fake countdown timer that resets every time you reload the page. The “only 3 spots left” that is always 3. The invented original price you mark down from, to manufacture a deal that was never real. The testimonial you wrote yourself, or stitched together, or paid for. The staged before and after. The results with no basis.

Each one is a small false witness, and Proverbs 12:22 is blunt about how God sees it: “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.” Abomination is a strong word. Here is the freeing distinction. Real urgency and real scarcity are completely fine. If you genuinely have three spots, say three. If the sale really ends Friday, say Friday. It is only the manufactured version, the invented pressure, that crosses the line into false witness. You never have to fake what is already true.

Reflect: Where in your marketing are you bearing a small false witness, a fake scarcity, an inflated claim, or a borrowed result?

Notes:

Principle 3: Trust Compounds. Honesty Is the Smart Long Game.

Here is the part that should encourage you, because honesty is not just the righteous path, it is the smart one. Trust compounds. A lie might win you one sale today, but it plants a seed of suspicion that grows into lost customers, bad reviews, and a ruined name.

Honesty does the opposite. Every time you tell the truth, especially when it costs you, you make a small deposit in a trust account, and over time that account becomes the most valuable asset your business has. A reputation for telling the truth is something no competitor can copy and no ad budget can buy. In a world full of marketing lies, honesty itself becomes your edge. Hype is a sugar high. Honesty is compounding interest. The brands that win the long game are the ones whose every claim turned out to be true.

Reflect: How have you seen a dishonest business eventually pay for its lies, and an honest one rewarded over time?

Notes:

Principle 4: There Is Freedom in Telling the Truth.

There is real freedom in this. When everything you say is true, you no longer have to keep track of your exaggerations or fear being found out. You can simply tell the truth and stand behind it. A person who lies has to remember the lie. A person who tells the truth can rest.

If your scarcity is real, say it. If it is not, do not invent it. If your offer is genuinely good, you do not need a fake timer to sell it. The real value will do the work, the way we have been building all along. This is the line we do not cross. We will be clear, we will be compelling, we will tell great stories, and every single word of it will be true. We would rather lose a sale than bear a false witness. That is not a handicap. It is the foundation of a name that lasts.

Reflect: What would it cost you to make your marketing fully honest, and are you willing to pay it?

Notes:

The Story: The Ninth Commandment in the Marketplace (Exodus 20:16; Proverbs 12:22)

Read the command together: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” It was given in the context of a courtroom, a legal witness telling the truth about another person. But the principle behind it is enormous. God commands truthful testimony, and your whole life is full of testimony.

Now bring in Proverbs 12:22: “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.” Notice the two halves. God does not just mildly disapprove of marketing lies. The word is abomination, something He detests. But the flip side is just as strong, and far more hopeful. He delights in those who deal truly. When you tell the truth in your business, even the small, costly truths, you are doing something God Himself delights in. Your honest sales page becomes an act of worship. And notice what Scripture connects to truthful dealing again and again: a good name, lasting favor, trust. The honest path is not the losing path. The truthful endure, and the deceitful are eventually exposed.

So walk it out. Your customer is your neighbor, and every claim is a witness. The fake timer and the invented testimonial are not clever, they are detestable to God. But honest marketing is something He actually delights in, and it builds the one asset no competitor can copy.

Reflect: Is there any claim, badge, or deadline in your marketing you would be ashamed to defend to God's face?

Notes:

Put It Into Practice

1. Audit your marketing. List every claim, number, timer, scarcity statement, and testimonial in your current marketing. Beside each, mark it true, exaggerated, or false. Be brutally honest. If you cannot prove it, it is not yet true.

Claims, numbers, timers, and testimonials I am auditing:

Which are true, which are exaggerated, which are false:

The honest rewrite of each questionable one:

2. This week's assignment. Make every fix this week. Go into your site, ads, and pages and correct or remove every claim that is not completely true. Then write one sentence about how it feels to know all of it is honest.

One thing I am removing entirely because it is not true:

How it feels to know it is all honest:

Go Deeper (Optional)

- **Read:** *The Speed of Trust* by Stephen M. R. Covey, and *Influence* by Robert Cialdini (the psychology of honest persuasion).
 - **Listen:** a trust and clarity episode of the *Marketing Made Simple* podcast, or *TGIF, Today God Is First* by Os Hillman.
 - **Study:** Exodus 20:16; Proverbs 12:22; Leviticus 19:35 to 36 (honest weights and measures).
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Close in Prayer

“Father, thank You that You are truth itself. Help me market with such honesty that You delight in it, to refuse every lie even when it costs me, and to build a name that lasts because it was always true. Purge every exaggeration and false urgency from my work, and let my dealings be something You delight in. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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