

Lesson Aim	To understand: 1. What the ninth commandment <i>proscribes</i> 2. What the ninth commandment <i>prescribes</i> .
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 43 and 1 Kings 21 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>In terms of proscription, we read the story of Naboth and Ahab, which features the breaking of the ninth commandment. How was Naboth righteous and how did Ahab break the ninth commandment?</p> <p>The king of Israel, Ahab, asked for Naboth's vineyard even offering him another or a payment price. Naboth refused because the Law of God in Numbers 36 prohibited him from giving or selling land that belonged to the family; it was an inheritance. Also, if Naboth let the land go to Ahab, Naboth's family would become royal dependents. When Naboth refuses to let the land go, Ahab's evil wife, Jezebel, hatches a plan in which witnesses falsely accuse Naboth of sinning against God. This is carried out as Naboth is convicted of cursing God and is stoned to death. Since Naboth is now considered to be a traitor, his land is forfeited to the king. The sin of Ahab, specifically, is deceiving others by giving the appearance that justice is being served by the trial with false witnesses. The ninth commandment says that "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." In addition, Ahab contributed to condemning someone rashly, which the Heidelberg Catechism teaches is part and parcel of breaking the ninth commandment. Finally, as the Heidelberg also mentions, we are not to slander, wrest and twist one's words, which Jezebel does to Naboth on different levels.</p> <p>What does the ninth commandment prescribe?</p> <p>To begin, there is an exceptional case, with respect to prescription, in what we call the "lie of necessity." This is a "good" kind of lie used for the benefit of our neighbor. There are several instances of this in the Scriptures like the Hebrew midwives who allow the Hebrew babies to live when they were not supposed to lying to Pharaoh that the Israelite women gave birth too quickly. Otherwise, in fulfilling the ninth commandment, we are to speak well of our neighbor and promote our neighbor's good name. We are to think the best of our neighbor shunning all gossip about him and doing whatever we can to help him.</p>
Bible Reading	Acts 15-21 (Reading through the New Testament)