

The TENDER Commandments  
Exodus 20:15 8th Commandment

## INTRODUCTION

Today we come to the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment – “You shall not Steal”. Pretty simple, right?

EX: years ago one of my kids said, “what can you say about that; it’s pretty simple.” Then I started giving some examples and she saw the implications of this simple commandment.

The Ten Commandments give clarity and application of the Great Commandment – “Love God and your neighbor as yourself”

To love your neighbor, you must protect his life, honor his marriage and family, and protect his property.

The Biblical view is that ownership is stewardship. The world says you own what you have or the government owns it, but the Bible teaches that what we own, we hold as steward; we are God’s trustees. One day we’ll be called to give an account for how we use the gifts and talents God has given us and how well we managed them. That is why we speak of church members at HPC as **Ministers, Messengers, Models, and MANAGERS.**

HOW ARE WE As Christians doing with this? Sadly, in some areas, not too well.

BARBARA EHRENREICH - Nickel and Dimed...

<http://swcta.net/moore/files/2013/03/Nickel-and-Dimed-Barbara-Ehrenreich.pdf>

She decided to live on minimum wage to see if it were possible...and took different job; first as a waitress in midprice restaurant.

*The worst, for some reason, are the Visible Christians - like the ten-person table, all jolly and sanctified after Sunday night service, who run me mercilessly and then leave me \$1 on a \$92 bill. Or the guy with the crucifixion T-shirt (SOMEONE TO LOOK UP TO) who complains that his baked potato is too hard and his iced tea too icy (I cheerfully fix both) and leaves no tip at all. As a general rule, people wearing crosses or WWJD? ("What Would Jesus Do?") buttons look at us disapprovingly no matter what we do, as if they were confusing waitressing with Mary Magdalene's original profession.*

This gives us a glimpse into some heart issues that relate to stealing. It comes in various forms... Stealing as a child from parents, food from plate of sibling or fries at McDo; Bernie Madoff to seminary students stealing bibles from the chapel. Stealing reveals something about our hearts, thus God gave the commandment.

Plato wrote; "No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market."<sup>5</sup> The suggestion is that ordinary humans do right only if others are watching.

As we continue, my prayer is that in this series, need to understand that

-The Ten Commandments ARE NOT ABOUT WHAT God WANTS FROM US, BUT WHAT HE WANTS FOR US.

-Remember that THE Ten Commandments ARE SOMEONE WE MEET BEFORE THEY ARE SOMETHING WE OBEY.

The context of the Ten Commandments is to be understood as a Covenant commitment ceremony,

Stipulations Relating To Loving  
LOVE FOR God IS SINGULAR – EXCLUSIVE  
Love for God is SPIRITUAL

Love for God must be Sincere  
Love for God must be Safe Guarded  
Honor Your Father and Mother  
Do not murder

Do Not Commit Adultery  
Exodus 20:15 Do Not Steal

What does this passage tell us about us, who need redeeming?

What does it tell us about God, who does redeeming?  
He knows and He cares that we treat others in a right way.

Before we look at Types of Stealing, let's consider "Why people steal"

## WHY PEOPLE STEAL

We aren't content with God's provision- fallen man just seems to want more than he already has and more than what others have.

EX: ROCKEFELLER – "how much is enough?" "Just a little bit more."

We're really desperate and in need – the bible recognizes the reality that fallen man wants more than he has and more than others have. Pride and jealousy are at the core of Satan's rebellion against God; they were at the root of the Fall and they are at the core of the discontented greed forbidden in the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment, which is itself the cause of the stealing forbidden in the 8<sup>th</sup>.

It is God's will that we have what we have by lawful means, trusting Him to provide for our needs.

### TYPES OF STEALING:

110. Q. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

A. God forbids not only outright theft and robbery but also such wicked schemes and devices as false weights and measures, deceptive merchandising, counterfeit money, and usury; we must not defraud our neighbor in any way, whether by force or by show of right. In addition God forbids all greed and all abuse or squandering of His gifts

Stealing is acquiring any property by unjust means – Luther

Stealing happens on an individual level, business or corporate level, governmental level

K.N.O.W. STEALING

Steve Jones – The reason stealing is illegal is because the government doesn't want any competition..

## MONEY OR THINGS

Taking it by force – being robbed is a horrible experience

Taking it behind their backs

Taking what is not rightfully yours because of someone's mistake –

EX: you get back too much change at the counter

EX: IRS return

EX: Even though he was taking from the rich to give to the poor, Robin Hood was still stealing.

Stealing is still stealing even if the victim is "able to afford it."

The Ballot is a bullet

Taking it through Corporate greed and corruption  
Taking it through false weights and measures;

What about mechanics, accountants.

The car you sold that has hidden things wrong with them. Make a product that doesn't really satisfy; doing shoddy work, you are stealing from people.

If you don't pay your employees a fair wage, on time, it is stealing. You have got to honor the caretaker rights of other human beings

If you pad your expense reports, it is a form of stealing.

It is stealing EVEN IF "no one is hurt" "It's a big company, no one is hurt".

**Ideas** – copyrighted material Taking it online

Ideas – copyright laws related to creative arts, music, film, intellectual property rights.

EX: World Radio – legal Monday looks at issue before the Supreme Court and many deal with issues of patent rights and copyright theft

**Time** on the job, sports, practice, etc

ILLUS: lawyer in heaven, angel says, "you are 96 yr. old, it's time" I'm 36 yr. old what do you mean? The angel says, OH wait a minute I see, we added up your time sheets

**Affections** – people

EX: among kids – "stealing a best friend"

EX: among adults "alienation of affections" still the law in 6 states

**Reputation** – gossip and slander

Shakespeare – "Who steal my purse, steals trash, but he that filches from me my good name...makes me poor indeed." Gossip, a breach of the ninth commandment, but its effect is a breach of the eighth.

**Robbing God** by not giving to His Work – Micah

### **SELF ASSESSMENT**

I do not steal, but am I always on the lookout for ways to "juggle the books" in my financial dealings with others so that I can get the upper hand? Am I a giver or a taker?

Regarding the things God has given me, am I generous, ready to share, and eager to find a way to bless others, or, am I a stingy man who looks for loopholes through which I can escape the clear obligation to love and materially bless them?

**THE ANTIDOTE IS GENEROSITY and Contentment (more in two weeks)**

**The Gospel Makes Us Generous**

Eph 4:28

**He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.**

Don't steal, but work to give to others

**SWINGING DOORS**

**111. Q. What does God require of you in this commandment?**

**A. I must promote my neighbor's good wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would like others to deal with me, and work faithfully so that I may be able to give to those in need.**

We haven't fulfilled the biblical command if we simply refrain from stealing in all the ways mentioned above. We'd still fall short of what scripture teaches if we aren't generous. The biblical standard isn't a simple negative, "don't steal"; there is also a positive – "work so that you'll have something to give to others" and be content

As trustees, you have to honor the owner's rights over your own wealth or you're stealing. Malachi 3, God says, "will you rob me" in tithes and offerings? What this means is this: everything you own is God's, and he wants a significant amount of His money to go to three causes, the Bible commands that you be generous, generous, towards 3 causes, you know what they are:

- a. God's work: the Kingdom.
- b. The poor.
- c. God's people with needs.

Ephesians 4:28 – let the thief no longer steal, let him be generous.

You are either a thief or you are generous. If you are not generous you are a thief. If you really owned the money you have, and God says, "please give to the work of the Kingdom, please give to the poor, please give to these needy Christians over here" and you said no you'd be stingy...but if you are a trustee and you said no, you're a thief. Either generous or thief.

## REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

EX: Zaccheaus Luke 19:8; he was applying the four sheep for one rule of Ex 22:1

EX: Belfast revival of 1922-23 converted shipyard workers returned so many tools they had taken that an additional shed had to be built to hold them.

### **TWO PRINCIPLES THAT SUMMARIZE WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES:**

1. God owns everything you've got, so you must act like a trustee.
2. Jesus gave everything for you so you are free for radical generosity.

IF we are all trustees, and only trustees, then we only own things in the secondary sense right? We don't have ultimate ownership over it. It might be that we enjoy it, yes. Trusteeship doesn't mean that you can't enjoy it. EX: Uncle Max in Sound of Music

### **-JESUS GAVE EVERYTHING FOR YOU SO YOU ARE FREE FOR RADICAL GENEROSITY**

When you know that your real riches are what you have in Christ, then you have a different view of earthly riches. Becoming a Christian means that you believe in Jesus Christ, He becomes the ultimate treasure and what is precious in your life. And everything else in your life that used to define you has now become eternally and utterly expendable

How generous do we need to become? This gets us out of our COMFORT ZONE  
Let the model of Christ's grace gives us the rule of thumb.

Don't sit back and think you've obeyed simple because you aren't stealing – anyone could and should do that. The Christian is one who patterns his life after, and is empowered by God, so the result will be that our approach is like that of God. God IS RADICALLY GENEROUS, and his people become that way when they walk with HIM.

It is good and right not to steal, but that alone doesn't point people to Christ. Jesus is glorified most when our giving of ourselves – time, talent, treasure – reflects HIS giving of himself. This means it is sacrificial and according to the need of the moment. Jesus didn't settle for "a tithe" of himself when he gave himself for us. His giving was radical.

**Does your giving reflect something of Jesus' self-giving?**

Does it cut into the way your live? Jesus left heaven to live in poverty on earth and take hell itself for us. he became poor so that we might be made rich. *2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.*

Jesus altered his lifestyle to save us; does your generosity impact your lifestyle or do you merely give God the leftovers, in terms of TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE.

There is GOOD NEWS...

Jesus WAS CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THEIVES, so that we can be forgiven as thieves.

If you see what Jesus did and if you begin to live your life in the same way, not only will you not steal, HE will make you radically generous and content.

Prayer

--	--