

Sermon Series: The Decalogue

**Sermon title:** "The 8th Commandment"

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 20:1-17

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**Introduction:**

Look at the chart on the screen on how much stuff is stolen from hotels.

Stealing is everywhere.

Stealing is so prevalent that we have had to create many different words to describe different kinds of stealing.

Things such as:

Theft

Robbery

Burglary

Aggravated burglary

Fraud

Blackmail

Handling stolen goods

Kidnapping

Hijacking

Shoplifting

Piracy

Rent abuse

Tax evasion  
Intellectual property theft  
Cybercrimes  
Phone scams

Now these are crimes but there are many other ways we steal.

What does God say about stealing?

He says it is a sin.

Why?

What are some ways that we may be guilty of theft?

What should we do instead of stealing?

Let's pray.

I want to start off by giving you my main idea right off, as I sometimes do.

**Main idea:**

**The Bible forbids stealing of any kind but instead commands us to trust God, work hard and give generously.**

Here is my outline and the things we want to look at today.

- I. Stealing in the Bible**
- II. Stealing from others.**
- III. Stealing from God.**
- IV. Stealing Remedies.**

## **I. Stealing in the Bible**

Let's first just simply explain what **Exodus 20:15** means when it says, "You shall not steal."

This word in Hebrew is '*ganab*' which means to thief or steal by stealth or to deceive.

As we have said before in our study on the commandments, many of them are closely related. To steal involves deception and lying.

And all of the commandments are about loving God and loving our neighbor.

Stealing is something that has been around from the beginning of time. The Bible itself is full of thieves.

- Jacob stole Esau's blessing with his mother's help.
- Laban stole from Jacob and Jacob stole from Laban.
- Rachel stole Laban's household gods.
- Achan stole the loot from the battle even though God said to not do it.

- One of the 12 disciples, Judas, was a thief.
- 2 thieves were crucified on either side of Jesus.
- Ananias and Sapphira deceived and stole from the church.
- Onesimus stole from Philemon.
- Satan is called a thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy.

Stealing is one of the fruits of our sin nature.

And we are all guilty of theft.

Not one of us can say, "I have never stolen anything."

**Martin Luther** said, "If we look at mankind in all its conditions, it is nothing but a vast, wide stable full of great thieves.....It is the smallest part of the thieves that are hung.....If we're to hang them all, where shall we get rope enough? We must make all our belts and straps into halters."

Well, how can we frame stealing in our lives today.

From whom do we steal and why do we do it?

Firstly,.....we steal from others.

## **II. Stealing from others.**

We surely aren't loving our neighbor if we are stealing from them.

Most of us are not maybe guilty of grand theft or embezzling money or stealing church funds. But are there any ways that maybe we have become numb to theft?

You see, when a certain sin becomes so common, we start to do it just because everyone else does....and we justify things that way when people call us on it.

We say, "*Everyone does this.*"

Downloading things that are fakes, using someone else's Netflix account details, charging people too much for something on purpose. Have we knowingly borrowed something from someone but never given it back?

It may not be that we want to deceive someone but maybe cause it's awkward we don't want to say anything.

We should give it back if it doesn't belong to us.

Do we steal from our employers?

Paper, paperclips, printing, other supplies, Zoom account for personal use, snacks, access cards, expense accounts.

Probably the biggest theft of companies takes place on TIME.

**Business News Daily** reported that. *"The average worker checks their email 36 times an hour and takes 16 minutes to refocus after handling a new email. Many employees attend at least 60 meetings per month, through which 91% of employees say they daydreamed. And it takes most workers two hours per day to recover from interruptions from co-workers. These distractions don't just take away from your staff's focus - they cost you money in the long run.*

*According to a 2018 survey by Udemy, more than 70% of workers report feeling distracted on the job, with 16% saying they almost always feel unfocused. All of this lost work is costing American businesses upward of \$650 billion per year,"*

It's a type of theft.

Do we steal from the government?

Do we report all our income? It may be why so many businesses accept cash only.

What about our personal taxes?

Do we tell everything?

### **III. Stealing from God.**

Is it possible to steal from God?

**Malachi 3:6-10** says this,  
Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' **8** Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. **9** You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. **10** Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

This passage says that we steal from God when we keep all of our money to ourselves and not give to the kingdom of God.

We can also steal from God when we don't use our gifts or don't serve the Lord with all our hearts. He has given us the resources of time, gifts, possessions and money.

#### **IV. Stealing Remedies.**

Well, in the Old Testament, what was the penalty for theft?

The penalty was restitution; pay it back.

#### **Exodus 22 & Proverbs 6**

Sometimes the price was to pay back with one of your own, like a cow or sheep etc.

Sometimes, the price was double.

Sometimes it seemed to be seven times.

It is certainly reasonable to pay back someone if you took something from them.

Well, at the root and at the heart, stealing is about so much more than just paying someone back if you took something.

It's about what it says about what we believe about God.

What are we to do besides stealing?

**First**, the Bible points us to faith as a remedy for stealing. We are to trust God. Stealing isn't trusting God to provide for you. It is taking it upon yourself to ensure that you have what you want.

### **Philippians 4:19**

**19** And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**Matthew 5** in the sermon on the mount Jesus makes it very clear that we are worth more than many sparrows, so we don't even have to be anxious



He will provide for us.

So the first remedy to stealing is to trust God to provide and not steal.

**Second**, the Bible points us to working as a remedy to stealing.

### **Ephesians 4:28**

**28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Work is the opposite of theft.

We are to work and labor as a means to provide for ourselves, not steal.

So, let's say I really like movies and I really want to have a nice big movie collection on my Apple Account or Netflix. Problem is, I can't afford another monthly subscription. But I want that. So what do I do?

I bypass the costly service and download some bit torrent free downloads. Easy. Wrong.

What should we do?

We should work more if we really need to add that to our life, so that we can afford it or do without.

But we must not steal it.

Trust is a remedy and work is a remedy and there is a third.

**Third**, the Bible points us to giving as a remedy. Giving is a remedy to the power of money. When we give, we are holding money loosely.

And we are back to our **Main idea:**  
**The Bible forbids stealing of any kind but instead commands us to trust God, work hard and give generously.**

At root is what do we think about possessions.

Jerry Bridges said this and I found it very helpful. He said there are 3 basic attitudes towards possessions.

1. "What's yours is mine. I'll take it." [Stealer]
2. "What's mine is mine. I'll keep it." [Spender]
3. "What's mine is God's. I'll share it." [Steward]

The command, 'You shall not steal' isn't just about what we should NOT do but it is also about what we SHOULD do.

We shouldn't steal but we trust, work and give.

As I close, in the beginning I said that we are all thieves. Well, ultimate remedy for the sin of theft is not to just do better and stop stealing. We don't just need to be better.

Ultimately, the remedy is that we need to be forgiven and changed. Jesus died on the cross for thieves like us so that we can be forgiven. Jesus has the power to change us...to give us real power to trust God, work hard and give generously and stop stealing.

There may be some ways today that you need to repent of stealing. I urge you to ask the Lord to show you.