

Thou Shalt Not Steal

Exodus 20:15 / Eph 4:28

Preface:

We come to the 8th Commandment. It is neatly tucked away in the middle of the last 6 Commands that deal with moral character.

What is character? Character is not what others judge you to be or have, but what you are when no one else is looking. It is what you are essentially on the inside. That is why in each of these moral commands Jesus always went to the core of the problem, not the superficial.

Introduction:

Stealing: As with so many of the moral commands we all can fairly easily, and smugly say, *“I don’t steal. I’m not a thief. Therefore that does not apply to me.”*

God’s Moral Laws

6. Shall not kill (murder) hatred, vengeance, or anger
7. Shall not commit adultery, or practice sexual immorality (lust eye-mind, heart, body)
8. Shall not steal (earn your own way) work, own, tithe
9. Shall not lie (be honest, don’t cheat, don’t fib, don’t deceive, or cover up)
10. Shall not covet (which is (which is idolatry Col. 3:5) love money, success, fame, fortune)

The Command:

“Thou shalt not steal!”

- You should never take things that don’t belong to you.
- You shall never borrow and not return, or repay.
- You shall pay all your debts, all you owe – whether a parking ticket, parking meter, library books, late fees, income tax.
- You shall always pay the admission to a movie, theater, ball game, or amusement park.
- You shall not rob from your employer - phone calls, photo copies, software, pencils, paper, paper clips, etc.
- You shall always give an honest day’s labor for your pay.
- You shall never plagiarize a term paper.
- You shall never download copyrighted material, music, software, etc.
- You shall never cheat the system to avoid paying what is justly due.
- You shall not lie to IRS about your earned income.

“To him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.”

Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does *it* not, to him it is sin. – James 4:17

*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?
thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? – Romans 2:21*

Stealing is...

The Obvious Sin of Stealing.

1. Pick pocket - just as soon put a gun to your ribs
2. Shop lifter - petty theft, dime store candy, (ie) Pastor in district caught on tape stealing breath mints.
3. Bank robber - breaking and entering, blowing safe,
4. Auto theft - hot wire a car and take it
5. Check fraud - credit card fraud (ie) Movie "Catch me, if you can."

Why? Because You'll go to jail, get your hand cut off, or be punished.

Not-So-Obvious Sins of Stealing. (culturally acceptable?)

1. Plagiarism - Taking credit for something you did not do
2. Downloading pirated or illegal software, CD, videos, etc.
3. Cheating for financial gain - selling a defective house or car as though it was not. Or insurance fraud about that ding in your car.
4. Driving without insurance - you are stealing from all of us who pay!
5. Cheating on your income tax - false report of earned income, deduction you know is not allowed. Padding expense account.
6. Debts you cannot pay
7. Child care or alimony - dead beat dads

(ie) Men's speaker who broke the law with radar detector felt remorse but still has one

Why? are these seemingly innocuous slight-of-hand, mischievous deeds prohibited?
Because they build into you a character flaw that grows. It is a crack in your armor.

The Hidden Heart-Sin of Stealing.

Three levels God speaks of...

1. Time - Matthew 6:19 - treasure in heaven. - "*only one life*"
2. Talent - surrendered life taken back - "*to every man he gave a work*"
3. Tithe - due to God - Malachi 3:8 "*Will a man rob God?*" Of course, if he thinks he can get away with it, and increase his own possessions or net worth.

Why?

God is about the business of building character, making us more and more like Christ.

(ie) Boy and the hot penny

(ie) Walking a mile to return a few cents

(ie) Pastor who embezzled thousands, robbed bank to pay gambling debt

(ie) Bank officer who went missing - lost his memory over guilt