

## INSIGHT

There is an old folk tale that paints us a picture about honesty that is worth telling during these times. Both children and adults need to learn from its teaching:

Once upon a time a lazy man decided to sneak into his neighbor's fields to steal grain for himself. He thought, "If I only steal a little bit of grain from each field nobody will miss it and it will all add up to a great store of grain that will see me through the winter." So he waited until it was dark and crept out of his house. He took his daughter with him to stand guard while he was in the fields taking the grain. He said to her. "Daughter, if someone is spying upon me while I am taking this grain you must call out." They came upon the first house and the lazy man began to reap what he had not sown. Before long the child called out, "Father, someone sees you!" Frightened, the man looked around but he saw no one. He took the stolen grain and moved on to the next field. Not long after he began reaping his daughter called out again, "Father, someone sees you!" Again the man stopped dead in his tracks to look around. Seeing no one, he gathered the little he had reaped and moved on to a third field. A little while passed and the daughter called out once more, "Father, someone sees you!" This time, more annoyed than frightened, he looked around quickly. He saw no one so he continued gathering grain that had been produced by another man's labor. Coming to the last field, he began his dishonest toil when his child said, "Father, someone is looking at you!" The thief stopped and looked around. Seeing no one, he questioned the child, "Why do you keep saying someone sees me? I've looked everywhere and I don't see anyone!" "Father," said the little girl, "there is Someone who sees you from above."

The eighth commandment addresses all kinds of stealing. From theft of property to theft of services and rights! Taking money or tangible property that is not rightfully one's own is the most obvious form of stealing. Acts such as burglary, embezzlement, fraud, bogus insurance claims, plagiarism and even contracting debts beyond one's reasonable ability to pay or simply leaving a debt unpaid are all forms of stealing!

Taking intangible things from others is also a form of stealing. For example, making personal long distance

calls at work without asking permission, taking advantage of someone's kindness, denying someone's social rights, and lacking generosity all violate the eighth commandment!

### ***The Heart of God: The Eighth Commandment*** ***When you take what belongs to another...***

**Key Text:**

**Exodus 20:15**

*"You shall not steal."*

**Theme:**

"Because some hearts are corrupt, greedy and selfish, there will always be people who try to acquire property dishonestly." God's desire for us to acknowledge everything we have as *His*, is at the heart of this commandment. You need to be firmly convinced that whatever you own is God's property held in trust. Therefore, if you steal, you are stealing what rightfully belongs to God. You are taking someone else's trust which God has given.

**Application:**

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. ***Don't use your position for personal profit.*** This may include soliciting bribes, taking kickbacks, etc.
2. ***Don't cheat on your tax return.*** Hiding your income from the Internal Revenue Services is intentional deceit and robs the people of government services.
3. ***Don't keep as yours what you have not paid for.*** This includes items you have *borrowed* (but not intended to return), violations of the copyright law (on videotapes, cassettes, paper materials, software, etc.)
4. ***Be careful of what you say to people about others.*** Don't gossip, slander, disrespect, or discriminate. Encourage the opposite wherever you are.
5. ***Make it a habit to put your \$\$\$ where your mouth is.*** If you claim to be a disciple of Jesus, don't store up treasures on Earth, but in Heaven.

Spend your money and your time on the Kingdom. Use your dollars and your property to bring others into the Kingdom and to promote good stewardship (*Luke 16:9-13*).

**May the Lord richly bless you!**

**SERMON OUTLINE**

**“Taking What Belongs To Others”**

**Introduction: Last Week**

1. The seventh commandment dealt with the importance of moral commitment to God!
2. The Gospel provided hope for a sinful people
3. God, through Christ, took us and made us His bride,  
to be faithful to Him
4. *Adultery* is breaking faith with your spouse and pursuing after other “lovers”
  - a. Adultery begins in the heart! (*Matt. 5:27-30*)
  - b. We must deal with adultery radically in our lives
  - c. We must rely totally on God’s grace (*Eph. 2:8*)
  - d. We must live by the Spirit (*Gal. 5:16*)

**I. Eighth Commandment: Moral Action**

*Exodus 20:15*

**A. Thou Shall Not Steal**

1. The Work Ethic: *Eph 4:28*
  - a. Basis: Spiritual Renewal (*vs. 20-24*)
  - b. Heed the warning: *Steal no longer*
  - c. Act upon it: *work, do something useful...*
2. Idleness makes thieves
  - a. God desires His people to be involved in lawful industry  
--it keeps you out of temptation
  - b. Earnings used for holy purposes  
--All that we have belongs to God  
-- God’s gifts are to be used for the kingdom:

**B. Jesus’ teaching on stewardship (*Matt. 25:14-30*)**  
*stewardship: one who manages another property, finances and other affairs*

- all three pertain to Christianity
- a. It’s God’s property: your possessions
  - b. It’s God’s finances: your money
  - c. It’s God’s affairs: soulwinning, fellowships and discipleship

1. Point: While Christ is away, honor Him with the things entrusted to you and promote

- His interests among all peoples  
2. When He returns, He will hold us accountable

**Conclusion:** *Prov. 30:7-9*

- Consider what you need from God:
1. Grace sufficient (pardon)--the spiritual
  2. Food that is enough (provision)--the physical

**SMALL GROUP STUDY**

**Warm-up:**

How would your lifestyle change if you were required to give one-fourth or one-third of your annual income to God?

**See To It**

**Malachi 3:6-12**

1. What kind of God is Yahweh? Is He a God who speedily executes judgment on His people? Why?
2. **Read verse 7.** How is Yahweh’s grace demonstrated in this verse?
3. What was Israel’s first response to God’s rebuke? What does this response imply? Did they recognize their sin?
4. What did Yahweh accuse the people of doing? What was their response? Did they see themselves guilty?
5. Why did God accuse them of theft? In what ways were they stealing from God?
6. What were the tithes and offerings in the Old Testament used for?

**Seeing It Closer**

1. Give some specific examples of how we can rob the Lord today as Christians?
2. Have you been convicted in robbing the Lord recently? If so, how have you robbed Him?
3. Do you see yourself like Israel, challenging God’s rebuke? Or are you open to correction in the area of sharing your time, finances, home, and other possessions with others? Be honest!!!!

**Getting To It:**

Our God is a merciful God who continually showers His grace upon us! Let us always examine our hearts and lives to see if we are robbing God in any way. Don't be like Israel who didn't recognize their sin, but rather use all that you have to the glory of God! Is your home a fellowship hall? Is your time God's time? Is the Lord in full control of your finances and material possessions? Heed to His warning: "*Stop robbing Me!*"