

May 27, 2020

Commandment #8

The eighth commandment is, “Thou shalt not steal.” (Exodus 20:15 & Deuteronomy 5:19). What does it mean to steal? Stealing is taking that which does not belong to you. We most often think of stealing in terms of material things, but we can also steal a person’s joy or happiness and even rob them of their peace of mind through our words, attitudes, or actions. In addition to taking that which does not belong to us, stealing can also speak of not giving that which rightfully belongs to another. If you borrow something and do not return it, you are guilty of stealing. If you waste time at work, you are guilty of stealing from your employer because you are not doing what you are being paid to do. In Malachi 3:8, God condemned the children of Israel for robbing God when they failed to give their tithes and offerings to the Lord.

Do you remember the story of Robin Hood? He supposedly stole from the rich to give to the poor. Is it okay to steal from those who have more than enough, especially if you are in need? Stealing is stealing, regardless of the motive. What about cheating on a test (stealing answers) or not paying your taxes? When we fail to pay our debts, we are guilty of stealing. Let us consider three passages of scripture.

First, **Leviticus 9:11-13**. How many of the ten commandments do you see in this passage? Note the sins identified with stealing. How many can you find? I see at least five, dealing falsely, lying, defrauding, robbing, and withholding wages.

Second, **Romans 13:8-9**. In this passage, Paul is summarizing the purpose of the law. Notice the last phrase in verse 9. The last six commandments deal with our relationship to others. When we break any one of these commandments, we are not fulfilling the law or loving others as we ought.

Third, **Ephesians 4:28**. In this passage, Paul admonishes us to put off the old man and the corrupt deeds of the flesh. From verses 25-31 Paul lists five sins that we are to put off. Can you find them? According to verse 28, instead of using our hands to steal, what are we to do with our hands? Working is the opposite of stealing. When we fail to do an honest day’s work, we are guilty of stealing.

In what ways are you guilty of stealing, from your parents, at school, or from God? Do you give your parents the honor and respect they deserve? Do you do your best at school? Do you listen to your teachers? Do you spend time with God in prayer and studying your Bible? When you go to church, do you listen, pay attention, and participate? Are you guilty of robbing God of thanksgiving and praise? The sin of stealing is born out of selfishness. Anytime you are being selfish, you are guilty of stealing.