

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Commandment # 8 - Honor Material Possessions

Exodus 20:15

¹ The Eighth Commandment is to honor material possessions. ² Exodus, chapter 20, verse 15, says, **You shall not steal.** ³

I. What Did This Mean to Them?

What did this mean to the original recipients of this command? ⁴

What is the meaning of the word? ⁵

The word **steal** ¹ means to steal, lift or heist. ⁶ If you “borrow” something without asking and don’t return it, it’s stealing! ⁷

What was the punishment for stealing in the Old Testament? Exodus, chapter 20, verses 1 through 3 tells us, **If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep. If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed. A thief must**

¹ גָּנַב

certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft. ⁸

The thief would have to pay for the theft four to five times what it's worth. ⁹ If the thief was caught at night and killed, it would not be considered homicide. ¹⁰ If the thief couldn't pay the theft with money, he could be sold as an indentured servant and work to pay off the debt. ¹¹

Why is stealing such a big thing to God? ¹²

Everything belongs to God. Everything is God's property. He created it, so He owns it. When you steal, you are stealing from Him! ¹³

It interferes with God's plan for the victim. God gives material possessions to people to manage for Him. It's called stewardship. Faithfulness to God is determined, in part, by how you take care of His property. When someone steals possessions, they interfere with God's plan for the person the possessions were stole from. ¹⁴

It, also, interferes with God's plan for the thief. God wants to develop within you an attitude of love, giving, humbleness and self sacrifice. Stealing is the result of pride, greed and disregard for others. This is the opposite of what God wants to accomplish in you! ¹⁵

II. What Should This Mean to You?

What should this mean to you? ¹⁶

God wants you to be content with what He provides for you at any given time. ¹⁷

1. Because of God's promise to you. Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 5, **Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." ¹⁸**

2. Because contentment is something you must learn. Philippians, chapter 4, verse 11, **I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹⁹**

3. Because godliness needs to be your focus, not things. We have a couple of scriptures here. First Timothy, chapter 6, verses 6 through 8, **But godliness with contentment is great gain.** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Then, we have what Lord Jesus stated in His Sermon on the Mount, **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,** and all these things will be given to you as well. ² ₂₀

Also, **God wants you to work hard for what you get.** ²¹
Why?

Because hard work is promised to bring forth a profit. Proverbs, chapter 14, verse 23, **All hard work brings a profit,** but mere talk leads only to poverty. ²²

Because it satisfies a craving. Proverbs, chapter 21, verses 25 and 26, **The sluggard's craving** will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All

² Matthew 6:33.

day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing. ²³

Because the apostles did it. They set the example for us. First Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 12 says, **We work hard with our own hands.** ²⁴

Because it's a Christian rule, **For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."** ³ ²⁵

Finally, **God wants you to focus on giving to others, not stealing from them!** ²⁶

Giving to others, the Bible says, provides heavenly riches. Lord Jesus stated, **Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys.** ²⁷ The gift isn't as important as the attitude behind it! ⁴ ²⁸

³ II Thessalonians 3:10-11.

⁴ II Corinthians 8:12 - For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

God wants you to do it cheerfully! Second Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 7, **Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.** ²⁹

Remember, when you steal; you are interrupting God's plan for your victim! ³⁰

You are interrupting God's plan for you! ³¹

You are telling God that you are not content with what He is providing for you. So, you are, figuratively, slapping Him in the face! ³²

You are not fulfilling His plan for you to work for what you get!

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