

**Proverbs 23:10-11** Do not move an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you.

### INTRO:

- God owns everything.
- Therefore everything that you own is really God's.
- Therefore you do not really own anything, and I am entitled to your property, right?
- This is the conclusion of socialism. And it has this problem: Proverbs 23:10-11.

**CONTEXT:** This is a proverb. Proverbs require meditation: "What instruction am I supposed to glean from this?" Observe and be wise.

### CONTENT:

1. **COMMAND:** Do not move an ancient landmark
    - **Q.** What are these ancient landmarks?
      1. **Deuteronomy 19:14** "You shall not move your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in the inheritance that you will hold in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess."
  2. **CLARIFICATION:** or enter the fields of the fatherless,
    - **Q.** Why would someone enter the fields of the fatherless?
      1. The worthless: to exploit the vulnerable
      2. The presumptuous: a little transgression that good made come
  3. **REASON:** for their Redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you.
    - **Q.** What is the reason annexed to this command?
      - **Matthew Poole:** Their redeemer, Heb. Their near kinsman, to whom it belongs to avenge their wrongs, and to revoke and maintain their rights.
        1. Their Redeemer is strong
        2. Their Redeemer is faithful
- **COMFORT:** The Christian has a strong Redeemer. You were once the fatherless. Your old covenant head abandoned you to the miseries of sin. But Christ took your nature. The meek may be exploited, but they will most certainly inherit this earth.
  - **CHILDREN:** You need a strong Redeemer.
  - **DIRECTION:** This is not just a passage about land.
    - **Matthew Poole:** Do not invade the rights of others.
    - **Matthew Henry:** We are here taught not to invade another man's right, though we can find ways of doing it ever so secretly and plausibly, clandestinely and by fraud, without any open force.

**DOCTRINE:** God owns everything. He has the right to delegate from His sovereignty what He pleases, to whom He pleases, and you must respect His decisions.

## I. GOD OWNS EVERYTHING

**Leviticus 25:23** The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine.

**Psalms 50:10** For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.

**Romans 9:21** Has the potter no right over the clay

**Psalms 115:3** Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

## II. GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO DELEGATE WHAT HE PLEASES, TO WHOM HE PLEASES

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

**Acts 17:26** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

## I) THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT GOD HAS NOT DELEGATED

1. God has not delegated His glory.
2. God has not delegated how He is to be worshipped.
3. God has not delegated a free use of His name.
4. God has not delegated the right to determine when to work and when to rest.

## II) THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT GOD HAS DELEGATED

1. God has delegated the vocations of superiors, inferiors, and equals, therefore you must honor them.
  2. God has delegated to the magistrate to be His avenger, therefore you must not take matters into your own hands.
  3. God has delegated to the husband to love his wife, therefore you do not get to commit adultery with her.
  4. God has delegated property to individuals, therefore you do not get to take it.
  5. God has delegated the care of a good name to every individual, therefore you do not get to slander.
  6. God is the wise delegator, therefore all covetousness is idolatry.
- God is sovereign. He has the right to delegate what He pleases, to whom He pleases. **This is the foundation of the the whole moral law of God.**
  - The whole moral law is **summarily comprehended** in the 10 commandments. Further summarized in “love God, and neighbor.” Further summarized in “fear God and keep His commandments.” (Eccl 12:13)

## III. YOU MUST RESPECT GOD’S DECISIONS

- If I can just give you one primary way to respect God’s decisions, it would be this: **Do not meddle in other people’s business.**
- In 1744, **Gilbert Tennent** preached a sermon entitled, *The necessity of studying to be quiet, and doing our own business*. I commend to you his seven points:

### When are we guilty of meddling in fields where we do not belong?

1. When we invade the Office of another in ordinary Cases, without a regular Call (**Grandparents, Self-appointed teachers, Fathers**)
2. [When] we obtrude our Advice upon others, especially our Superiors, not being ask’d (**Examine yourself and watch out for those backseat drivers and tales that try to wag the dog**)
3. When Persons of a private Character authoritively reprove their Superiors (**Remember this when we go to the capitol**)
4. When we interpose in contests without a Call (**Examine yourself and watch out for those who are always trying to mediate someone else’s grievances**)
5. When we are inquisitive into Mens designs, and labour to discover their Secrets (**Watch out for the curious inquisitors: those who are “just checking in” with an unhealthy desire to know what is none of their business**)
6. [When] we infringe upon the Liberty of others, and cross their Humour by trying to impose our Opinions upon them (**Watch out for those who are full of opinions**)
7. Idle tatlers are especially guilty of this Evil (**These are gossips and busybodies**)

**These are all forms of moving the ancient landmark, and trespassing where one does not belong.** Two summary exhortations.

1. **Keep a close watch on yourself.**
2. **Heads of households, keep guard of your homes.**  
**CHARLES BRIDGES:** Everyone has an undoubted right to his own. He must therefore have the means of knowing and securing his right.
3. **CHILDREN:** You need to learn what it means to “mind your own business.” If you do not know, ask your parents today.

**DOCTRINE:** God owns everything. He has the right to delegate from His sovereignty what He pleases, to whom He pleases, and you must respect His decisions.

## IV. USES

### I) INSTRUCTION

1. You must earn the right to be heard.

2. The state does not have the right to take your property and to feed the one who does not work with it.
3. You can set whatever price you want upon what you owe.
4. You can pay whatever wages you want upon the service you want performed.

## II) COMFORT

1. To the Christian fatherless
2. To the Christian who has had their boundaries violated
3. To the every Christian (gospel)

## III) EXAMINATION

1. Where are you violating the boundaries of your neighbor?
2. Heads of household, where are you enabling your neighbor to violate your boundaries?

## IV) WARNING

1. The violator of boundaries makes the Redeemer their adversary.

## V) EXHORTATION

2. You need a Redeemer. Do you have a Redeemer?

**Hebrews 9:15** Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

## VI) DIRECTION

1. Know your stewardship
2. Learn your rights
3. Learn your responsibilities
4. Mind your own business
5. Faithfully steward what has been entrusted to you

**Deuteronomy 27:17** “‘Cursed be anyone who moves his neighbor’s landmark.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”

**Job 24:2** Some move landmarks; they seize flocks and pasture them.

**Acts 5:4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?

**Job 26:14** But the thunder of his power who can understand?