

GOD'S GUARDRAIL #8: THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

"Thou shalt not steal."

Exodus 20:15 (KJV)

Big Idea: The risk of breaking the 8th commandment increases when our heart levels of contentment and integrity are low.

1. Understanding the WRONG in STEALING.

- Biblical Perspective on Ownership:

- Divine Ownership: God has sovereign ownership of everything.

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,
2 for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.*

Psalm 24:1-2 (ESV)

- Human Stewardship: God grants us the responsibility to manage what He owns.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:28 (ESV)

- Moral Call:

- Integrity: God calls us to live with honesty and truthfulness.

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.

Proverbs 11:3 (ESV)

- Contentment: God calls us to be satisfied with what we have.

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."⁶ So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Hebrews 13:5-6 (ESV)

2. IGNORING God's GUARDRAIL in 2024.

- Modern Manifestations:

- Theft: Stealing through deceptive practices.
- Plagiarism: Stealing intellectual property and claiming it as one's own.
- Time Theft: Wasting time at work or not fulfilling responsibilities.
- Permanent Borrowing: Not returning things lent to us.
- Slander: Stealing the good name and reputation of others.
- Fornication: Stealing the moral purity of others.

3. The FLIPSIDE of "Thou Shalt Not Steal".

- Real Freedom:

- Abundant Life: Provided for by the Good Shepherd.

"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

John 10:9-11 (ESV)

- Selflessness: Free to focus on the interests of others.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

- Gospel Contentment: Free to live contentedly, trusting in God's provision.

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:11-13 (ESV)

- Generosity: Free to be generous contributors to those in need.

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)

4. Jesus' OFFER to Those Who IGNORE This Guardrail.

- A Picture of Forgiveness: Jesus offers forgiveness and a new start for those who repent.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. ⁴ So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷ And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸ And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." ⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19:1-10 (ESV)

- Transformation: Jesus transforms our hearts, leading us away from theft towards generosity.

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Ephesians 4:28 (ESV)

- Provision: You are not an orphan! Jesus promises to meet our needs, as our focus changes.

"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:31-33 (ESV)