

DON'T TAKE IT!

"You shall not steal."

Deuteronomy 5:19 (ESV)

QUESTION #1: WHAT'S OWNERSHIP?

- Ownership = the act or state of possessing something. It's the legal right to use it, possess it, and give it away.

QUESTION #2: WHO OWNS IT?

- God owns EVERYTHING, and we STEWARD His blessing.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.
Psalm 24:1 (ESV)

QUESTION #3: WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

- REALIZE my stewardship in relation to God's ownership.
- RESPECT the Owner (and steward) of the property.
- REFUSE to take what you weren't made to steward and be RESPONSIBLE for what you have.

QUESTION #3: WHAT ARE WAYS PEOPLE STEAL IT?

General Theft:

Theft, robbery, extortion. (Ezekiel 22:29)

Kidnapping or slavery. (Exodus 21:16)

Stealing from employers. (Titus 2:9-10 – slaves)

Employers stealing from employees. (Jeremiah 22:13)

Refusing to work for a living. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

Rip-offs and false measures. (Proverbs 11:1)

Failure to pay debts. (Psalm 37:21)

Tax evasion. (Mark 12:17; Romans 13:7)

Fraud. (Leviticus 19:13)

Refusing to give credit/praise for a job well done. (Proverbs 3:27)

Charging excessive interest. (Proverbs 28:8)

Gossip and rumor. (Proverbs 22:1)

*Not an exhaustive list, specifics drawn from scripture.

Stealing from God:

Failing to give back to God. (Malachi 3:8-10)

Living a hypocritical life. (Jeremiah 7:9-10 or Romans 2:21)

"Gaze upon Christ long enough, and you'll become more of a giver. Give long enough, and you'll become more like Christ."

Randy Alcorn

QUESTION #4: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE STEAL IT?

Consequences of Stealing:

Anger of God and His wrath. (Joshua 7:1 – Achan stole devoted things.)

Deprives others what they are due. (Leviticus 19:13)

Brings shame/disgrace to the thief. (Jeremiah 2:26)

Leads to deception, lies, and even greater sin. (John 12:4-6)

QUESTION #5: WHY DO WE STEAL?

- Ultimately, theft comes from a lack of CONTENTMENT.

"We will never take things that are not ours unless we want things that are not ours, and the problem is that our whole economy is built on our wanting things that are not ours."

Anonymous

GUARDRAILS AGAINST THEFT

- Guardrail #1: LOVE

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:8-10 (ESV)

- Love robs the thief of his FOCUS.

- Guardrail #2: GRATITUDE

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."

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

- Gratitude robs the thief of his ATTITUDE.