

## “The Ten Commandments (Part 9 – No Stealing)”

Commandment #8 is recorded in Exodus 21:15, where the Lord says, “*You shall not steal.*” In a recent survey, 86% of adults claimed they kept this command. And yet, stealing is the most common crime in our country. The Old Testament word for “*steal*” means to “*to quickly carry something away by stealth.*” It’s the idea of deceitfully appropriating someone else’s property without permission. In the New Testament it’s the word “*klepto*” that is used, from which we get “*kleptomaniac.*” We’re not to steal anything from anyone at any time for any reason. We’re not to steal a person, a place, or a possession. To say it positively: God wants us to be just, honest and generous.

To understand the prohibition against stealing let’s remind ourselves of five Biblical principles that every follower of Jesus should embrace: 1) God owns everything; 2) Everything I have is a gift from God; 3) I am a steward (manager) of all He’s given to me; 4) I must respect the property of every person; 5) I must be a giver (sharer), not a taker (stealer). Here’s the main idea of this Eighth Commandment: *When we steal, we take from the person who possesses it, and from God who owns it. When we trust God’s providential provision, we will treat people and their property with respect.*

This Eighth Commandment prohibits **stealing from people**. Unfortunately, there’s a lot of ways people steal things from other people: theft, burglary, motor vehicle theft, robbery, shoplifting, pick-pocketing, online scams, embezzlement, etc. Human trafficking has become (and has long been) a tragic reality. This is where people steal other people (usually women and children) and enslave them, taking away their freedom, often forcing them into the sex trade and doing other things against their will (under the threat of violence or death). People also steal things from other people in the following ways: employees stealing from employers, employers stealing from employees, using false measures and deceptive practices, failing to pay debts, lying on our taxes, plagiarism, and illegal downloads or streaming. According to Proverbs 11:9 we also rob others of their reputation by passing along juicy gossip and rumors.

This Eighth Commandment also prohibits **stealing from God**. *Don’t steal from God by attempting to take His glory unto yourself.* Please allow God to use you! But don’t for a moment fool yourself by thinking you had anything to do with the outcome. Give all the credit and all the glory to God alone. *Don’t steal from God by robbing Him of your tithes and offerings.* God accused His people of doing this very thing in Malachi 3. Yes, it’s Old Testament, but tithing was practiced before the Law was given, it was prescribed and practiced in the Old Testament Law, and Jesus affirmed tithing as a New Testament principle when He said that we should not leave tithing undone (see Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42). Start today giving 10% of your income to the Lord (“tithing” means “a tenth”). Through tithing we honor the Lord and recognize His provision and blessing in our lives. Take God up on His dare to see if *He won’t throw open the windows of heaven and pour out more blessing on you than you can contain* when you tithe. Tithing is an act of faith by which we assert our belief that a blessed 90% goes further than an un-blessed 100%. God doesn’t need our money, but we sure could use His blessing – a blessing promised to those

who obediently, faithfully, and cheerfully give. ***Don't steal from God by trying to re-gain the lordship of your life.*** When we get saved, we give all that we are to the Lord to receive all that He is in our lives. We, by far, get the better end of that exchange. When we get saved, our life now belongs to the Lord. Don't try to take back from God what you have already given to Him. Keep placing Him on every throne in your life. Keep living a continually surrendered life to the Lord.

## **Discussion Guide/Action Steps**

1. In what ways have you been guilty of stealing things from other people?
2. Pry any attention off yourself and onto God.
3. Don't steal by robbing God of what belongs to Him.
4. Keep giving control of every area of your life to the Lord.