

You shall not steal

For the Family

Say together the 8th Commandment: ***You shall not steal.***

Talk together about why it is wrong to steal from others.

Think together about different ways we steal from others.

Explain how the opposite of stealing is generosity. Instead of taking what others have, we need to learn how to be generous with what God has given us.

Read together Genesis 25:19-34 (Esau sells his birthright)

Explain the importance of a birthright in those days. The first born son (even if a twin) would receive a double portion of his father's possessions. (You may want to illustrate this idea: Use tokens to show how this worked: 2 to the firstborn; 1 each to the other sons).

Talk about the situation here. Esau was so hungry he was willing to sell his very valuable birthright for some "red stew." It was such a poor choice that he was given a nickname for it: "Edom," which means "red."

Talk about how Jacob took advantage of Esau's situation. Instead of being generous with his stew (Esau was his brother!), Jacob convinced Esau to sell his birthright. Explain how this was a form of stealing. God wants us to be generous with what he has given us, especially when someone else is needy.

Review the first eight commandments:

Put God First
Worship Him Only
Keep God's Name Holy
Keep the Lord's Day Holy
Honor your Parents
Do not Murder
Do not Commit Adultery
Do not steal



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: ETCHED IN STONE

You Shall Not Steal

The Eighth Commandment

Exodus 20:15

You shall not steal.

Last Week: The last six commands (honor your parents, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, don't covet) are the foundation upon which God will build his nation of Israel. God says in very simple language, "Do not commit adultery." God knows the pain that is caused when one spouse is unfaithful to the other, not only to them, but to their family, and even to the culture at large. God expects his people to be faithful to one another.

This Week: The eighth commandment is a simply worded yet highly expansive prohibition against theft of all kinds: "You shall not steal." This is one of the most open-ended commandments, and includes stealing of all kinds. Stealing includes material theft, withholding what you owe (loans, taxes, commitments, etc), taking credit for ideas that are not your own (plagiarism, copyright), taking someone's dignity or good name (slander, gossip), and other ways of taking something that does not belong to you. The opposite side of stealing is stewardship and generosity. God gives us material wealth so that we can take care of our families, take care of others in need, and build his kingdom on earth.

Observing

Read Exodus 20:15 – *You shall not steal.*

1. What do we learn about God in this commandment?

2. Commandments 6-10 (on murder, adultery, theft, lying, and coveting) can be seen as building blocks for a civilization.

How would a prohibition against stealing help build a strong civilization?

3. See how many ways of stealing you can come up with.

4. What happens to society when people steal from each other?

5. With murder and adultery, Jesus gave us the underlying causes: anger and lust.

What are some underlying causes of stealing?

Connecting the Dots

1. A Heart Issue

Read Matthew 6:19-24

What are the alternatives for treasures? (19-21)

What are the alternatives for sight? (22-23)

What are the alternatives for masters? (24)

What is the link between treasure and heart?

What is the link between eye and body?

What is the link between master and money?

2. Repentance

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:2

How does Paul describe the Gentiles' mind, understanding, and heart? (17-18)

What attitudes and behaviors did these bring about? (19)

What are the differences between the old self and the new self? (20-24)

Paul makes several applications of these truths in the rest of the chapter. This week we will focus on verse 28, about stealing.

What does Paul suggest the thief should do instead of stealing?

How would you describe the "old life" of the thief?

How would you describe the "new life" of the (former) thief?

3. Godliness

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-11

How would you define "godliness with contentment"?

Is "food and clothing" really enough? Would you settle for that?

What can happen to "those who desire to be rich"?

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Why is the "love of money" the "root of all kinds of evil"?

How does the desire for wealth draw us away from the faith?

Continuing the Journey

1. What do you treasure in life?

Where does your relationship with God fit in?

Do you need to change what you treasure?

2. Where are you in the transition from "old self" to "new self"?

Have you just begun the journey?

Or have you made it down the road quite a ways?

3. When it comes to God or money, who is your master?

Do you lean on God or on money?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you fit on a "Godliness with contentment" scale?

What would it take to score higher?

Next Steps:

- I will not steal from God. I will give to God what rightfully belongs to him.
- I will not steal from people. I will pay my debts and respect what belongs to others.
- I will monitor my attitude towards material property to ensure that my possessions don't own me.
- I will not be defined by my possessions (or lack of possessions) and will not define others by what they possess (or don't possess).

Memory Verse – Exodus 20:15 – *You shall not steal.*

During this series we will be memorizing a simplified version of the 10 Commandments. Here are the first eight:

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make or worship any idol.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor your father and mother

You shall not murder

You shall not commit adultery

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