

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Lesson Seventeen

The Eighth Commandment (2): You Shall Not Steal

Burden to Impart:

Stealing is take whatever belongs to someone else without their knowledge or permission. This includes "borrowing" and not returning or repaying. Stealing is sin, and should be cleared up by first confessing the misdeed and then by repaying or restoring what was taken.

Memory Verse: He shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full...
Numbers 5:7

Facts to Teach:

1. Stealing breaks the basic law of God: that we should LOVE our neighbor as ourself (Gal. 5:14) and treat our neighbor as we would like him to treat us (Mat. 7:12).

2. Stealing is to take what belongs to someone else. Either that person worked for the item, or his parents, or it was a gift. But at any rate, someone had to work and pay for it.

3. Stealing does not only mean to take money from others, or some costly thing, stealing is to take ANYTHING from another person without their knowledge or permission. It may be a small item, like a pencil, an eraser, a sticker, etc. Our conscience will strongly protest if we intentionally take anything that does not belong to us. That strong warning represents God's warning to us. He knows our thoughts and intentions (Heb. 4:12) and is warning us not to steal.

4. Sometimes we steal unintentionally by "borrowing" something and "forgetting" (or neglecting) to return it. To return the item or to repay the money borrowed is the borrower's responsibility. If they do not return the item or repay the money, they have stolen it, just the same as a thief. Although the lender may forget what we borrowed, the Lord does not. This is a warning to us to not borrow things from others (Rom. 13:8).

5. Another way we may be guilty of stealing is by taking something we found. Every lost thing has an owner. If we find something we should always look for the owner or turn in the item to the proper authorities so that the item can be returned to the owner if he reported it was missing. If he does not report it missing and the owner is not found the item will probably be returned to the finder.

6. Stealing requires restitution. This means that that we should not only confess our sin to the Lord and to the owner, we should repay or replace whatever we stole. In the Old Testament God required to repay at least a fifth more, sometimes double or even fivefold (Num. 5:7; Exo. 22:1,7). This teaches the thief not to be either lazy or greedy and covetous. God is happy whenever we clear up any past misdeeds. This is what Zacchaeus did when he got saved (Lk. 19:8).