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No Stealing: The 8th Commandment

Deuteronomy 5:18
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Lazy Mountain Bible Church
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Introduction

We are in the 8th message in a series called, "Live the 10."

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It is about living the 10 Commandments.

We are looking at the 10 Commandments because the Bible tells us they are 10 essential building blocks, ten foundations stones, for building strong lives, strong relationships, strong families, and a strong national consciousness.

In fact, just after giving these commands in Chapter 5 of Deuteronomy, in the same breath God turned to the whole country, in a national address, and said, please say it with me:

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Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (NLT)

5 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

Well, how can you do this, if you don't know the 10 Commandments? How are you supposed to live what you do not know? How are you supposed to teach what you can't recite? Well, you can't. So for the past 8 weeks we have been memorizing them in just 24 words, and this Sunday it is time for us to give ourselves a progress report, time to find out where we are.

So will you please take out the little index card and write them down.

Sound Person please play a CD for about 1 ½ minute.

Now look at your card and let's read them aloud together.

And if you didn't get them, here they are, and you can download this slide on the web.

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Let's say them together.

1. No other Gods
2. No idols
3. Honor my Name
4. Honor my Day
5. Honor your parents
6. No Murder
7. No Adultery
8. No Stealing
9. No lying
10. No Coveting

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OK, now let's turn to the 10 Commandments in the Bible—they are easy to find and easy to remember where to find them, because all we have to do is look at our hand and count the fingers. 1 hand has 5 fingers—and that helps us remember, "Where are the 10 Commandments?" We find them In the 5th Book of the Bible, the 5th Chapter, beginning with the 5th verse: Deuteronomy Chapter 5, beginning with verse 18.

No stealing

Today we look at the 8th commandment, which is "Thou shall not steal."

Once a man was wanting to rob a downtown Bank of America. He walked into the branch and, on a deposit slip, wrote

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"this iz a stikkup. put all your muny in this bag."

"However, while he was in line waiting to give the note to the teller, he began to worry that someone had seen him write the note and might call police before he reached the window. So, he left the Bank of America and crossed the street to a Wells Fargo bank.

After waiting a few minutes in line there, he handed the note to the Wells Fargo teller. She read it and surmised from his spelling errors that he was not the brightest light in the harbor. She told him that she could not accept the stickup note, because it was written on a Bank of America deposit slip, and he would either have to fill out a Wells Fargo deposit slip or go back to the Bank of America.

Looking somewhat defeated, the man said "Okay," and left. The Wells Fargo teller then called the police, who arrested the would-be bank robber a few minutes later as he was waiting in line back at the Bank of America.

There are many stories out there about dumb criminals that are very similar to this one.

I particularly like the one about a guy who was holding up a convenience store wearing his motorcycle helmet as a disguise. The only problem was that his name was emblazoned across the front of the helmet in big, bold letters. Police somehow tracked this genius down very quickly.

Stories like these are always good for a laugh. However, it gets decidedly "unfunny" when someone actually steals from us. How many of you have had something stolen from you?"¹

I remember we were overseas, and we took our camera up to breakfast with us so we could take some pictures of the ocean in the morning.

Well, we left breakfast and left the camera on the patio breakfast table, got back to our room and realized we had left the camera on the table. It was gone along with our vacation pictures.

It hurt, still hurts to this day to think about it.

We laugh at all the "stupid criminal" stories and we get justifiably serious and rightly incensed when other people steal from us. After all, everyone knows this commandment by heart: "You shall not steal." However, very often—maybe even usually—we fail to apply this commandment to ourselves as stringently as we do to everyone else!

Have you ever done that? Applied a Commandment to someone else, more stringently than to yourself.

Well, you probably haven't but I have. Jesus calls it the log factor.

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Matthew 7:3 (NIV)

³ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

We have the eyes of Eagles to see specks in others eyes, and the eyesight of a newborn kitten when it comes to finding logs in our own eyes. And everyone knows that kittens are born with their eyes closed!

¹ "Thou Shall Not Steal" – Derick Helt

Kittens open their eyes about 7 to 10 days after their birth, but Jesus says some of us never open our eyes to our own culpability.

So Jesus says there is a cure. First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to remove the speck out of another's eye.

Let's look at what the Bible says.

What does it mean to not steal?

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גָּנַב (gā-nāḇ): v.**steal**, be a thief, i.e., take items without permission by the owner, but usually by stealth and not force.

Now it might surprise you, but having a fool proof security system, absolutely fool proof security system, does nothing to deter theft. In fact the person with the most fool proof security system is the one most stolen from. It is the author of this commandment. That is correct it is God.

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The greatest victim of this commandment is God.

In fact, billions of Christians will go to church today, and leave, having ripped off God. It was the next to last warning he gave before the birth of Jesus found in the last book of the Old Testament. He said:

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Malachi 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions.

The Bible teaches tithing is a tenth or ten percent. The first 10% of all I make goes back to Him in gratitude because I owe Him everything. I wouldn't have anything if it weren't for God. The first 10% of all I make is to go back to God. He could have said 20%, 50% but He just said 10%. I don't know why but He did. God says if I am paying my bills before I pay the Lord back out of gratitude for what He's done, that's robbing God.

Now you will hear, someone say, "Well, that is Old Covenant, that is Old Testament. They will continue, "Tithing doesn't apply to me, I am a New Testament believer."

Let me ask you a question, "Does thou shall not steal?" apply to you? That is Old Testament. Does thou shall not murder apply to you? That is Old Testament.

And they will say, "Well, those commands are repeated by Jesus in the New Testament.' And they would be right.

But Jesus also repeats the instruction to Tithe in the New Testament!

Luke 11:42 (NIV)

⁴² "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

A pastor friend was preaching through the Ten Commandments. A guy in his church came up after the service and said "You're really preaching the word in this series. It is great." Each commandment, each week, until "Don't steal" and the guy came up and said "Now you've quit preaching and started meddling". This gets personal. We love to hear when we talk about other people's sins. But we don't like it when we realize "I'm breaking the eighth commandment because I'm not tithing." God says you're robbing Me if you're not tithing and it is just as important as the other ones.²

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The next greatest victim of stealing is the Government

The Bible teaches

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Romans 13:1,2, 5,6 (ESV)

Submission to the Authorities

13 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment...⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

We are to pay every penny of the taxes the government levies.

Well, you say, "I don't agree with what they are spending my taxes on." Then change the government.

² "Prospering with Integrity" – Rick Warren

You live in the most changeable government in the history of the world.

Let me ask you a question, back in the day that you were born, do you remember God asking you, "What country would you like to be born in?"

No, he didn't do it.

He planned for you to be born an American. He planned for you to be born a citizen in the most peacefully changeable government in the world. If you feel the Government is misspending your tax revenues, then it is your responsibility to change that. It is your responsibility to do everything you can with all the energy you have to change your government. God brought you forth in this country so that you would have that option. If you were born a Russian, or an Iranian, you wouldn't have that option. But it was no surprise that you were born an American. God planned it.

Well you say, "Religion should be involved in politics." Well if our founding father George Washington was here he would beg to differ with you greatly.

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George Washington

He was one of the half dozen most wealthy men in Virginia, and he put all of that on the line, he risked all of it, because of taxes—not taxation without representation. And he was a Christian a man as any man in this room.

If you are defrauding the government by hiding income and not paying your full taxes, you have no biblical basis for doing so. Stop staling today and pay your full taxes. And when it hurts, then it just might be painful enough that you step forward in this next election cycle and do something about it.

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The Constitution keeps the Government out of Christianity, but it can never keep Christians out of the Government.

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And lastly, the third greatest victim of theft is you and me.

There's a "Big Lie" regarding stealing. It is very subtle, yet pervasive in our culture. It goes something like this: "There's stealing and then there's really stealing. We don't steal, we just 'borrow.' If no one notices that something's gone, then it cannot really be stolen. If you don't get caught, then there's no harm done." You see, most people I know would never, ever consider actually going into someone's house and taking their possessions. That's stealing! However, probably all of us need to be reminded that there are many more subtle ways to steal things and to rob from others.

Subtle stealing is still real stealing.

Stealing from an employer is probably the most common type of theft. It has been estimated that Americans waste twenty percent of the time they spend at work. My guess is that this happens most often with people who don't like their job. If you hate your job, it can be very difficult to self-motivate and really stick with it. However, if you love it, then often even the most difficult aspects of your job can motivate you to really pour it on and work hard.

However, we need to remember Paul's instructions to slaves and indentured servants:

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"Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do.... No matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God" (Ephesians 6:5–7, The Message).

Whether it's wasting time, or taking Post-It Notes or paper clips, or making unauthorized photocopies, facebooking it at work—whatever it is that we do—it is still stealing, even if we don't get caught.

How about stealing from big, faceless corporations and companies? Many people do this. They copy software illegally, or music, or movies, or use other copyrighted material without permission.

Many people think nothing about filing a false insurance claim.

The rationale of people when they do something like this is usually along these lines: "They're so big, so rich. They won't notice a little revenue lost from one person defrauding them or using their product without paying for it." Or, they delude themselves by thinking that "They somehow owe me something for free because I have less money than the CEO of XYZ Corporation."

The crazy thing is that when people do this, they are ultimately robbing not only themselves, but their neighbors, family, and friends also. For, you see, companies will make profits one way or another. If some steal their product, then the price of that product goes up for everyone else. If too many people shoplift from Wal-Mart, then Wal-Mart will raise their prices. That's the way the real world works. If I defraud my insurance company, then your premiums go up, as do mine. This idea that one can steal from a corporate entity and not real people is a myth. It is still stealing.³

What do we do about it?

God laid out a plan in the Bible.

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How to live the 10 today!

Fist, we make restitution.

³ Thou shall not steal—Derik Helt

You know the story of Zaccheus. He was a great tax cheat until he met Jesus. But when he met Jesus he said this.

Luke 19:1-9 (ESV)

Jesus and Zacchaeus

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And 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 of 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.**

Second, Put God to the test, Give God the Full tithe

Malachi 3:8-12 (ESV)

⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

It is the only time that God invites his followers to test him.

Third, Live Honestly

Ephesians 4:28 (ESV)

²⁸ 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.

Conclusion --Worship Team Comes Forward

Some years ago, there was a young pastor whose first church was in a small logging community here in the Pacific Northwest. Nearly everyone in town worked for the logging mill. It was the biggest employer and also involved in a fierce competition with another mill that was just upstream. One day, the pastor climbed up the slope overlooking the river and the mill. To his horror, he saw some of his church members pulling logs that were branded

by the other mill from the river, cutting off the branded ends, and running them through their own mill. That Sunday, he preached a powerful sermon entitled, "Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Property." After the service, all the loggers shook his hand, patted his back, and told him how much they enjoyed his preaching.

However, the next week, he saw that they were back in the business of stealing their competitor's logs. So, he fired off another scorching sermon called, "Thou Shalt Not Steal." Again, he was commended for his powerful delivery and his keen insights into the Scriptures. But on Monday, the other mill's logs were still being swiped. Enough was enough! He'd had it. This time he decided not to hold anything back. The next Sunday he pulled out all the stops and preached a message entitled, "Thou Shalt Not Cut the Branded Ends Off Someone Else's Logs." The result? He was run out of town!