

# VIII

DO  
NOT  
STEAL

**Exodus 20:15**

*“You shall not steal.”*





# REFLECT

*What did you hear?* \_\_\_\_\_

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*What do you think?* \_\_\_\_\_

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*What will you do?* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Now talk with God...* \_\_\_\_\_

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 19:11-13; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9.
2. Define stealing.
3. Besides personal property, what else might fall under the category of theft or stealing?
4. Can businesses steal? Employers? Employees? If so, how?
5. How does one who has stolen, make things right?
6. What is the intent of the Lord when He blesses us with material goods beyond our need?
7. Restate this command in a positive light. How would this command read?



# Character And Integrity

Ephesians 4:28

The eighth commandment “you shall not steal” is made up of four simple words which indict the entire human race to one degree or another.

Let us consider two things:

## 1. The Nature of Man

Man is fallen—sinful—his “*heart is deceitfully above all things and desperately wicked*” (Jeremiah 17:9). “*From it flow the issues of life*” (Proverbs 4:23). The heart of man refers to the core of our being. Our character is revealed by what proceeds from our hearts. Jesus in Matthew 15:19 refers to the heart as the place of origin for evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, and yes theft (stealing), false testimony and slander.

## 2. Spiritual Regeneration

As believers our character (who we are at the core) and our integrity (our actions) are on display before the world. The measuring rod used to measure our character and integrity is our actions. “*Take courage my friend,*” Ephesians 4:28 states. “*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that is in need.*” Let the world judge us by our generosity and willingness to help others.

**Application:** How can we display a life that has been radically regenerated by the indwelling Holy Spirit? Perhaps we can show up to work early and stay late. Wait, don’t stop there, remain conscientious of allocated break time so as to not steal time from the employer. Wait, you’re halfway there. Now take some of your hard-earned income and bless someone who is less fortunate, remembering the words of our Lord Jesus “*it is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35).

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## DAY 37 - DO NOT STEAL

# The Great Time Robbery

Ephesians 5:15-16

“I need some help this Saturday morning moving furniture. Can you help me?” My friend Rob wanted to move furniture between rooms since his kids all left for college and needed help. Anything for Rob so I came with a couple of other friends that day. However, when we knocked on the door, Rob was still deciding which furniture was going where and was in the middle of taking big pieces apart. When we finally did begin moving, Rob changed his mind several times. We stood around for half the time and weren’t done until after dinner. Unfortunately, Rob didn’t plan efficiently. He was stealing our time.

None of us ever wants to steal but the one type we often do unknowingly, is the stealing of someone’s time. Ephesians 5:15-16 says *“therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil”*. This verse tells us that our time is valuable but it implies that ALL time is valuable. Being a wise steward of someone else’s time is even more important because we are to *“with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”* (Philippians 2:3).

When asking for someone’s time, pray to be a servant to those serving you, to be efficient with their time, and to show them grace and thankfulness.

**Application:** How have you used others time? How can you be more of a servant to those who are serving you? How can you stop stealing time?

“Dear God, thank you for friends willing to serve. Please help me to be more aware of their time and serve them by using their time wisely. Amen.”

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## DAY 38 - DO NOT STEAL

# Do Your Best

Ephesians 6:7

The Apostle Paul speaks of all work as serving God. In Ephesians 6:7, we are encouraged to “work with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” In Colossians 3:23 Paul encourages the Colossians “and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.” Both passages seem to encourage us to do all work as if God were our employer, not a company or an individual.

Several translations of II Timothy 2:15 begin with “Do your best” to show yourself approved a workman who needs not be ashamed. . .” Granted, the narrow application of this passage applies to the way we interpret and teach the Bible. But the broader application, especially when coupled with the Ephesians and Colossians verses certainly encourage us, wherever we are and in whatever we are doing, to always do our best. We are working for God, not men. And often how we are seen by others have more heavenly implications that we realize.

Think about the Bible heroes, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David, to name a few. These people were not perfect—they sinned and made errors in judgment. But we find them doing their best, whether doing great things or simply mundane things. Sometimes maybe we think of the things we are doing as mundane. We may not think of our work as being too important. We may not think that flipping hamburgers at McDonalds is going to change the world much. But we may not know that the manager knows we belong to Jesus and is watching our behavior and attitude toward our work.

**Application:** When we see things from this perspective, we realize more how important it is to do our best and work as though God were our Boss. We bring honor to all work when we have this view. And after all, when we have Jesus as Lord of our lives, is not God really the Boss anyway. So don't steal from either your earthly or heavenly employer. DO YOUR BEST!

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## Can You Be Trusted?

Luke 16:10-11

What presented itself as a typical business lunch between industry professionals quickly transitioned to a private meeting at a local sandwich shop which could hatch a scheme promising considerable personal gain. While the simple, but dishonest plan was communicated in sufficient detail, I found my consciousness dropping into what seemed like slow-motion. “Is this really happening? Does this type of thing go on in Stanislaus County?”

The building blocks of trust can be made up of thousands of brief actions spread over years, and even decades. Occasionally, trust can even be well placed—or withheld—in a matter of moments as it was in the above story.

Today’s verse is taken from a parable that Jesus shared with His disciples while Pharisees listened from nearby. The shrewd manager was accused of wasting his master’s possessions, and the master was removing him from his management position.

What do you manage—large or small? If Jesus came to review your performance, would He find you trustworthy and honest? Can you be trusted today? Trusted to carry out today’s tasks in a way that will bring glory to our Heavenly Father? Trusted to faithfully carry the gospel of Christ into your world? What will you do today to build on your story of trustworthiness and honesty?

**Application:** “Father in Heaven, thank you for the wisdom and discernment that you provide when we ask and seek you first. Thank you for your protection and help. Father, my desire is to seek your approval above the approval of others. I want to seek Your treasures first, trusting in Your promises to provide for me and my family.”

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## DAY 40 - DO NOT STEAL

# God Is Our Boss

Colossians 3:22-4:1

One of the wonders of our creation and existence is that each of us have been given life as an expression of not only God's love, but also His purposes! Each of us have been hand-crafted by the Creator of the Universe for purposes He has prepared for us and we will not "sleep" until our purposes are fulfilled (Acts 13:36; Ephesians 2:10).

We all have been made to serve our Creator who calls us not only to love Him, but also to serve others. We each have been made with various talents and gifts which when all are functioning bless the larger community (Ephesians 4:14-16).

As followers of Christ, how ought we embrace our work?

1. Enthusiastically! We are in the service of our great King who desires to not only work in us, but through us, and He is the one who has strategically placed us for His purposes. Imagine a workplace where there are no followers of Christ!
2. Others first! As we seek to serve others first, our great King will wonderfully provide for us as He does for all creation (Matthew 6:25-34). When we put others first, we are on time, we give our best effort, we expend our energy to see that the businesses we are involved in thrive and our customers are blessed.
3. With anticipation! When we recognize that we are in the service of our King, we realize that our King will honor and reward us for every sacrifice with treasures that will never dissipate over time and are greater than any temporary earthly treasures we could ever acquire (Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15)!

**Application:** "Father in Heaven, help me to serve you well today! Help me to be one of yours who seeks to serve rather than be served, trusting in you for my daily needs! Amen."

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# JOURNAL







