

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 6:25-33**.
- B. The 8th commandment (Ex. 20:15).  
“You shall not steal.”
- C. How does this commandment demonstrate God’s love for us?  
Answer: In effect God is saying, “I don’t want you stealing because I am your Provider. I want you to understand and believe that I am the One who will supply all your needs. I don’t want you to have to scheme, manipulate, and deceive to obtain things. I don’t want you to feel responsible for your own future.”

I. **WHY DO PEOPLE STEAL?**

- A. First, because they want instant happiness.
  - 1. See the example of Achan in Josh. 7:20,21.  
So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: [21] when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."
  - 2. Rather than waiting on God to supply what he desired, Achan took what did not belong to him, and it brought a stinging defeat to the army of Israel. It also brought a death sentence to Achan and his family. When the Israelites walked away from the pile of rocks that covered the family’s grave, they named that place *the Valley of Trouble*. All for just one act of stealing!
  - 3. This whole account seems to speak about trusting God’s timing and provision. Not running ahead of Him to provide for our own needs. Not running ahead of Him to grab our own happiness or comfort or security. He wants us to wait for Him, and to wait for His timing. Even if we have to wait through the very few years of our lives to enjoy the unimaginable splendor in heaven, *it is better to wait* (1Pet. 1:3-5)!  
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
  - 4. Yes, we all have our work to do. And yes, we need to be responsible, making a living, and pursue excellence. But always remember it is God who provides for you. He’ll provide for your future. He’ll do what He said he would do. Trust Him now to do those things.
- B. Second, because they want security.
  - 1. People sometimes think, “If I can just take this and get that, it will give me the sense of security I’m longing for.” They think security in riches and “things” will make them happy. Solomon said that kind of lifestyle doesn’t work (Prov. 23:4,5).  
Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. [5] When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings, Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.
  - 2. Money and possessions are no security at all. The only secure thing in this life is God (Psa. 16:8,9).  
I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. [9] Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely.
- C. Third, because they want to attract friends.
  - 1. Notice Prov. 19:4.  
Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend.
  - 2. To have money and possessions will attract a lot of friends. But that friends is only interested in the money and possessions, not you as a person. This sort of friend is really no friend at all.

- D. Fourth, because they have forgotten God's great promise.
1. See [Mt. 6:25-33](#).
  2. The reason people steal is because they've forgotten about God. the reason people deceive, manipulate, and cut ethical corners is because they believe their future lies in their own hands. When people forget who God is, they end up being very possessive and greedy.
  3. When you know who God is, it changes the way you look at possessions.
  4. Money is uncertain. When a person seeks to be rich--whether through honest means or by dishonest schemes--the money will fly away and you'll wonder what happened.

## II. TWO WAYS TO STEAL.

- A. First, we rob our neighbor.
1. We take what God has given to another and rationalize it by saying, "They can afford it" or "No harm was done" or "They'll never miss it."
  2. No matter how we try to justify our actions God never gives us a reason to think that He approves of stealing (Mt. 7:12).  
["Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."](#)
  3. Some ways to steal are:
    - a. Stealing ideas. Songs, sermons, articles, etc.
    - b. Stealing by not paying our debts.
    - c. Stealing by swindling others in business deals.
    - d. Stealing others' time. Are you consistently late for meetings?
    - e. Stealing opportunity by discrimination.
    - f. Stealing liberty by binding traditions rather than doctrine and grace?
    - g. Stealing well-being by not sharing out of our abundance.
- B. Second, we rob God.
1. When the accumulations of things becomes so important that our attitudes and actions are driven by our desire to accumulate, we've given "things" first place instead of God.
  2. We rob God for the same reason we rob others; we've lost our perspective on things.
  3. Ways that we steal from God:
    - a. We rob God of credibility by living lives lacking in character (Jer. 7:9-11).  
["Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal, and walk after other gods that you have not known, \[10\] then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered!'-- that you may do all these abominations? \[11\] "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD."](#)
    - b. We rob God by giving Him meager offerings (Mal. 3:8-10).  
 Some of the most hardened thieves pack the pew every Sunday. What is the most expensive thing you have to pay for? Shouldn't God be your greatest "expense."  
["Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings. \[9\] "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! \[10\] "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."](#)

## III. TERMS OF SURRENDER.

- A. That's what happens when people place their faith in "things" rather than God. They are disappointed in the end. And the end always comes.
- B. In a sense, the first sin of eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden was a theft, for the man and the woman took what God had told them to leave alone.

- C. You can't be a person of character and be a thief. We all have something inside of us that is fascinated with the concept of getting something for nothing. It permeates our culture.
- D. Two Things about Things.
1. *You Own Things.*
    - a. Why do people steal? Perhaps some people steal for self-preservation. They are so destitute that they think stealing is the only way they can survive. Most people steal because they have not kept material things in perspective. We live in times dominated by a materialistic worldview where ownership of things has become a measure of affirmation, self-worth, and success.
    - b. Scripture, contrary to communism, does NOT condemn private ownership. But Scripture, contrary to capitalism, does NOT go to the other extreme and assert an absolute right to private ownership.
    - c. There is a wrong involved in stealing because this is right of keeping (owning).
    - d. The best attitude toward things is the attitude of stewardship. What we have has been put into our trust by God (it all belongs to Him). Xians should not desire to accumulate things at the expense of other people, because things were meant to be used not hoarded.
  2. *Things Own You.*
    - a. We live in a time when "things" define our personal value, and, if we buy into this materialistic value system, we will inevitably want more and more things (Mt. 16:26; Lk. 12:15; 1Tim. 6:7,8).  
*(Mt 16:26) "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*  
*(Lk 12:15) And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."*  
*(1Tim 6:7,8) For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. [8] And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*
    - b. We must live in the delicate balance. It is permissible to own things, but that doesn't justify grabbing as many of them as you can.
    - c. The thief's root problem is that he/she is not satisfied with the portion God has allotted him in his life (Eccl. 5:10). The thief takes because he is not content with what he has.  
*He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.*
    - d. A thief can learn a skill and get a job, but until he learns to be content with what God has given him, he will always be tempted to take what God has given to others.

#### IV. **THREE WAYS TO SURRENDER AND NOT STEAL.**

- A. First, cultivate a thankful spirit.
1. Thanksgiving is not a holiday for Xians, it's a lifestyle.
  2. People of character remember how much God has given them and how much more that is than they deserve.
- B. Second, share whenever you can.
1. See Eph. 4:28.  
*Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.*
  2. See Prov. 11:25.  
*The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.*
  3. By becoming a Xian we have an entirely new world view of things. They are not something to be accumulated at all cost; but rather used as they become available in the service of others.
- C. Third, trust God.
1. If God is not the Lord OF all, he is not Lord AT all.

2. Trust God. Put God first. It is as simple as that. See Mt. 6:19-21,33.  
 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; [21] for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” [33] “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”
3. There is something greater than happiness--it’s called contentment  
 (Phil. 4:11-13; Heb. 13:5,6; 1Tim. 6:7,8).  
**(Phil 4:11-13)** Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [12] I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. [13] I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.  
**(1Tim 6:7,8)** For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. [8] And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.  
**(Heb 13:5,6)** Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," [6] so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?"

**CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. God does not want you to steal because He wants you to trust Him to be your Provider.
- B. Does your attitude towards things need to be adjusted?
- C. Let’s come back to the principles of the Ten(der) Commandments.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.