

The Sin of Stealing

Int.

1. Aim: To show that stealing in any form is sin.
2. Exodus 20:15 "Thou shalt not steal." - BBE "Do not take the property of another."
 - a. This is the 8th commandment
 - b. Repeated in Rom. 13:9
 - c. Eph. 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."
3. Millions of dollars are lost every year in this country over the theft of goods and services.
 - a. One estimate says that 1 out of every 52 shopper's carries something out of the supermarket for which they haven't paid.
 - b. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 4 million people are caught shoplifting every year.
 - c. But for every one caught, 35 others get away with it. This means that there are over 140 million incidents of shoplifting every year in America!
 - d. What's really tragic is that only 10% of all shoplifters come from low incomes. 70% are middle class and 20% are classified as wealthy. [Stole from Walmart photo]
 - e. These facts are astounding! America appears to be a country of thieves.
4. Stealing is wrong. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." 1 Pet. 4:15
 - a. Thief = a stealer
 - b. Kleptes - we get our word kleptomaniac - one who steals

Discussion

I. STEALING IS A VIOLATION OF GOD'S LAW

A. Right of ownership is sacred

1. God made everything and man really owns nothing.
2. We merely use or lease the things that God has given into our hands
3. We have the right to possess or use property
 - a. But we must work for it - Eph. 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Labour = work hard
 - b. 2 Thes. 3:10 "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."
4. Some examples of people owning property and were not condemned
 - a. Ananias and Sapphira
 - (1) Acts 5:4
 - (2) Owned land - it was theirs and nothing wrong about that
 - b. Philip
 - (1) Acts 21:8-10
 - (2) Owned a house - used to care for Paul and company for several days
 - c. Mary
 - (1) Acts 12:12
 - (2) She had a house with enough room for several people

B. Three ways to obtain property

1. Work - it is honorable -

- a. Eph. 4:28 - Labour = work hard
- b. Work is not a curse, but the way that God has ordained for us to get the things we need and want.
- c. Ill. One evening a man saw his neighbor, a famous author, carrying coal into his house. The neighbor told him that it was undignified for a man of his social standing to be seen carrying coal. The famous author replied, "Any man who is ashamed to carry his own coal deserves to sit all winter by an empty fireplace."

2. Gift - is from love

- a. Some one may give us a gift, or we may receive an inheritance, or we may be the beneficiary of a will or insurance policy.
- b. These are all legitimate ways of getting gain. There is nothing wrong with receiving things from others.
- c. Often, God may choose to bless your life in this way.

3. Theft -

- a. Stealing is the illegal taking of another person's property without that person's freely-given consent.
- b. It could be in the form of burglary, embezzlement, larceny, looting, shoplifting, or fraud.
- c. The person who carries out an act of theft is known as a thief.

- C. Thieves will not be in heaven. 1 Cor. 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

II. **EXAMPLES OF STEALING**

A. Shoplifting

1. Stores - take items without paying
2. Receive too much change back from cashier - do you return it ?
3. Undercharged for an item or items and you know it. Do you tell them?
4. Motels and hotels - One new hotel reported that in their 10 months of operation, they lost 38,000 spoons, 18,000 towels, 355 silver coffee pots, 1,500 silver finger bowls and 100 Bibles to thieves.

B. Stealing from Employers - in the work place

1. Employee theft costs companies billions of dollars every year, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$120 billion.
2. According to USA Today, 48 % of all American workers took something from an employer last year.
3. People do this by taking things home, selling things without their employers knowledge and pocketing the money, taking kickbacks, falsifying time records, wasting time while at work.
4. When we take things that are not ours from an employer we are stealing.

5. Lev. 19:35-36 NKJV " 'You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36 'You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt."

C. Cheating

1. Income tax - not reporting all income, taking deductions that are dishonest
2. Tests at school - getting answers from another is stealing

D. Gambling - on horses, ball games

1. It is wrong because it violates the principle of ownership
2. It is born of covetousness - Col. 3:5 - desire to obtain money without working
3. The Lottery is a form of stealing -
 - a. You want the money of many others and they want your money.
 - b. The money that should be used for your family is stolen by you and put into the lottery.
 - c. The money could be used for spreading the gospel and other good works
4. Gambling is where two or more people are trying to steal from one another.
5. Greed not hunger is the most frequent motive for gambling

E. Borrowing things and not returning them is a form of theft.

F. Making debts and then not paying them is stealing.

1. Trying to live beyond our means -
2. Keeping up with the neighbors - new cars, furniture

III. PRINCIPLES VIOLATED IN STEALING

A. God condemns all stealing

1. Rom. 13:9 "thou shalt not steal"
2. 1 Pet. 4:15
3. Eph. 4:28 - stop this stealing - work for it so you can help others.

B. The amount involved does not matter

1. Stealing \$1 is just as wrong as stealing \$100 or \$1,000
2. Cheating on one answer is just as wrong as cheating on all of them

C. Excuses offered to soothe conscience

1. "It's not very much - they'll never miss it."
 - a. Not just them we are concerned about.
 - b. God will judge us according to our works and He has said "thou shalt not steal"
 - c. Whether they will know it or not, God will - Rev. 20:12-13, 14:13
2. "They are getting enough already"
 - a. Talking about income tax
 - b. That doesn't make any difference
 - c. Sinful to cheat whether they are charging too much or too little
 - d. Rom. 13:1 & 7

3. "I'm not stealing from any person, but it's a company or government"
 - a. Sinful to steal, whether its from individual or group of people
 - b. Stealing is wrong because God condemns it and there is never any situation where it is right
 - c. Acts 5 - Ananias and Sapphira

IV. OTHER WAYS OF STEALING

A. Drunkard

1. Steals food from his wife and children - 1 Tim. 5:8
2. Steals lives of many on the highway - Rev. 21:8
3. Steals own life and usefulness which belongs to his home and community - one talent man - Matt. 25:30
4. Steals his own soul from God and hands it over to the devil.

B. Some Christians

1. Steals the Lord's day and consumes it upon his own pleasure.
 - a. Goes fishing or camping instead of worshiping God
 - b. Goes shopping and misses worship services
2. Steals his talents by not using them for the Lord
 - a. Has the ability to teach a Bible class - but is not willing to take the time and make the sacrifice
 - b. Has the ability to help his fellow man but is too selfish

3. Steals the contribution which should go into the Lord's work and uses it for his own luxuries

a. Will a man rob God - Mal. 3:8-10 v. 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

b. Stealing at it's worst

C. The Stealing Of Time -

1. You and I have been allotted only so much time in this world.

2. If we waste that time instead of using it for the glory of the Lord, we are guilty of theft!

3. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"

Ps. 90:12

CONCLUSION

1. According to the Word of God, when we steal, we are to repay - Ezek. 33:15-16 NKJV.

"if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 16

"None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live." - Restitution

a. We are to practice restitution to those we have wronged.

b. Whether it is an employer, a neighbor or even God.

c. We are to make it right, whatever the cost!

2. God has blessed us with many material possessions.

a. We should use these to help others

b. This is the proper way of life

3. "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Romans 12:17

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