

Thou Shalt Not Steal

In modern times, stealing has become socially acceptable in some circles. Since stealing has become so widespread, it's worth taking some time to point out that it's not acceptable to God. The almighty God who created the universe has forbidden it:

Exodus 20:15: "Thou shalt not steal."

In fact, God has forbidden all forms of theft and fraud. None of them are acceptable to Him:

Leviticus 19:11: "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another."

God takes stealing personally. Those who steal are guilty of taking His holy name in vain:

Proverbs 30:9: "Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

When people break God's law they are dishonoring Him. That means sin is *always* a personal attack upon God Himself, and He doesn't ignore it. Stealing is therefore a serious matter. In fact, God has pronounced a special curse upon those who steal:

Zechariah 5:1-4: "Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse

that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.”

If a person is a thief then God will send a curse into their house, and that curse will remain there. Over time that curse will destroy both them and their house. Thieves may think they're getting ahead through the evil they're doing, but in reality they're cursing their household and bringing it down to destruction.

All forms of fraud are an abomination to God. He *hates* them:

Proverbs 11:1: “A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.”

Proverbs 20:23: “Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good.”

There are countless ways people can steal from one another. Some people walk into a store and take something without paying for it. Others use lies to convince someone to purchase something they otherwise wouldn't have. Some people claim the item they're selling is one thing when in reality it's something else entirely (and is worth far less than is claimed). There are those who break into homes or cars and steal, or who rob people on the street. Some people rob banks or convenience stores. The list of ways that people can take wrongly things that

don't belong to them is very long.

It's never acceptable to steal. Some people justify it by saying they were poor and needed the item that was stolen, but God *never* justifies stealing:

Proverbs 6:30-31: “Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.”

God doesn't excuse theft on the grounds that it satisfied an urgent need. Instead He condemns it. People *must not steal*. It's not justified in the sight of God.

Some people operate under the principle that if they can get away with it then it's fine. However, God disagrees. No unrepentant thief will be spared from His wrath:

1 Corinthians 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, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

This is a big deal. If thieves don't repent then they'll go to Hell. They will be tormented in fire forever with no hope of release. They will experience everlasting agony. Stealing doesn't make people's lives better! If thieves don't repent it will condemn them for all eternity:

Proverbs 29:24: “Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.”

That's why it's so important to repent now, while there's still time. Thieves (and all sinners) must repent of their sins. They must believe in Jesus and ask Him to forgive them. They must also turn away from their sin and make restitution for what they've done.

That last bit is important. If someone robs a bank and then keeps the money, they haven't repented. True repentance involves restoring what was stolen:

Luke 19:8-10: "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

It's true that if someone repents and then dies ten seconds later it's not possible for them to make restitution for what they've done. There may not always be a way for people to do something about the harm they caused others through their actions. However, genuine repentance doesn't ignore the victims of our actions.

John the Baptist put it this way:

Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:"

If you want to be saved then *stop stealing*. Repent of your sins and ask God to forgive you – and then do whatever you can to make restitution. Those who turn away from their sins and seek forgiveness from Christ will save their souls from everlasting damnation, but those who continue in sin will be cast into Hell.

As the apostle Paul said:

Ephesians 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.”

That is the way of salvation.