

# **“The Lunacy of Larceny”**

## **Exodus 20:15**

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### **I. Introduction**

- A. This 8<sup>th</sup> commandment addresses one of the most common sins of our culture—the sin of stealing
  - 1. Today, in California and some other states in the United States, we have decriminalized petty larceny
  - 2. We all know how it feels to be the victim of theft
    - a) Illustration- (Acts 2:38)
  - 3. God’s command is “thou shalt not steal”
  - 4. The Hebrew language only has two words: “not steal”
    - a) God’s Word is clear. Stealing is forbidden
    - b) God’s standards don’t change over time
    - c) Think of the kind of world we would live in if we followed God’s law
  - 5. This command clearly implies that we have a right to private property
    - a) We must acquire it the right way
    - b) It is not loving your neighbor if you steal

### **II. What is Stealing?**

- A. To steal is to take by stealth, force, or deceit, that which rightly belongs to another or is due to another
  - 1. “The command plainly forbids robbery and extortion. The taking of another’s possessions by force, or threat of force. It also forbids similar crimes of stealth such as embezzlement, graft and bribery” – R. Kent Hughes
  - 2. How do I steal from someone?
    - a) Property theft, customs theft, debt theft
    - b) Borrowing theft, welfare theft, time theft
    - c) Work theft, phone theft, computer theft
    - d) Account theft, supply theft, plagiarism, and the theft of another’s reputation
  - 3. Stealing can take two forms
    - a) The active
      - 1) The sin of commission
    - b) The passive
      - 1) The sin of omission
  - 4. I want you to see this in our Lord’s parable of the Good Samaritan
    - a) (Luke 10:25)
- B. We see active stealing by force and violence
  - 1. The thieves (v. 30)
    - a) Their philosophy of life was “what belongs to my neighbor I want, so I will take it”
  - 2. They stole by force and violence
    - a) So common today

- 1) In 2020, there were 538,203 violent crimes in the U.S.
  - 2) In 2017, the FBI reported 1,401,840 burglaries in the U.S.
  - 3) There are 2.5 million burglaries annually in the U.S.
  - 4) Every 15 seconds, a home burglary occurs in the U.S.
3. There are many shades of stealing
    - a) Employee theft
      - 1) Money, goods, time, etc.
    - b) Employer theft
      - 1) Unfair wage
    - c) Fraud
      - 1) (James 5:4)
    - d) Exploitation
      - 1) Illustration- Jacob, Esau
    - e) Deceptive business practices
    - f) Falsifying insurance claims or business expenses
    - g) Embezzlement
      - 1) Stealing funds placed in your trust
    - h) Plagiarism
    - i) Borrowing and not paying it back, or giving it back
    - j) Also, in the church
      - 1) Illustration- Jesus cleansed the temple
      - 2) Preachers who fleece the flock
  4. Even more subtle forms of stealing
    - a) Kidnapping and slavery
    - b) Stealing one's purity
    - c) Stealing someone's reputation
      - 1) Gossip
      - 2) Slander
  5. The value of the thing stolen has no bearing on the guilt of the act
    - a) If you steal, you are a thief
    - b) (1 Corinthians 6:10)
  6. Stealing is sinful and harmful
    - a) To others, yourself, and God
- C. Stealing comes in the passive form
1. (Luke 10:31-32)
    - a) The Priest and the Levite
    - b) Their philosophy was "what belongs to me is mine and I will keep it"
    - c) Not only can we steal by taking from another, but we can also steal by withholding from another what is their due
      - 1) (Matthew 7:12)
      - 2) (1 John 3:17)
        - a. Illustration- The Rich Fool

### III. The Positive Side of the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment

- A. The Good Samaritan's philosophy was "What I have is given to me from God and I will share it"
  1. (Luke 10:33-37)

2. Let us also remember that we can rob from God
  - a) We rob God of glory by our sinful behavior
  - b) By not using our time, talents, and treasures for others and God's glory
    - 1) (Malachi 3:8)
  - c) By not giving Him proper worship

#### **IV. What is the Remedy for Stealing?**

A. Regeneration

B. Restitution

1. Illustration- Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
2. (Ephesians 4:28)
3. Jesus said, "the day of salvation came to this house"
4. Illustration- Jesus on the cross and the two thieves
  - a) (1 John 1:9)