

Stark Road Gospel Hall

Bimonthly Bible Readings

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Jeff Joyce

Introduction:

The Lord Jesus often grouped the last 5 commandments together, as referring to how we are to treat our fellow man (neighbor). "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself".

These last three commandments are especially related to our treatment of others (8&9) and our hidden thoughts about others and their possessions (10).

Command #8 - Protecting Private Property: Thou Shalt Not Steal –Protecting the property of my neighbor – His estate.

1) **Definition:** Stealing is taking from others without giving in return.

2) **Character of God displayed:** God is by nature - giving.

3) **Context** – No limiting context to the original commandment, although the first application of this law is kidnapping in chapter 21, which is perhaps the most serious form of stealing.

Interestingly the first sin could be described as a theft (as well as disobedience) – Eve "took" of the forbidden fruit. The first recorded sin as Israel entered the land was theft (Achan), and the first recorded sin in the NT Church was a theft (Ananias, with Sapphira). Often theft (followed by lying in denying it) is one of a child's first sins.

4) **The Reason for this Commandment:** Man is by nature, selfish. (Mark 7:21-23)

- This commandment has to do with the regulation of our hands.
- One who steals is in a sense, trying to remove the effect of the curse of sin. (Ge 3:19) "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"

5) **Broader Application**

The most obvious form of this sin is the blatant taking of another's possessions. Most of us would carefully steer clear of such a blatant and obvious violation of this command. However, perhaps we would not be so sensitive to activities that though less obvious, also transgress this commandment.

a. Stealing from man

- Time theft from an employer (late to work, long lunches, long non-work related discussions with coworkers, web surfing/shopping etc.) This type of theft alone is estimated to cost the US economy 70 Billion dollars per year.
- Downloading copy-written music from the web, burning CD's for your friends or accepting the same.
- Using bootleg copies of software or entertainment DVD's.
- Plagiarizing material for school projects.
- Tax evasion (Rom 13:6-7) "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*"
- Disrespect of the law (Rom 13:7b) "Render therefore honour to whom honour *is due*."

b. Robbing God (Mal 3:8) "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

- Negligent in giving financially to the Lord's work
- Negligent in giving time (priority)
- Neglecting to worship (robbing God of the honor He is due)
- Negligence toward the needy (Mat 25:34-46) "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me."

Stealing is an act that is completely contrary to the character of God. Perhaps the reason why God hates stealing so much is that it is a crime which completely contradicts His character. God is gracious; the thief is greedy. God gives; the thief takes. God responds to the cries of the needy; the thief callously creates needs and tragedy. Nothing could be more contrary to the graciousness of God than the cruelty of the thief.

Stealing, then, is a sin against God, against one's neighbor, against one's nation, and ultimately against one's self.

6) Positive Opposite

(Ac 20:35) "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive".

(Ro 12:17) "Provide things honest in the sight of all men".

(1Th 4:11) "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;"

(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."

(2 Th 3:8,10) "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: .. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Command #9 - Protecting the Sanctity of Truth: No perjury (or lying) - Protecting the good name of my neighbor.

1) **Definition:** Communication (verbal or otherwise) with the intent to deceive.

2) **Character of God displayed:** God is by nature – Truth.

(Ex 34:6) "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

(De 32:40) "*He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he."

(Ne 9:13) "True laws, good statutes and commandments?"

(Ps 19:9) "True and righteous judgments"

(Ps 119:160) "Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning"

(Jer 42:5) "The LORD be a true and faithful witness..."

(John 1:14) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ..full of grace and truth."

(John 1:17) "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

(John 14:6) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life."

(John 16:13) "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth"

3) **Context** – Court witness.

a. In Israel (as in our court system) a witness had the power of life and death in capital cases. (Nu 35:30) "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person *to cause him to die.*"

(Ex 23: 7) "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked."

(Pr 14:25) "A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful *witness* speaketh lies."

b. In civil cases the witness has opportunity to cause financial hurt. (Ex 22:11)" *Then* shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept *thereof*, and he shall not make *it* good."

4) The Reason for this Commandment: Man is by nature malicious and self protecting.

Jesus said that the natural man takes after his father the Devil. (John 8:44) “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

This commandment has to do with the regulation of our speech.

5) Broader Application

While the commandment is specific in the context of truthful witness, the compass of scripture has much to say about truthfulness in all our communication and relationships.

- a. Dishonesty – Saying what is known to be false. All falsehoods are not lies. I might be wrong, but have no intent to deceive or mislead; I may just be misinformed or ignorant.
- b. Hypocrisy (Mt 23:28) “Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”
 - Hypocrisy at its root, is appearing on the exterior what is not reality on the inside; A false front.
 - Am I honest with others when they ask “How are you”?
 - Am I pious around the Christians and worldly at work or school? I can act a lie as well as speak it.
- c. Guile (deceiving speech) (Ps 34:13) “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile”. Guile is not necessarily telling a falsehood, but it is communication with the intent to deceive.
- d. Truthfulness is an absolute necessity for healthy relationships.

With God (1John 1:9)

With my family

With fellow believers

With my neighbor

6) Positive Opposite

(1Co 5:8) “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”

(1Co 13:6) “*Love* Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;”

(2Co 4:2) “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

(Eph 4:25) “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”

Command #10 - Protecting the Motivations of the Heart: No coveting. (Luke 12:15) “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

1) Definition – Coveting is the strong desire to have what I do not have. Coveting is not always bad (1Co 12:31) “But covet earnestly the best gifts”, but is almost always associated with inappropriate desires to have what I cannot, or am not intended, to have. Covetousness is often synonymous with greed and envy; It is the obsession with “having”.

Other scriptural terms: Lust, concupiscence, desire, inordinate affection (vile passions)

Coveting is the seed form of many other sins. (James 1:14-15) “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

- 2) **The Reason for this Commandment:** Man is by nature dissatisfied (discontent). Remember what tempted our first parents? (Ge 3:5) “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God” ie. Shall be something God never intended them to be.

This commandment has to do with the regulation of our heart's inner desires and motivations. (Mt 15:19) “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

What is the difference between ambition and covetousness?

- a. Ambition: The motivation to excellence; To do the best I can in the sphere that God has assigned me. (Phl 3:10-14) “That I may know him, ... If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ... Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Col 3:23) “And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord..”
- b. Covetousness: (1Ti 6:10) “For the love of money (*for example*) is the root of all (*kinds of*) evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many” sorrows. (Rom 1:25) “..and worshipped and served the creature (created thing) more than the Creator”

- 3) **Character of God displayed:** God is by nature Satisfied – “I am that I am” (Ex 3:14)

- 4) **Context-** The coveting of another person’s things (house), relationships (wife), or lifestyle (servants).

- 5) **Application** (need not be broadened)

- Do I hold possessions, or do my possessions hold me?
- Are my possessions a stewardship (given to me to use for God), or are they what I live for?
- Do I define myself by what I have? – Whether it be a car, a house, or a girlfriend / boyfriend.
- Do I spend time fantasizing about things or people?

- 6) **Guarding against covetousness:** Recognize the progression from temptation to sin. It is vital to understand that there is a multi-step process we allow ourselves to go through. Sin doesn’t “just happen”.

(James 1:12-15) Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.

- a. Tempted, (not sin, but exposure)
- b. Drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (entertaining the desire in my mind, fantasizing.)
- c. Conceived, (deciding this is what I want (to do))
- d. Sin. (acting or awaiting the opportunity to act)

The way to put out a fire is to stomp out (mortify, or kill) the sparks as they are first noticed. It is difficult to put out a blaze once it has been fueled and is raging.

7) Positive Opposite

- a. Giving (generosity)
(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.”
- b. Contentment
(Php 4:11) “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.”
(1Ti 6:6) “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”
- c. Temperance (self control)
(2 Cor 10:5) “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”
(Col 3:1-5) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. ... Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”
- d. Trust God
(1 Pet 4:19) “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”