



Mustard Seed



Thou Shall Not Steal

Pastor Scott Swartzendruber

When I first began learning and memorizing the Ten Commandments, I thought the command to “not steal” referred mainly to property. I understood that to not steal meant that I was never to take tangible things that did not belong to me. Over time, I came to understand that not stealing goes far beyond material things and even reaches into matters such as slavery. The Israelites were taken into slavery by the Egyptian Pharaoh who badly mistreated them. In the 8th commandment, God stated that slavery is a form of stealing and therefore must stop. Slavery is stealing life and human dignity from a person. Throughout human history, we read of times when leaders and governments engaged in the stealing of human life through the sinful practice of slavery. Our own American history has a sad and terrible chapter of a time in which we broke the 8th commandment and engaged in the stealing of human life.

This makes me wonder about ways we steal from others. In what ways do we rob people of their dignity, childhood innocence, talents, time, dreams, etc.? I think of people in leadership and even religious leaders who have robbed children and youth of their innocence due to sexual misconduct. We are not to steal. We are never to misuse and abuse both property and people, and to do so is a great sin.

The Ten Commandments are also to be understood as commandments of God’s grace. God wants us to be people who live with loving hearts to the point where we want to respect people and property. We are called by Jesus to value the life of each person. May we always seek to add to a person’s well-being.

May we never take things from others that would rob them of the precious gift of life that has been given to us by God.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- May we never take things from others that would rob them of the precious gift of life that has been given to us by God.
- Life has felt a lot like walking through deep mud for quite some time. You don’t often make progress, but you easily fall down and if you’re not careful you’ll lose your shoes.
- Remember it’s not too late to volunteer for the upcoming MCC Sale and/or Vacation Bible School. Many hands make light work!

In Pursuit

Dawn Wyse

“Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart, for I bear your name, Lord God of Armies.” Jeremiah 15:16 This verse sums up the solution to something I have struggled with for quite some time . . . and still haven’t totally cast it off from my life, but with God’s help I will. Praise Him for getting me this far! He has saved me once again.

Life has felt a lot like walking through deep mud for quite some time. You don’t often make progress, but you easily fall down and if you’re not careful you’ll lose your shoes. I wouldn’t go as far to say that I was clinically depressed, but I also wouldn’t say that I have been a pleasure to be around. My motivation went out the window. I’d go to work but struggled to put in the hours needed and my productivity wasn’t great. I did what needed done, but that isn’t how I generally approach work. At home it was worse. It was like I’d get stuck in a place and couldn’t move. My brain honed in on negatives and wouldn’t let go.

I tried to set goals so that I would get back on track. However, I wouldn’t meet them and it was like I had laid out another failure in front of myself. Next, I tried doing things for others as a way to get my mind off of myself. Don’t get me wrong, I was glad to do things for other people and hopefully it was a blessing to them, but it did nothing to help my inner struggles.

Finally, I got to the point where I knew I needed some help. So I talked to a couple of prayer warriors. Thank God for them. We definitely need more prayer warriors. Christian fellowship is vital to our spiritual health. Their prayers took a layer of gloom off of me and I found myself thinking that I might get past this thing. Even though I still struggled

most of the time, I was grateful for the blessing. It was a flicker of hope I hadn’t had.

Then one day, Larissa told me I needed to hear a song sung by Upper Room called Defender. This song starts out talking about how God heads out to win our war before we even know He has gone. The chorus goes like this:

And all I did was praise
And all I did was worship
And all I did was bow down
And all I did was stay still

I cannot tell you how many times I listened to that song. I played it before I went to sleep and when I got up in the morning and other times in the day. You see, it reminded me of something Lysa Terkeurst said. “You steer where you stare.” I had been staring at my struggles, so I kept heading right back into them continually. This song reminded me that I needed to focus on God, because He was already winning my battle for me and I needed to praise Him, worship Him, bow down before Him and to quit fighting on my own, but to stay still and wait on Him. It was a turning point for me. So I played that song until I found the lyrics going through my mind whenever I started to hone in on my struggles. The song, Defender, has become a reminder for me to stare at God instead.

You would have thought that spending time worshipping God would have fixed everything, but it didn’t. It helped me beyond measure and I highly recommend spending more time worshipping God, but God started pushing at me to let me know it wasn’t enough. He made it abundantly clear that He wanted me to set aside my devotions and Bible studies and just open His Word, read and just listen for His voice.

(Continued on page 3)

(In Pursuit, cont. from page 2)

I am in complete awe of the presence of God He has allowed me to experience as I have been given the privilege to have Him show me His Word.

Each day, I ask Him to show me what He wants me to see . . . and He has amazing things to show all of us. His knowledge never runs out. God has been feeding me and healing me with His Word. It fills me with His joy. This process is step by step pulling me out of the mud. Oh, don't get me wrong. I still find myself dallying in the mud more often than I'd like but it is happening less and less. Praise God!

This week I listened to a pastor who was either very brave or incredibly stupid, tell his congregation that if their soul didn't cry out for the Word of God like an infant cries out for food then they may be dead or sick. His point was that a person in a healthy relationship with God will spiritually hunger for His Word. If we don't, we need to find out what is wrong. Another person put it this way. God doesn't give us all of His blessings to us at once. He desires relationship with us. So, as we spend time with God in His Word He has treasures He will reveal to us over time. Some things will be seen at the first reading, but others may take years before they are revealed. God has

the best treasure hunt ever made, uniquely designed specifically for each and every one of us. How great is that? It's one of the ways God reveals Himself to us.

As God reveals Himself to us, He settles in more deeply in our hearts. The more He is in our hearts, the more the people around us will be able to see God in us. It's one of the ways God makes Himself known to people who don't believe in Him yet. What a privilege it is to be an important part of God's plan to save the world. It blows my mind.

I thank God for feeding me His Words. (Thank You, God, for coaxing me to eat them even when I drug my feet.) Those Words have become my delight and my joy because they show me God and draw me deeper into His Presence. I do bear God's name, because He saved me through Jesus' great sacrifice that I didn't and don't deserve. I thank God for actively going out to win my battles, the ones I know about and the ones that are coming. Without God, I shudder to think where I would be. God is my Lord God of Armies. To Him be all praise, glory and honor.

As always in pursuit.....

Hot Off the Press

Elsie Mast

Crowded Closet Association Rep

Breaking News!!! Crowded Closet has not bought the Kmart Building on south side of Iowa City! A company named Build to Suit did; however, Crowded Closet has purchased 50,000 square feet on the west side of the building from them. This company will do what we want them to so it will be like new! There will be a lot more space to work and will all be under one roof! Hopefully it will be ready to move into the first part of 2019. This was the news at Crowded Closet Association Meeting on Monday night May 21st at West Union Mennonite Church. The meeting was well attended and people were anxious to hear if there was any news! If you want to know more talk to Larry Pickard, Crowded Closet Board Member.

Congratulations!

*These people have reached a milestone, 50 or more years of marriage, or 80 or more years of life
Don't forget to send a card! The addresses are in your church directory.*

Birthdays:

June Gingerich ~ June 1

Anniversary:

Otis & Eunice Yoder ~ June 3 ~ 62 years

Ed & Mary Jane Miller ~ June 11 ~ 61 years

Derald & Marilyn Bender ~ June 24 ~ 51 years

Levon & Ginny Christophel ~ June 24 ~ 51 years

Roy & Mollie Miller ~ June 29 ~ 55 years



Father's Day

Eunice Madrene Miller Yoder

A wonderful Dad, missed and remembered in the heart

I whittled my list down to the most important

You loved us in a variety of ways

It may not have been an easy task

You had a hand that showed the way

You were a shoulder for comfort, a smile, a song that made the day

You shared your wisdom

You were strong when needed

Your skills were earned through living and experience

You showed me a father's love

God gave me the very best.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

Ed V & Carol Miller

Well we hope you all had a good month of May. Mushrooming was a bit spotty this year, but we managed to feed a few families. One surprise for me this year was to find a huge den in the woods while mushrooming. So I stood real still and made some chirping noises and out popped a coyote pup to see what was happening. A walk in the woods is always a good time!



Joya Schrock recently gave her Senior music recital at IMS. Five of her siblings (Summer, Liam, Luke, Annika & Landry) participated with her as well. Annika (6) & Landry (4) each sang a solo of one of the verses of the song "He Leadeth Me" accompanied by Joya. It was all very nice!

Frank & Jane Yoder have returned from Washington D.C. after spending 5 months volunteering at the Mennonite Guest House. Frank recently gave a talk here in Kalona to the Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa. He spoke on rural school consolidation and the closing of the One-Room Country Schools. The meeting was well attended and what was amazing is that there so many children in the

Sharon & Washington Townships that there was a country school for every 4 miles. Wow, how times have changed!

Angie Lamb completed her Master's Degree in Higher Education Administration and Policy. She works as a Specialist in Student Success Initiatives, which actually means she works with 1st generation students & minority students to help them navigate all the various aspects of college life. Congratulations, Angie.

Leon and Robin Schrock are 1st time grandparents! Levi & Elaine are the parents of a newborn son, Leo Kevin. Little Leo was named after his great grandfather, Leo Schrock. Congratulations to all!

Sylvia Erb's S.S. Class of 1st & 2nd graders like to sing together. So they had the opportunity about a month ago. Sylvia played the guitar and the girls sang right out! Very nice!



That's it for this issue. Remember it's not too late to volunteer for the upcoming MCC Sale and/or Vacation Bible School. Many hands make light work! Enjoy your summer!

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Library Notes

Shirley Hochstedler

So many books, so little time to read! But what a privilege to have access to so many, many good books! So many choices, but all of them good ones. This is the blessing of a church library. Take a look at these:

Books of God's faithfulness in peoples lives make encouraging reading. [Girl in the Song](#) by Chrissy Cymbala Toledo is told first person by the daughter of Jim Cymbala of Brooklyn Tabernacle. Brought up in a loving, God fearing home, she became obsessed with perfection at a young age. After many poor choices and rejection, she hits bottom and learns true redemption. A very good read. [Eight Twenty Eight](#) by Ian & Larissa Davis is the story of commitment of two young people who experience a tragedy. [Angels in the Fire](#) by Dann Stadler is of Dann and his wife who are in an auto accident.

Remember [Kisses for Katie?](#) Her new book, [Daring to Hope](#) tells of the joys and struggles of the last 10 years in Uganda. You don't want to miss this.

Can you imagine being an average young family with two small boys, and being led by God to adopt 8 siblings from an orphanage in Uganda? [At Any Cost](#) by Mike and Hayley Jones is a marvelous read of God

working in impossible situations. Don't miss this one!

On the lighter side for a smile or several, is [Diary of a Jackwagon](#) by comedian Tim Hawkins who sees the world a bit differently.

[Capital Gains: the Smart Stuff I've Learned by Doing Stupid Stuff](#) by Chip Gaines, is a #1 *New York Times Bestseller*. But long before the world took notice, Chip was a serial entrepreneur who was always ready for the next challenge, even if it didn't quite work out as planned. This is the perfect book for anyone looking to succeed not only in business but more importantly in life.

For fiction readers and those who love Lauraine Snelling, look for [The Promise of Dawn](#) (#1) and [A Breath of Hope](#) (#2).

New DVD, [Different Drummers](#), and Audiobook Karen Kingsbury's [Every Now and Then](#) are also on the shelf.

For the younger set, [You're Here For a Reason](#).

Come. Browse the shelves. Find a book. Read this summer!