

## Stop! Thief!

Exodus 20:15

### Introduction:

There is no way to calculate the cost of stealing in our society. You may never stolen anything in your life, but you pay for it every time you go shopping. The loss from shop-lifting is included in the cost of almost every item that you buy in any store. Most of the stores in the local malls add it in as a cost of doing business.

Yet in this commandment, the God of Creation and the Covenant says to all of humankind, "Stop! Thief!" He wrote it on the stone tablet with His own finger. We need hear this commandment again.

### I. STOP BECAUSE IT IS SIN!

This should settle it for those of who take our relationship with God seriously. Thievery is the taking of anything of value that does not belong to you, and should considered as an offence to God.

#### 1. It is a sin against God.

(1) It is a sin because it shows a lack of trust.

We take things that are not ours because we do not believe that God can provide for all of our needs.

(2) It is a sin because it is an act of disobedience.

All sin is lawlessness. All sin is transgression of the law of God. Stealing breaks this commandment and is thus disobedience.

(3) It is sin because it is an act of rebellion.

The Creator established property rights. They are a part of the social that we have received from God for our good. There are only three ways that you can legally receive property before God--one, you earn it by work. Two, you receive it as a

gift. Third, you inherit it. These are the only legal ways to acquire property. To acquire it by any other means is in the end stealing. When you steal you are rebelling against the divine order in society.

This puts gambling and other such means of acquiring wealth in a bad light.

2. It is a sin against others.

(1) It demonstrates a lack of love.

(2) It deprives others of the fruit of their labor.

## II. STOP BECAUSE OF WHAT IT DOES!

1. What it does to society.

When I was growing up in the country, not a home in our community ever locked their doors. Now I go back to that same community, and every door is doubly locked and in some cases there are bars on the windows.

Do you have any idea how much we spend in our society to protect ourselves from thieves?

2. What it does to the victim.

A thief stole the wedding ring that I gave my wife when we were married. This could not very replaced. I bought her another ring, but it was not the one I slipped on her finger when we established our covenant.

When your home is burglarized, it leaves you feeling like everything about you has been violated.

3. What it does to the thief.

The thief is changed by his evil acts. He will soon begin to see other people as things--not as persons of worth whose rights are to be respected. No wonder there is no place in heaven for the thief.

## III. STOP BECAUSE THERE IS A BETTER WAY.

1. Honest work is a better way.

2. Generous giving is a better way.

Ephesians 4: 28 Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him in need."

3. Inner contentment is a better way.

Hebrews 13:5-6

I Timothy 6:6-10

4. Gratitude is a better way.

Gratitude is the opposite of stealing. It is being grateful and thankful with what you have.

Conclusion:

Angel had three children and was on the street when we first met her. She was coming out of a Salvation Army shelter where she and her children had spent the night when one of our workers saw her.

We befriended her; helped her to find a place so she and children would not be on the street. More importantly we taught her about the great Gift of salvation that God gives to sinners. And she accepted the gift.

Soon after she was baptized, she and her children were on the way to a grocery store to spend the little money that they had. One of the children noticed that their mother did not have her extra larger purse that she usually took to the store. She would use it to steal things that she needed. When the child asked about it, Angel replied, "Children, we do not have steal any more. We have a heavenly Father who will take care of us."

When they had spent all of their money at the store, and barely had enough food for a partial meal, they made their way home. When they arrived at the house

that had been rented for them, a Christian family had been by and left two large sacks of groceries by the door.

There really is a better way!