

The Ten Commandments: Posted on our Hearts and in our Homes
A Simple Command, But Not So Simple Obedience
Exodus 20:15

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Introduction to Text: We return today to a series of messages concerning the 10 Commandments. Today we are considering the 8th commandment. Like the ones that have most immediately come before this commandment, the 8th commandment is to-the-point.

Text: ¹ Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

¹⁵ Do not steal.

Introduction: At first glance, similar to the commandment on murder, our first reaction might be that surely those gathered this morning here at FBC have no issue with stealing. I wish that were so, but let me show you some ways that perhaps we are tempted to violate the 8th commandment.

What? What does this commandment mean?

A Simple Command—Indeed this is a simple commandment. Listen to how some have spoken about this commandment.

- “Little explanation is given perhaps because little is needed.” (NIV Application Commentary)
- This commandment covers stealing “of any kind under any circumstances (WBC)
- This commandment prohibits “taking something that doesn’t belong to you without permission (NAC)

Some Specific Examples from the Rest of the Code

- Exodus 21:16—Persons
- Exodus 22:1-4—Animals
- Leviticus 6:2-7—Taking Advantage of someone through deception
- Leviticus 19:13—Fair wages

Conclusion: The eighth command is not just taking something, but is expanded to a broader range of meaning.

Why? (Why do people fall into this temptation?)

- **Selfish dependence instead of dependence in the provision of God.**
At the heart of this sin is our tendency to rely on ourselves instead of God.
- **Sinful Condition of the Human Heart**

Ultimately, here again is a reminder of the sinfulness of the human heart. *“Augustine, one of the three greatest theologians in the history of the Christian church, tells what he did when he was a teenager. In his confessions, he tells the story of how he and some of his teenage cronies went and stole from a neighbor's pear tree. They got so many pears that they couldn't hold any more. They had their arms filled with pears. He said they each took just a few bites and threw them away to the pigs. Why? Because it wasn't the pears they were after. They just wanted to enjoy breaking the law. And there are a lot of young people today that do just that. And the Bible says that's a serious sin. In fact, Jesus says, in Matthew 15, verse 19, 'That it is out of the heart that comes thefts.'”* (copied from Ligon Duncan, FPC, Jackson, MS).

What Now?

How do we apply this commandment to our lives?

To Students

- Cheating—Stealing an answer or work that is not your own
One study in 2008 of over 1200 college students indicated that 61.9% of the responders said they had knowingly plagiarized all or part of a paper.¹ Depending upon what study you look at the number of those who say that they cheated on a test in high school are staggering. One report I read indicated that at least 75% say they have cheated. Some studies go all the way to 98%. 73% of teachers surveyed said that they believe *most* of their students cheat.²
- Pirating of music and computer software

To Employees

- Stealing from your employer through...

Not working hard, abusing phone and computer privileges, taking office supplies home, inflating expense reports

Consider statistics from the American Society of Employers:

- Businesses lose 20% of every dollar to employee theft.
- 20% of employees are aware of fraud at their companies (including theft of office items, false claims of hours worked, and inflated expense accounts).
- The average time it takes for an employer to catch a fraud scheme is 18 months.

¹ <http://neoacademic.com/2011/02/04/online-plagiarism-and-cybercheating-still-strong/>

² <http://www.glass-castle.com/clients/www-nocheating-org/adCouncil/research/cheatingfactsheet.html>

- 55% of perpetrators are managers.
- 44% of workers say their companies could do more to reduce fraud.
- The U.S. Retail Industry loses \$53.6 Billion a year due to employee theft.
- 60% of companies have staff trained to deal with fraud and ethics issues (up from 30% in 2000).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that 75% of all employees steal at least once, and that half of these steal again and again. The Chamber also reports that one of every three business failures are the direct result of employee theft.³

To Employers

- Fair Wages

To All

- Financial Integrity—Have you ever under reported your income or over reported your deductions on your tax returns and justified that the government already got enough?
- Stewardship Integrity—Malachi 3:7-10

³ <http://www.bitingthehandthatfeeds.com/preface.htm>