

# Commandment 8: Thou Shalt Not Steal

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] and saw that scarlet line, a representation of the scarlet blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and the only way to have sins forgiven and to get to heaven.

Today we're back in the Ten Commandments and we are in verse number 15. We are going to pick up command number 8.

The last time we met here over this a few weeks ago, it was verse 14, Thou shalt not commit adultery. And just as a brief reminder, we began by addressing adultery and discussing what it is and why it's forbidden and then assessing adultery as in showing how grave the consequences for such a sin are, not just for the individuals guilty and involved, but for families and even the society and the whole congregation.

And it's something that God said, that's not forgivable. There's no atonement for that. You're going to be stoned. You're going to be put away from the people and you're gone. And that's God's way of eliminating that sin and not allowing it to pervade the society.

And then the third thought there was we finished by aggressing adultery or attacking it, even guarding against that sin, being proactive so that we don't find ourselves in that sin as well.

[ 1 : 2 3 ] And the last thing I closed with was reminding you in regards to this sin of adultery, that it's not a sin that cannot be forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ's blood. Though the atonement didn't exist under the law, in John chapter 8, the woman who was condemned by the law was not condemned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he said, go thy way, sin no more. And so what a blessing to know that the blood of Christ can forgive us, although consequences will still exist in relationships and here on earth.

There's no getting around that. Many times the damage is irreversible. But with the Lord Jesus Christ, you can find forgiveness. So now let's move to verse 15.

The Bible says in Exodus 20, verse 15, Thou shalt not steal. So there's another concise command with no follow-up details, and it's really one of the shortest verses in the Bible.

Now, you know as well as I do, you're taught this from the very earliest of ages because it shows up at the very earliest of ages.

[ 2 : 3 2 ] You're taught not to steal, not to take things that don't belong to you. It's commonly thought of just that, taking something that doesn't belong to you. Or, you know, covertly slipping it into your pocket and walking out the room casually as if you don't have that.

People do that in stores. No covertly about it anymore. It's just walk right in, smash and grab, and walk right out. Don't touch me. Stealing, whether it's shoplifting or whether it's something simple as taking some candy, as simple as that can be, the command, I believe, can be violated in a lot more ways than just that.

And some of them obvious, but some of them not so obvious. And those are the ones that we want to discuss this morning. I want you to remember as we're reading these commands, remember that we're not talking about something that's just posted in somebody's front yard on a little sign, or that something that is engraved in some capital buildings around the United States.

We're talking, just because they're the Ten Commandments, we're talking about commands that are part of a covenant that this holy God is making with this people, this nation, to bring them to himself and to set them apart from everybody on the earth.

They're to be a kingdom of priests. And this command of not stealing, it's a forbidden practice for this holy people. Stealing embodies dishonesty, deceit, selfishness, as well as greed.

[ 4 : 10 ] None of those are to be named among a chosen people, a holy nation. Think about this. A thief epitomizes the sinner. And the reason I say that is because our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified between two adulterers, two Sabbath breakers, two thieves.

And those two thieves fulfilled, in their death, they fulfilled the prophecy that the Lord Jesus Christ would make his grave with the wicked. And that he would be numbered with transgressors.

And so the thief seems to epitomize the sinner in that light. It's a very elementary sin. Very basic, very rudimentary sin.

It is not something as involved like last time, adultery. It is not something as complicated, you might say, as that. It's not even as involved as fashioning a graven image like the second command and bowing down and worshiping and crying to something to deliver.

It's very basic. Thou shalt not steal. It appears very early in life. It's in your heart and it's revealed very, very early.

[ 5 : 28 ] As early as I can remember of any child, it shows up. Reaching for something that's not theirs. Taking something they were told not to. Being disobedient and even pretending it wasn't theirs.

I mean, I know of stories. I know of individuals that's kids that steal from the church nursery. It's that bad. They take a toy. They want it. It's not theirs. They take it home. They hide it. And parents find it amongst their toys at home.

They say, where'd you get this? I don't know. It's that level. It's that early. Maybe some of you have stolen from the church already. You know what? Sometimes hymnals go missing around here.

Hmm. Hmm. Oh, let's talk about that for a minute. But in Matthew chapter 15, we've gone there a few times already and seen that adulteries and murders come out of the heart.

Guess what else does? Thefts. Thefts. And so just like these others, it proceeds from the heart. And just like it's been there since you've been little, it's still in there.

[ 6 : 29 ] And so it needs to be revealed. It needs to be preached against. So thou shalt not steal. Now again, I want to address some ways in which this command might apply to you this morning.

I'm not going to talk about stealing the hymnals from church or the toys from the nursery. I'm not going to talk about shoplifting. I'm not going to talk about taking somebody's stuff and not returning it.

But I'm going to give you some thoughts that I truly believe can help you, like could actually apply to you, where you might tend to just dismiss it or just justify it. But you might be guilty of violating a command and not really think on it.

And today, let's think on it. I want to give you some examples of what that might look like. Before we go into it, let's pray again together. And then we'll dive in. Our Father, we ask that you'll minister to each heart in this message, that you'll take these words and this thought that you pronounced upon your people and reveal how true and accurate this is for us today.

Lord, give everyone hearts that will receive the word of God, that will open their hearts and be honest before you in all ways and all accounts and however your spirit may speak to hearts.

[ 7 : 36 ] Help us to be a holy people. Help us to be clean with clean hands and clean hearts. We pray this in Jesus Christ's name. And amen. Amen. I'm going to give you three ways that you might be guilty of violating this command, thou shalt not steal.

The first one, would you turn to chapter 22 of Exodus? And the first one is by taking advantage of the resources of others.

I'll tell you what I mean by that. By taking advantage of the resources of others, thou shalt not steal. Exodus 22, the first verse introduces a man that's stealing someone else's cattle.

And he's mentioned as a thief in verse 2. The last word in verse 3, his theft. Verse 4, if the theft. So the context has to do with a thief.

And now verse number 5 says, If a man cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field, of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

[ 8 : 53 ] The man's guilty of not allowing his cattle or beast to eat his crops, but his neighbors, putting him in his field.

Those aren't his crops. That's not his food. He doesn't want to pay for it though, does he? Or just pretends, you know, Oh, I didn't know. Oh, I didn't notice. Things like God. God addresses these little things.

And what I'm showing you here is, this is a case where a man is taking advantage of the resources of another. Now, you don't have cattle feeding probably in other men's fields, so this doesn't seem to relate to you.

But let me just throw a few things at you that may kind of bring it into our 2000s. I've heard of people stealing internet service, tapping into their neighbor's internet, because they don't want to pay for it, so they steal it.

I've heard of people doing the same thing, splicing a cable, because they didn't want to pay for cable. They'd splice into their neighbors and run a cord into their house. And sometimes the neighbor's okay with it. Sometimes the neighbor doesn't know about it.

[ 9 : 52 ] I imagine out here with the houses being so close, I imagine that can go on much easier in LA than it does where I'm from. I've heard of people running power cords to other properties and using their electricity to run certain things only because they didn't want to pay for it themselves.

They're just being cheap and they're being deceitful. I've heard of people taking toilet paper rolls home from work, putting it into their purse or putting it into their bag, just one here and one there.

Why? Because they didn't want to, because it saves them money. That's stealing from your neighbor, from your employer, whatever it is.

That may sound goofy to you. You say, well, I've never done that. That's pretty rare. But maybe it's something that shows us, though, that whether you're taking toilet paper from your boss or power from your neighbor, if you don't engage in those kind of odder or weird things, I say it's still deeply embedded in your heart to find a way to get something for nothing.

And it doesn't mean that getting something for free is wrong. Of course not. If somebody's willing to give it away, then why not be willing to receive it and benefit? That's totally fine.

[ 11 : 11 ] But listen, that's only fine as long as you're not being deceitful on your part to get something for nothing, acting like, oh, I'm in such a bad way, I could really use your help, when the truth is you don't need their help.

I've heard of millionaires, millionaires by the bank account living in what looks like poverty and receiving things from the government or receiving things from other neighbors just because they're so cheap they didn't want to.

I think that's taking advantage of the resources of others or of their compassion and playing on their emotions. And I want to show you that I think this happens in two ways. One is by manipulation, and two is by a Bible word, oppression.

First, let's think about manipulation for a minute and taking advantage of the resources of others. It has crossed my mind, because I have an evil mind, but it's crossed my mind, and God, I never act on this by the Lord's grace, that because of all of this tragedy from the fires and because of all the coverage and nationwide 24-hour coverage, this has the entire nation, even the world, knowing about this incredible natural disaster.

In Los Angeles. And because of that, there's been phone calls. And even to the church, there's been phone calls from other good, solid Bible-believing churches and pastors saying, hey, brother, just want to know, are you guys all all right out there?

[ 12 : 36 ] And do you need anything? Does any of your people need anything? And it's been several. And that's directly, I've had indirectly other people that I'm friends with and know of, saying, hey, so-and-so, a church reached out to me, saying, to my parents, saying, is your son okay?

Are they okay down there? Is the church okay? Is everybody okay? And they said, we are prepared to take up an offering. I could have said, glory to God, I'll take your money.

I could have used that. I would have just, just by the snap of a finger, just a word, if I would have put it out and they would have sent the money. And they'd have never known. I could have deceitfully taken advantage or manipulated a situation to our advantage.

People have called and they have generous hearts and they have charity in their heart. They want to help others. And, you know, what they've seen is, you know, you know, you've all seen it.

It's tragic. And the churches and communities, even, they want to help. We could have raised a lot of money. I literally could have done that without a real outlet.

[ 13 : 39 ] Could have just kept it. But that would be deceitful. And defrauding. And when it boils down, it's stealing. Taking advantage of the resources of others.

I'm going to give you an example and I don't want you to think that this happens a lot. But certain missionaries, that is men and women that leave America generally and go to other nations, some even not foreign, but here locally, some missionaries have earned a term called moochinaries because they were feigning their situation to be worse than it really was to get a bigger offering.

They were praying on the compassion of God's people, talking about how bad they have it and tugging at the heartstrings to just get more money raised. Some talk about needing a repair for a vehicle that wasn't real or was exaggerated or certain conditions, make up a story even.

And in some cases, it was found out and dealt with. Other cases, and even far worse, I believe, are moochinaries that are raising money for ministries that don't even exist.

They just found that they can tap into the pockets of people. When I was in Pennsylvania, there was more than one occasion where the pastor got a call from other pastors saying, hey, watch out for this guy if he shows up at your church.

[ 14 : 55 ] He's a moochinary. He's coming in, talking about, you know, having his kids dressed pretty rough and he said, we researched it. He's a liar. He's a fraud. He's not a missionary at all. He's just traveling to churches.

I get calls here from time to time, people that are on hard times and they want us to pay their hotel bill or they want us to get them out of the hospital that they're in for drug use and get them set up and these things and pay the thousands of dollars.

They're just looking to take advantage of our resources and of our compassion. Same thing's true of TV preachers. They raise massive amounts of money for their ministries and promise things that it's the Lord telling them to do this and then they themselves live in this luxurious situation with houses all over the country or world, with private jets, with cars galore and just money flowing, taking advantage of the resources of others for their own comfort or to consume it upon their own lusts.

That's stealing. That's taking. And it's wrong. That's manipulation. And it's not living by faith. It's not trusting God. It's not contentment.

It's not walking honestly toward them that are without. It's not walking uprightly. It's not the fruits of righteousness. But it's using a situation to your advantage.

[ 16 : 13 ] And it may not be hacking somebody's bank account and taking the money for your own. But if you can get them to hand it over to you by just being a little deceitful, it's the same thing in God's book.

It's qualified as stealing. That dishonest and deceitful action. So taking advantage of the resources of others by number one, manipulation.

By number two, by oppression. And what do I mean by oppression? I'll give you one place here. Look at Leviticus 25. Leviticus 25.

And there's a few other places I'll just turn to and read in a minute here. Another one's Proverbs 22. I'm going to grab that quickly.

In Leviticus 25, the Bible uses the term oppression. And this is just a specific case of selling land and a property deal.

[ 17 : 15 ] And just to understand, this is kind of confusing, but every 49 years, the 50th year is called the year of Jubilee. And it's just a cultural thing that God instilled into this law for His people, for the land, that whatever their inheritance was for the family, if they came on hard times or they had parcels of property, they were allowed to sell them.

And they were allowed to sell them to somebody else who could work that ground. And when that year of Jubilee came, it automatically transferred back to the original owner so that the property, the name could remain there, the inheritance could stay in that family perpetually through the years.

But they were allowed to, we would say, lease it for so many years to someone else. So that's kind of the idea here. Now what the statement is, I'll start in verse 14 quickly. If thou sell ought unto thy neighbor or buyest ought of thy neighbor's hand, ye shall not oppress one another.

According to the number of years after the Jubilee, thou shalt buy it of thy neighbor. And according to the numbers of years of the fruits, he shall sell unto thee. According to the multitude of years, thou shalt increase the price thereof.

And according to the fewness of years, thou shalt diminish the price of it. For according to the number of years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not, therefore, oppress one another.

[ 18 : 31 ] Now the reason somebody's going to have to sell that off is because they're in a bad way. Or they're just in need. And the point is, you're not going to take advantage of your brother and his situation and oppress him.

Give him the lowest price. There's going to be a prorated price here. That's the idea. Now I'm going to, you don't have to turn, but Proverbs 22 and verse 22. God says, Rob not the poor.

Rob. Steal. Rob not the poor because he is poor. Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate. The gate is the place of business. The gate is the place of judgment where you do your deals.

And you're not allowed to rob or take from or oppress somebody who doesn't have more or is in a bad way because you're in a good way. Like, undercutting them.

Or just, you can get the idea. The Bible says, For the Lord will plead their cause and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them. Because they're just not being honest or not being upright in their dealings.

[ 19 : 35 ] Okay, there's one more I wanted to read. I'll skip it. It was in Zechariah 7 verses 9 and 10. You'll see that God is against them oppressing the poor or oppressing someone who doesn't have the ability.

And the idea here is one person's using their power or using their position or just using a situation, you know, someone's affliction to prey upon, to get a hold of their property.

He accused, Christ accused the Pharisees of doing this to widows. of getting their properties when they were widows. They didn't have their husband. They didn't have a man to do the deals and to stand up for them.

And so they oppressed them. Taking advantage of somebody that's sick and in a bad way or a tragedy struck a home or a family. It happens all the time. It happened then. And then somebody comes in and tries to scarf up their land or property or does some shady things.

That's oppressing them when they're supposed to be helping them. So there's the idea. Taking advantage of the resources of others whether it's by manipulation and being deceitful about it or whether it's just by oppressing and using your position and power and your good fortune so to speak to take advantage of theirs.

[ 20 : 47 ] Thou shalt not steal. That's a way that it can be done and it can even be done in your life when you have opportunity you say, oh it's just a good deal or I'll take advantage of it because they're in a bad way.

That's wrong. That's not just. Your God is a just God and He expects you to walk uprightly. To be honest and be just. We'll get to even more of that in a second.

Number two. You could be guilty of violating this command thou shalt not steal by dealing unjustly and deceitfully with others.

I mean dealing as in your deals business deals covenants agreements things you make with others that are deceitful unjust.

Yeah that car runs real good. Try to get top dollar when you know and you just don't that's deceitful dealing. You're actually what I'd say that's stealing money from them that is not warranted for for instance the vehicle or the item that you know is not valued at that.

[ 21 : 50 ] You're trying to get more. It's dealing unjustly. Let me give you a nice example of this in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 25 the fifth book in the Bible Deuteronomy 25 this is one that if you read through your Bible you see this pop up a lot.

It's kind of a big deal to God something that he really puts on his people is this thought of having a false balance. And the false balance thing is not some spiritualized concept it's literally a balance where what is weighed on one side should be the exact weight on the other and it's a just weight it's accurate but a false balance is putting something that's less than on one side claiming it to be the full weight or more than claiming it to be the exact weight.

25 look at verse number 13 13 thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights a great and a small now just for you to understand this you would have a great weight meaning let's just use our measurements a pound and if I'm going to be at the market and I'm going to sell rice I'm going to sell a pound of rice but I want to get a little bit more money so I'll start with putting a small weight on the scale it's less than a pound and I know it but it has imprinted their one pound so they think it's a pound but I know it's less so I put less than a pound of rice sell it to you and get the price for a pound I'm being deceitful the same thing happens the other way you want to sell me a pound of rice well let me get my big weight out and make sure that I get more than a pound of rice from you as I'm buying it to you then I'll switch the weights and sell it for you see that's all deceitful and it's all unjust and it's kind of a common thing in this society and culture of how they you know they weren't going you go to the grocery store you pick up a pack of meat and it tells you how much price per pound and what the pound is but you don't know if they actually

I mean you're trusting their scale and their printout and the sticker slapped on there and the employer didn't have his hand on the scale you're trusting that that's actually you don't know you don't weigh it I don't think anybody here takes a weight to the supermarket and checks those things but here's the case where they could be being dishonest alright Proverbs chapter 11 here's what God says about a false balance look at Proverbs chapter 11 verse 1 he talks about this in several of the minor prophets as well and I'm going to go find one of them okay Proverbs 11 verse 1 a false balance is abomination to the Lord but a just weight is his delight because God expects fairness and equity and honesty in all of our dealings with each other that's what the balance is about it's about me and you having a deal and he expects me and you to be upright and honest and to disclose everything and you could be stealing violating the command by dealing unjustly and deceitfully

I'm going to read for you Amos chapter 8 and verses 4 through 6 the Lord says hear this O ye that swallow up the needy even to make the poor of the land to fail saying when will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat making the ephah small and the shekel great and falsifying the balances by deceit that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes yea and sell the refuse of the wheat they are so greedy of gain they'll do anything it takes deceive anybody and lie to anybody to get that money and the love of money is the root of all evil it still is today so dealing unjustly is a temptation it's a command that I believe falls into this thought of thou shalt not steal so you say well you know what I really don't buy and sell stuff like that and you know occasionally I may sell a vehicle or an item on offer up but you know

[ 26 : 23 ] I'm honest about it I'm up front with those things so let me ask you this this is just going to put it into every single person's life what if we could place your paycheck on one side of the scales and then put your time card on the other side of the scales would that be a just wait would that match up every single time you think about it would that be a false balance to where I claimed I worked this much and I got paid for this much but in reality I wonder if your time card reflects a just wait I wonder if you give out in labor what you agreed with your employer to receive in wages and just know this from me I am not a nitpicky guy on this kind of stuff like this is so easy to just to make you know this would be a wait grievous to be born to put it on you if you were on your phone if you check and send a text you're not working get out of here we all live in the same world and I will not nitpick you that you converse with your co-workers you're not working or you send a text while you're on the clock you should wait for a break

I'm not going to talk like that but how about you do know you know yourself if your habits are toward laziness if your habits are toward milking this job so I can milk the company or this job should take me three hours but I know I can stretch it out to get some overtime and then I'm getting the real money and that's what I really want and that's what I need that's just dishonesty and it's deceit and it's dealing unjustly and deceitfully with others it's not upright it's not honest and it's a crooked mindset like right there in the scripture that God says is an abomination to our holy God I don't believe and I'm not putting this on you I promise I don't believe that you have to be the best employee because you're a Christian I've heard men say that

I don't believe that you may not be as fast as others you may not be as quick thinking you may not just have the skill and talent and hand to eye coordination that somebody else has maybe you're not the best employee okay fine I don't believe you have to be but I do believe that you have to show a work ethic that ought to reflect honesty integrity morality faithfulness dependability these things ought to come out of you that ought to be your testimony at work because they're virtues of a Christian becoming of one that names the name of Christ and by the way Paul said let them that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity dealing unjustly falsifying the bag or the weights so we're talking about dealing with mankind being unjust or being deceitful I'm only mentioning the employee employer relationship here but I'm sure it goes beyond that it can apply to neighbors and friends or the government it could apply to a lot of ways where you could be deceitful and where you could be tempted to be unjust and the command

I think covers this thou shalt not steal so you could be guilty of violating this command by taking advantage of the resources of others by dealing unjustly and deceitfully with others and in one more way by withholding that which is to be dispersed or that which is to be distributed the idea being keeping something that you're supposed to be giving maybe you owe them and you know you owe it but you're not going to pay you're stealing from them when it is your duty and right and even agreement perhaps to make that payment withholding that which is to be dispersed or distributed let me give you an example and a principle and then a specific application that we can all take and and God willing receive withholding something that you're supposed to let go of if you agree let's just take a hypothetical you agree with your employer to work for them for \$20 an hour and let's just say you work 10 hours in one day what do you expect to see on your paycheck before taxes \$200 everybody got the math everybody there

Mark got it quick you know he's thinking on it right \$200 that's what you expect to see before taxes or cash under the table whatever your deal is if that check comes in it says \$100 before taxes if it says 10 hours at \$10 you're like whoa hold up no that's not what we agreed for and you're ready to call a lawyer you're ready to take him to court for that because that's dishonest right on his part now before we go forward what if the employer says well I did agree with you for \$20 an hour but I haven't seen you work a full hour since you've been here what if that was the case but nevertheless that's generally not how things are handled so you get your check and it's \$100 and that's a problem because that's wrong for him to withhold from you something he promised to give you right you're justified in complaining and taking it to the next level if you have to because what rightfully belongs to you is being withheld so let's look at a principle about this first you can leave



[ 32:15 ] Exodus and let's go to the Proverbs and we're going to bounce a few scriptures here so how about get ready to turn let's go to Proverbs chapter 11 again I want to introduce this principle of giving out how it's what God blesses is giving not withholding in Proverbs 11 I want to show you verses 24 through 26 and I'll help you understand what we're reading here in verse 24 there is that scattereth and yet increaseth now that's that wouldn't naturally seem to be the case because scattering is dispersing and putting it out so you think you'd you know if your bank account was here and you start giving it away it's going to go down right well the case says there is that scattereth and this is some irony of your Bible is that and yet you increase it doesn't make sense continue the verse and there is that withholdeth that's holding on to more than is meat but it tendeth to poverty keeping that number staying the same and not giving it out tendeth to it goes away now if I was going to make application

I'd say you know the vehicle breaks down you're withholding and then it ends up losing it there and losing it there when you're supposed to be scattering or giving it out verse 25 the liberal soul means the one that's giving liberally the liberal soul shall be made fat that's a blessing that's a good thing not your scale and he that watereth shall be watered also himself on the contrary verse 26 he that withholdeth corn the people shall curse him but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it so the blessing is for the one that distributes flip over now to the new testament find 2nd Corinthians chapter number 9 2nd Corinthians 9 we got to cover a few more scriptures here I'm going to go back to the proverbs in a moment and read a few of these and give you some more of that but you can be in 2nd Chronicles 9 I'm also going to find Luke 6 okay look at verses 6 and 7 considering that principle that we read in the proverbs verse 6 Paul says but this I say I want to give you context quickly they're taking up an offering for another church okay there's another church in need and this church at Corinth is going to take up an offering for them a special case okay verse 6 this I say he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully every man according as he purposeth in his heart so let him give not grudgingly or of necessity for God loveth a cheerful giver and so he continues with the context of giving and he's praising them in verse 13 for their liberal distribution unto this other church that has need the principle is that the blessing is upon the giver and that God is pleased with that attitude of generosity and of charity the giving is not the same as this is the distribution the other was the withholding which matches some of those words we read at the beginning of greed and deceit and dishonesty or selfishness that's the attitude that grieves the Lord he loves a cheerful giver he wants us to trust him and give the Lord Jesus Christ said in Luke chapter 6 and verse 38 give and it shall be given unto you good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over shall men give into your bosom for with the same measure that ye meet with all it shall be measured to you again there is that scattereth and yet it just comes back it increaseth now I'm going to read from the proverbs quickly chapter 28 and verse 27 he that giveth unto the poor shall not lack but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse hideth his eyes he'll withhold he'll keep proverbs chapter 19 and verse 17

I'm just going and reading he that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord and that which he hath given will he pay him again so the emphasis this morning is not on the poor but it's on having an attitude of giving and distribution rather than withholding now I've already made the case that withholding can be stealing when it belongs to someone else when it's not yours to hold on to it's yours to give out and in that case withholding is a sin and it's stealing but the blessing in the Bible is on the giver now one specific application here would you please turn to Malachi chapter 3 if you think I know where you're going yes you do that's where we're going Malachi chapter 3 and let's read a passage here in verses 7 through 12 Malachi 3 and look at verse number 7 please

I'll give you a minute to find it it's the last book of your Old Testament I'll begin in verse 7 even from the days of our fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them so they're being condemned for not keeping the commands the ordinances of God return unto me and I will return unto you saith the Lord of hosts but ye say wherein shall we return they're saying what have we done wrong what have we done wrong at all that we need to fix in our lives and here's his answer will a man rob God ok that's a question is that possible to rob God like you can't stick him up on the corner you can't you know gang up on him in the alley and say give it to me you can't rob God right how can you possibly rob him and so that's a question will a man rob God the thought is like well of course not

I can't do that but then he goes on and says ye have robbed me ye have robbed me the Lord says to his people but ye say verse 8 wherein have we robbed thee still acting innocent what have we ever done and here's the answer in tithes and offerings that's how you've robbed God they were commanded to give the tithe the tenth of all of their substance and increased to the Lord and yet they haven't been doing it they've been commanded to offer certain things beyond the tithe and they haven't been doing it why what have they been doing withholding keeping it to themselves and not giving it to the Lord as he commanded all right verse number 10 or verse 9 as a result verse 9 ye are cursed with a curse for ye have robbed me even this whole nation bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in mine house and prove me this is God telling his people prove me now herewith saith the

[ 40 : 15 ] Lord of hosts if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it just test me if you obey me test me and see if I'm good for my end of the bargain he says in verse number 11 if that's the case if you start to give like I told you I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes for ye shall not destroy the fruits of your grounds neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field saith the Lord of hosts and all nations shall call you blessed for ye shall be a delightful land saith the Lord of hosts now this is a literal pledge or promise from God the Lord Jehovah in his relationship to this people in this covenant it is a literal condition of the covenant between God and his people Israel but do not do not do not make the mistake or mistake the application of this and pretend well tithing that's for the

Old Testament because you'd be in a mistake and I believe that with all my heart not because I want your money because God wants your heart that's a mistake to say that's the Old Testament tithing is giving a tenth of your income to God tithing is the only biblical example of how God requires what God requires of his people to give to him before Exodus chapter 20 or 19 or 18 or Exodus period you can go all the way back to Genesis chapter 14 and find a man named Abram and Abram before he was the father of many nations before Isaac ever came on the scene Abram went to battle and recovered some things and spoiled his enemy and he took the spoils of war and the

Bible says that he gave tithes of all who did he give the tithes to to Melchizedek the priest of the most high God Abram did that he wasn't under the old testament command to tithe he gave a tenth of what came into his possession to the priest of the most high God he gave it to God later on I think it's in Genesis 28 Jacob that would be the grandson of Abraham Jacob God comes to him and visits with him and pledges these promises of blessing to him and Jacob says Lord if that's what you're going to do then I will give the tithes of all from here forward I will give a tenth of everything that's mine to you that's long before Moses that's long before the old testament is ever brought into place tithing is the biblical example of how

God's people are to give back to him these are the two examples that exist before the law and I'm just seeking to establish that tithing is a biblical example tithing is acceptable unto God obviously but what I'm really tired of and I'm just going to speak openly with you I'm tired of unfaithful Christians pretending that it doesn't apply to me it just applies to the Jews Old Testament giving a tenth to God transcends the law it precedes the law it's during the law and I full well believe it follows through after the law and is the right thing for you to be doing today somebody says well Paul never commanded believers to tithe in the church therefore I'm off the hook you're correct I don't know where Paul commands the believers today to give a tenth to the Lord or to the local church but I don't see anywhere where Paul prescribed how a local church is to set up their finances

I don't see that anywhere there's no concrete model in the New Testament for such a thing you know why Paul didn't do it he didn't have to the Lord God has already given us the model by the way he set up the Old Testament and I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this but just quickly understand the Lord took the Levites to be his ministers and he told them you're not going to farm fields you're not going to work a factory job the rest of the congregation is going to do that you are mine and as a result they're going to give a tenth of everything to you and you ministers of the ministry of the tabernacle and the holy things received of the tithes of the congregation and this was God's plan this was his structure this was his command for such a system to work he came up with this and it worked it was effective and by the way it's still effective if

[ 45 : 37 ] God's people are obedient somebody says this morning well I can't afford to tithe and I'll just give you a line right back to you my pastor used to say this you can't afford not to tithe if you want to be right with God and you don't want to be guilty of withholding from the Lord something that you're supposed to be distributing obediently in faith and prove me the Lord says I can't afford well maybe you should be looking at it a different way tithing is a matter of faith giving to the Lord is a matter of obedience and it's evidence that you're going to believe God and walk by faith and that you're going to choose to obey his word now almost done here very close to finishing I want to say a few things just directly and it's not because this is something that's a hobby horse of mine it's because it's my duty to put forth the entirety or the whole counsel of God I say these things if you could understand my heart it's in love

I love you I want you to be informed I want you to be right with God I don't want your money personally I'm not asking for a raise I'm not looking for big things I'm looking for your obedience to Jesus Christ because ultimately it's about your obedience to Jesus Christ and where you stand in your relationship with God that's the ultimate I believe in this church all members are suspected to understand the necessity and the importance of this but just beyond membership children should understand the necessity and the importance of this practice you should understand that God wants giving it's part of the book I could I mean we could take a time on this for a while if we wanted to analyze more verses on it and I think if this church is where you attend and if this church is where you're fed the word of God and sharpened and helped and support this work not some guy online that's you don't know what he's doing with it

I think this is the place that God would have you give your tenth of what he's given to you we're almost done but we're not done Bible Baptist church today right now in January of 2025 the word I like to use to people when they say brother how's things going I say well we're surviving but we're not thriving that's really how I look at it and analyzing this in the financial aspect we're surviving we're not going anywhere by the grace of God we're going to keep going and the Lord is keeping the doors open and things are okay but we're not thriving that's very obvious and it's not because we're just a few people here I think it's because many are withholding from the Lord what they ought to be distributing to the Lord we support at this church three missionaries I'd love to see it be thirty we support three we started for a while when giving was higher we started tithing everything that came in in a month we would give a tenth of that into a missions program or account we've since stopped doing that because the giving has gone way down we were just surviving we're just going to keep those missionaries and the pledges to them going as God allows we're not going to withhold from them but we can't take any more on the way

I see it we haven't taken any more on I'd love to take more on I'd love to be able to do more in that way especially in the area of worldwide missions that's a big one I think this church could do a whole lot better if you're a faithful giver then you know that these words are not aimed at you to give more and I'm not squeezing you for more and I'm not going to pass the plates again at the end of the service but if you're just knowingly shirking this matter in your Christian life it's time that you address it I don't preach about giving but today we're preaching thou shalt not steal and the question was will a man rob God oh I wouldn't dare do that will you have if you're not faithfully obediently giving another little asterisk on this if you've never heard this before in your life if this is the first time somebody said you're supposed to give 10% to

God then please don't feel like oh I'm just being hard on you and down your throat and wanting your money please receive this as the word of God this is not my pet peeve please know that and believe that you're not going to hell who knows maybe you will hear about it next week too who knows but this is not a common theme but don't be guilty and don't be lazy and don't be cheap people use they twist references in the Bible that are referring to something special and try to pretend it's daily or weekly and I think God set it up the way for for the congregation to support the ministry and the ministers of his work and that's just that's just a Bible model and that thing works if we do our part and obedient to it so thou shalt not steal you can be guilty of this by taking advantage of the resources of others by not paying by withholding by not dealing justly but rather deceitfully with others you could be guilty of stealing from them or by withholding that which is to be distributed

[ 51 : 45 ] I want to turn to one more verse and then we are going out the doors Ephesians chapter 4 the very last verse we look at because I pointed out earlier it's in your heart thefts come forth from the heart and it showed up in your life very early I don't have to know you personally to know that you took things in your life as a child you stole you tried to hide it you did that we're all guilty of that it's in our heart and it showed up right away and it's still there is a new command given for the believer let's read this here in Ephesians chapter 4 I'm going to back up to verse 22 and then we'll work down to 28 the Bible says that you put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts he is a thief and you need to put him off and then look verse 23 and be renewed in the thinking about this and put on the new man verse 24 evidence of the new man let's look at one verse that is 28 verse 28 and we're through let him that stole steal no more right you shouldn't be stealing that's wrong that's a sin thou shalt not steal but look at this there's a new command for the

Christian something we're to replace that sin with watch this verse 28 let him that stole steal no more but rather let him labor working with his hand the thing which is good why that he may have not taking to have but that he may have to give to him that needeth here's a difference we're to replace that sin of selfishness dishonesty greed lust lying ultimately stealing with a Christ like change of mind of giving and others let him that stole that is he's taking let him that stole steal no more no more taking no more taking deceitfully and no more withholding and no more manipulating or oppressing or taking advantage of situations with others no rather what you have work with your hands so that you can give to him that needeth so that you can give you're replacing that greed and lust and covetousness with a cheerful giving spirit being a blessing to others going from selfish to selfless going from taking to giving that's a new creature that's the new man that's

Christ in you and the work of God in his children now we're going to dismiss with that right there the command was thou shalt not steal I think I gave some pretty authentic and accurate ways which can be violated by each one of us today I hope you'll believe this I hope you'll receive this and if you have questions about it I'll love to talk with you in a non condemning way I'll answer your questions the best I can from the word of God because that's the thing we want to submit to and be right with God in the book all right so we'll be dismissed with that let's have a word of prayer and then I'll just let you go and Lord willing you get home safely in the rain so let's have a word of prayer Father I thank you for drawing our attention to these truths from your word this book has a lot to say it's obviously something that we're very guilty of and it's on your heart to fix and so Lord may we fix it and be obedient to you in these ways I pray that you'll prick the hearts of your children if they've been negligent in these any situation then

Lord reveal that to us give us an honest heart an open heart that will do right that will repent of that lust and that selfish greed inside of us and would give with a cheerful heart Lord we love you for these things thank you for caring about us enough to come after us and to seek to make changes in us and may we each submit to the word and give her a good time as well as Mrs.

Fleming and the respicios all over and I pray your blessing upon this church that we could grow that we could be more giving and that we could take on more of your children that have been called and support them and be able to financially do more for you we pray these things in Jesus Christ name and for his sake alone amen amen you are dismissed