Lesson 9 Commandment 8

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Preacher: Brady Owens

[0:00] All right, let me ask you a question, and I just want you to give me a raise of the hand here. How many of you, before the age of eight years old, had stolen something?

Only three of us? The rest of you? You never stole anything before age of eight? Now, next week, we're going to talk about lying.
So, I'm just messing with you. So, all right, how many of you that raised your hand before the age of seven?
Before the age of six? Before the age of five? So, a lot of you are blessed to not remember those times.
I happen to remember when I was two years old. So, my memory goes back that far, and I have lots of memories from that.
[1:10] But I remember at five, stealing something for the first time. My dad was pastor of a church, and we were going over to somebody's house for lunch after church on Sunday morning.

And their kids wouldn't play with us, so I was left to myself and my brother just to wander around and find things to occupy ourselves with. And I ended up with a pocket knife in my pocket.
And we get home, and, you know, the afternoon goes on, and at some point later, my parents discover I have this pocket knife. They asked me where I got it from, and I said, well, I got it out of the drawer of the bedroom at the end of the house, you know.
And they wore my rear end out. Then they drove me straight to those people's homes.
I had to place it in their hands and tell them what I had did and ask them for forgiveness. Now, you would think that that would teach you a lesson. And it does.
[2:12] It teaches you to be a little bit more sneaky next time. About two weeks later, I go into my father's room, and he's not home, and he's got a pocket knife.

So I take his pocket knife, and I go up by the church. It has all of these hedges, and I get up behind the hedges, and I spend time for a couple hours just whittling because that's what I wanted to do.
And they were looking for me, and when they finally found me, they saw me with the knife. I was worn out again. And you would think.
You would think. You would think you would learn, but it was in college, after I got married, that my wife and I would go grocery shopping together, and that's when they had the Brock's candy display in the middle of the fruit section or something like that.
And I love caramel. And I would just walk by, and I would just grab one, and I would just eat it. And if we went by there a couple times, I would get it.
[3:21] Now, did you wear it in a mouth? She should have. So, here's the thing we've got to think about. When you look at the news, and you see a group of teenagers run into an Apple store, and they take all of the iPhones and the iPads and this kind of a thing and run back out, there's a lot about that that we look at that and we go like, man, somebody ought to whip those kids, or they stopped that somehow.

Now, but what if the scene is a five-year-old kid who's hungry, and he's at the grocery store, and he picks up an Apple and eats it?
We have a tendency to look at that a little differently, don't we? We know it's wrong, but also we kind of go like, yeah, but why would you punish that kid? He's hungry. It's interesting because I feel like this commandment of do not steal doesn't carry with it quite the weight of some of the other commandments.
Even the way God said some of the other commandments. You think about the way he talks about using his name in vain. He says, I will not hold him guiltless who takes the name of the Lord God in vain.

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I mean, that's pretty heavy, you know? You think about what happens to murderers in the Old Testament, right? I mean, capital punishment was already established at the end of the flood, and this is what's supposed to happen to murderers, you know?
[4:58] So it's a very serious offense. Or you look at adulterers, right? We didn't talk about this last week, but do you know what the Old Testament law was for adulterers?

What was supposed to happen to them? Stoned. Everybody stoned. Now that was Israel's law at that time because that's what God had for them.
But the thief, you'll see that when somebody's caught stealing, they're supposed to repay back what they stole with about 5%.
With about 5%. So, you know, you just look at even the way the Bible treats it, you kind of get this feel like, well, maybe this is not such a big deal.
So I want to start today with why should we obey this commandment? Before we get into talking about what is this commandment. And I want to give you four reasons why we should obey this commandment.
[6:01] The first reason has to do with Romans chapter 13. And it's because it breaks the second great commandment.

Paul writes in Romans 13, For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet. And any other commandment are summed up in this word, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. You see that, right? He's basically saying that loving your neighbor as yourself is sort of the umbrella command that these other commands come up underneath.
So when you steal something, you're actually breaking the second greatest commandment. You are harming another person. It may not feel, it didn't feel that way when I took the Brock's candy, because there's corporations that seem to be involved, and it doesn't seem to be a person who's harmed.
But somebody owns that corporation, and I was doing them harm, right? I'm not loving them the way that I should. It breaks the second great commandment.
[7:12] The second reason that we should obey this commandment comes from Leviticus 6, and it's because it's a breach in faith. It's a breach in faith against the Lord.

He says in Leviticus 6, The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by, and that's going to list some things, deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor, or has found something lost and lied about it, swearing falsely in any of all the things that people do and sin thereby, if he has sinned and has realized his guilt, and he will restore this robbery, and he's going to keep going, and I stopped in the middle of that.
The reason I stopped in the middle of that is because really what we're after here is this verse 2. It's a breach of faith against the Lord for robbery to happen, or to deceive your neighbor and take some sort of deposit from them, or to oppress your neighbor, or to find something that somebody lost and lie about it.
That's a lot of different kinds of things related to stealing there, but the point is that it's a breach of faith against the Lord. Okay, so what is a breach of faith?
What's a breach? A break. A break. Okay. Can you think of anything that you know of that, like, you know, a break in what?
[8:53] Like, what kinds of things do we use that term for? Well, it could be anything like mechanical or physical. That's kind of a breach. Right. There's also a breach in trying to discourage the law or some other.

Trust. Trust. Yeah, exactly. Breach the wall and the fort. Breach the wall and the fort. And what did you say, Ms. Carol? Breach of contract. Breach of contract. Yeah. All of those things give us this sense that there's something solid, there's something trustworthy, there's something that's a connection between two, and the breach breaks the two.
If it's a breach in the wall, the wall's no longer connected. If it's a breach of contract, then the two parties are at odds with each other now. Right? So it's a breach of faith against the Lord for us to break this commandment.

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And you know what else is a breach of faith? Adultery. You know? So if you think about it, this breach of faith is not a nothing thing. It's an important thing to realize that we're separating ourselves from God when we take something that doesn't belong to us.
The third reason, the third reason that this is something that we should watch for is because when we steal, it demonstrates our dissatisfaction with our own life.
[10:16] It demonstrates our dissatisfaction with our own life. Paul is preaching to the Athenian pagans, and we'll come back to this verse later, but he talks about God being someone who needs nothing.

He doesn't need anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life, breath, and everything else. Everything that you have, God gave you. Everything you have, God gave you.
So if you seek to take something from someone else, it means you're not satisfied with what you have. You don't have enough. You need more. You want more for one reason or another.
And so to steal is to demonstrate you lack gratitude, that you're not happy with your... ...
... ...! ...
[11:37] !!!!! ...

Right? But this is talking about somebody who commits the sin, has no relationship with the Lord, isn't concerned about it, except maybe if they get caught. But they're not repentant.
They don't see this as a violation of God's law. That's the kind of person he's talking about. Right? It's this unrepentant sin. And it condemns us to eternal punishment.
And so stealing is an important commandment for us to really think about. And we really need to sort of process it. So let me pause there and ask you any questions about those four reasons?
Okay. So let's then talk about the heart of this commandment. What is the heart of this commandment? Well, here's the way I would say it. Basically, you've got to start this way.
[12:54] For God to tell us that we should not steal implies people own things. It implies personal property rights.

If you don't own it and I take it from you, then I'm not stealing because you didn't own it. But if you own it and I take it from you, then I'm stealing.
You can't, you can't, in other words, you can't really have a governmental society of, say, like communism, where the government owns everything. And actually have stealing as a law.
It doesn't make sense. Does that make, you understand what I'm saying about that? Because in a communistic and even socialistic governmental society, the government owns property.
And it owns all the property. And it gives it to the citizens to use. But it's the government's house. It's the government's food. It's the government's everything. So if I come into your house and take something, it's just government redistributing.
[14:07] It's not stealing. Yeah. So what I'm saying then is that God giving us this command upholds the idea of personal property rights.

It's where the United States gets the idea of the free capitalist society as well as personal property rights. It's a part of our society because it's a part of what the Bible says.
I think that the Bible supports a particular way of governing. And that way of governing is through the implications of these things. So if that's true, if stealing then implies the personal property rights, then stealing is depriving someone of their personal property.
Stealing is when we deprive someone of their personal property. And we can do that in lots of ways. I mean, you can think of all kinds of ways that we can do that to people.
And so I'll give you an example. Here in Exodus 22, verses 1 through 14 lays out like three different ways that this happens.
[15:14] I just want to kind of briefly go through this. I'm not going to read all 14 verses, but in verse 1 it says that if a man steals an ox or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.

Okay. If a thief is found breaking in and he is struck so that he dies, there will be no blood guilt for him. But if the sun has risen on him, there shall be blood guilt for him. He shall surely pay.
If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the stolen beast is found alive in his possession, whether it is an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.
Stealing is actually just taking something. That's what that's talking about, right? It's just flat out just taking it. Then if you turn to verse 5 and 6, you see, if a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over or lets his beast loose and it feeds on another man's field, he shall make restitution from the

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beast in his own field and his own vineyard.
If fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that the stacked grain or the standing grain or the field is consumed, he who started the fire shall make full restitution.
[16:25] So that's where you're causing, stealing is causing someone's property to be destroyed, right? If you're not watching what you're doing and you start a fire and it gets out of control, you are guilty of stealing because you are depriving someone of their property.

Does that make sense? I think even the laws of our land bear this out. A lot of the laws of our land follow these very same things. When you go to verse 7, if a man gives to his neighbor money or goods to keep safe and it is stolen from the man's house, then if the thief is found, he shall pay double.
If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to God to show whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's property. In other words, if somebody asks you to keep something for them that belongs to them and they're asking you to keep it safe and you don't, then you're depriving them of their property and that is stealing.
If you allow it to be stolen from a thief and you can't find the thief, then you're the one that has to pay the restitution. If you find the thief, then fine.
That's fine. Or if you say that you're going to keep somebody's property and you allow it to get damaged, then you're depriving them of their property.
[17:53] You see, the point is, is that it is our goal and our task to make sure that we are not actively or by negligence letting someone be deprived of their property.

We need to uphold personal property rights. We can't, we can't let it happen through negligence, carelessness, or even active pursuing of things.
So let me just pause there and ask if you have any questions. It's a lot.
It is a lot. Can you give an example of that last one? Yeah, well, so here's what's fascinating. I don't think a lot of people do this anymore, but there's a couple of ways you can think of this.
Number one, on a personal level, if you live in the city and you have a boat and you want someone to protect your boat, you might hire out one of these storage facility places or you might hire a friend who's got land and you ask them to keep their boat.
[19:05] And how many people, if you were to go to them and say, hey, would you keep my boat safe? Most people would tell you no, because instinctually we know that we're responsible for it.

But a business who's doing that for a business, if they, you know, if they put up a sign that says not responsible, well, then that's fine. But if they don't and they say, no, we'll keep your boat safe and your boat is not safe, then they're liable.
You know, so it's that kind of a thing, you know, and really, really this gets into a lot of businesses that people can have, even your banks. The banks are keeping our money, our property, and so they should be liable for that, right?
Well, that makes it clear. I guess I was thinking of it as more of a personal thing. Well, back then, you didn't have these businesses, right? You just had that person.
Well, we don't have a lot of personal things happening these days because we have all these businesses because people have made business out of these things. And if you have a boat, you shouldn't have insurance.
[20:13] Yeah. I mean, there's all kinds of things in our world that we have that make some of these things a little bit easier. But if we look at the biblical categories and see it, it helps us to kind of get the picture that what's really at the heart of this command is that we all own personal property.

And we have to make sure that no one's deprived of that. But we also have to make sure that we handle that personal property in the right way. Because there's a lot of implications of that that are going to come out as we go through the application part.
Because really the lengthy part of this lesson is yet to come. This was the easy part. We're done with all the big picture things. Now we're going to look at light, map, and mirror and kind of see how does this flesh out for us as we live.
So now is the time to step on toes is what I'm saying. So, well, let's think about it. Remember, we've talked about that we want to look at every law under the idea of a light, a map, and a mirror.
The light is that this law kind of shines a light on God's character and gives us a glimpse of who God is. The map gives us instructions about like, okay, if we live out this particular commandment, what are the implications of that in our life?

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[21:33] What does it mean we do? What are some of the things that we can and can't do, things that we should have involved in our lives? And then as a mirror, it shows us where we have failed so that we run to Christ and his cross for forgiveness.

Okay, so let's start with the light. And as a light, the commandment, you shall not steal, gives us a glimpse of God as the great giver.
James says, do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
One of the reasons this command is there is because God is a good giver. He plans to give to his people. It's like we said earlier, everything that you have, God gave to you.
You know, and it's not just physical objects here that we're talking about. We're talking about your time, your energies, your talents, your abilities. We're talking about your experiences and your wisdom that you gained from years of employment.
[22:42] You know, there are some people who would be willing to steal from you your wisdom without ever giving anything back. You know what I'm saying? You can think of the number of times that con men will try to con somebody out of something in order to get something over here.

It's this idea of robbing us of these things. And so God is the good giver. He's given everything to us. Platyarism, absolutely.
Absolutely. We'll get into some other examples like that. Not only is he the good giver, but we go back to this sermon that he's preaching to the Athenian pagans. Paul is in Acts 17.
And he talks about God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man. Nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything. Since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything else.
God gives to us the things that we need that he understands and believes and thinks that we need in order for us to live the life that he's called us to live.
[23:51] Even through our suffering, even through difficulties, he gives to us what it is that we need. And you and I both know that we're not supposed to be like the Gentiles who pursue after food and shelter and clothing with such greediness.

But instead, we're supposed to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And God will add all these things unto us. He is the great provider. He provides for us what it is that we need.
So it gives us a glimpse of God's character in that way. It shows us something about who he is.
He's very much wanting to give to us and for us to have so that we can live this life.
Now, that being said, God as the light, this commandment showing us God's glory. Let's talk a little bit about this as a map. And there's so many things that we could talk about here.
I had to narrow it down, right? So let's talk, first of all, about personal property rights. If we're to obey this commandment, it means that we need to do what we can to uphold personal property rights in our culture.
[25:13] And that may mean being politically active to vote for candidates who will help protect personal property rights. Now, you know, they say you're not supposed to mix politics and religion, but you can't help it.

Right? Politics is how we live in this world and our religion ought to affect how we live in this world.
And every one of these commandments that we've looked at somehow, some way, shape what we should be doing in our public life, including in politics.
And so I would say that one of the things that often is not talked about is that one of the functions of the government is to protect the people and protect their rights.
Their God-given rights, not governmentally given rights, but their God-given rights. And if God has given to us the idea that we can own property, then the government ought to do what it can to protect that and to keep us from losing our personal property.
And I'll even go so far as to say government overreaches its authority when it tells you what you can do with your personal property.
[26:33] Stick that in your pipe and smoke it. The government likes to tell you, likes to tell me, that when you are putting the electricity in your house, they have a list of codes and demands that they want you to meet in order to do that.

That is government overreach. It's my personal property. Now, let me give you a balancing thought to that because there is a balancing thought.

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We talked about in the commandment number six that you should not murder. And part of that idea is that we're to protect life. So we need to build our houses to a particular code in order to protect life.
And all things being equal, if we lived in a moral society, we would not need government telling us to build to a code. We would all just adhere to that because we're good citizens and love the Lord. But that is not the society we live in. We don't live in a moral society. We live in a society where if there is not an enforcer saying build to this code, you're going to have people building things that are dangerous out there that don't protect life.
[27:51] So it's that balancing act of giving up some measure of personal property rights for the idea of the protection of life.

And how do you balance that? Great question. Don't have the answer. But you understand what I'm saying. On principle, in a moral society, the government should never tell me what to do with my house.
What kind of book line does it have? Or, exactly. A good example here or anywhere is drilling for water.
It's a massive concern. Sure. It's my property, but if everybody's drilling for water, somebody's getting away and nobody has water.
That's exactly right. What's the balancing act of sustaining life versus personal property rights? If we lived in a moral society, we would get together and we would go like, oh, well, I need to move away from you.
[28:54] But we don't live in a moral society. We live in a society where everybody's after themselves. So I'm not going to be the one to go out and say, I'm only going to vote for candidates who destroy the code system.

I'm not going to do that. But at the same time, there has to be some sort of understanding of this principle on the basic foundations. Okay, so that's one way, is that we need to do things to uphold personal property rights.
Which means also that if we know that we're building something and it's leaning over onto somebody else's property, just move it. Just move it. Don't encroach on somebody else's stuff, you know.
It's easy to see. Secondly, we need to do better when we borrow things from people to return it in better condition. How many of you have loaned things out and have never gotten them back? Yeah. Do you know how many books from my library I have lost by loaning them out to people? Probably enough to put a couple of, two or three more shelves in my library.
[30:07] You know, I don't know. I guess it was my dad who taught me this or whatnot. But, you know, if you borrow something from someone, you return it in better condition.

So, like, if I borrow your car and I see that it's got a quart of a tank of gas in it, when I return it, it'll have a full tank. I'm not going to just give you the quart of tank it had and leave it as it was.
But I'm going to return it better. Because I think that that is a way that we uphold this kind of thing is that we treat others and their stuff in such a way as to show dignity and respect.
It's theirs and it's worthy of us to do that. A third thing. We need to do better about paying for damages that we're responsible for.
Now, listen, you are a group of people that I don't think you struggle with this. I believe that because some of what I know of you and what I know of your upbringing, maybe except for Frank, I know.
[31:06] But there is a younger generation that see the breaking of a window at a local restaurant by their kid as just the cost of doing business.

And not something that belongs to somebody. You know, every business belongs to someone. It's their personal property. When my brother was here for the Eclipse, he was telling us a story that when they went back to see some friends in Tyler, Texas, they had built this new building for a pizza joint called Bruno's that they loved to go to.
And they met their friends there. And they had this big old, you know, plate glass window here at the front. And his son was standing next to it. And his son had a rock in his hand.
And it was a big rock. It was sticking out the back of his hand. And he wasn't playing. He wasn't throwing things or doing wild things. He was just swinging his arms. And that rock, boom, hit that glass window.

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And it broke. They said that they just watched it spider. You know. And my brother goes like, well, okay. So how much is the window? You know.
[32:22] And of course then my brother finds out that his homeowner's insurance will actually pay for that. And so that's the way he paid for it. But he took the damages. Because that's the right thing to do.

That's somebody else's property. You don't have to have been malicious and meant to destroy something in order to be responsible for fixing it.
It's their personal property. And you've just deprived them of it. Even by negligence, carelessness, by accident. Nobody who sets a fire out in the field is thinking to themselves, you know, that I hope that this escapes.
No, nobody wants that to happen. And so we've got to do better about paying for damages of things that we're responsible for. Fourthly, we need to do better when we work for someone, giving them the full measure of our work.
Giving the full measure of our work. While we're on the job, we need to give the full measure to our employer. Not in the sense of what I think is a full measure, but in the sense of what helps them increase their bottom line.
[33:35] Every employee ought to have the mindset of, I want my employer to succeed. But that's not the mentality. Nowadays, you see these people working in a store or whatever, wherever you are.

But they're over here looking at their phone. I mean, every few minutes. That's right. Well, that's taken away from service, from your employer, from, you know.
That's exactly right. I agree with that. I think, you know, there are some jobs that being on the phone is necessary. But a lot of these jobs, it's not necessary for you to be on the phone.
And even if you just take 10 seconds to look at something and then put it away, you begin to add up 10 seconds that you took time away from your employer and add that up in terms of wages.
That begins to add up over time. And you're stealing those 10 seconds that belongs to your employer while you're there. I think, but I think it's not just about that.
[34:41] But I think it's also pushing forward in anticipation of needs. One of the things that I tried to teach my son when it came to work ethic is that as you work with someone, you seek to anticipate their needs and work ahead of them so that you can keep them rolling.

One of the examples that we had, it was a thing that we went to do. My brother-in-law was building a house and he was putting up the rafters and the overhead joists and such. And he was ready to do some blocking in all of this, getting ready for sheetrock and this kind of a thing.
And so he and his friend had been up there together measuring, cutting, nailing them in. And so what Jacob and I did is that we worked ahead of them by measuring and cutting all the blocking and setting them in place, written on the floor, written on the thing, written on the rafter.
So they would know exactly where to put it, which one. And all they had to do is move their ladders, nail it in, move their ladders, nail it in. And they finished a job that would have taken a couple of days within just a few hours.
And I was trying to help him understand this is what you have to do. When you go to work for someone, you need to anticipate. You think about Joseph in the Bible. Joseph wanted Egypt to succeed.
[35:56] That's why he told them the wisdom that he had about how they could prepare for the seven years of famine. As Christians, we should be the best employees working in anticipation, working for the good of the bottom line for the person who owns that company.

Because it is in that that we are blessed by God. Even if the employer never shares that with you, you are blessed by God because that's what you have done.
Now, let's bring this a little closer to home because we all have jobs that we have to do that we don't get paid for. We have jobs that we have to do.
And here's the thing. I want you to look at this verse in Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 28. We're going to talk Sunday morning and we talked this past Sunday about put off and put on, right? You put off sin, you put on righteous behavior.
This is a great verse that shows you the opposite of these things. Look at what's opposite of the thief. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor doing honest work with his hands so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

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[37:05] The reason that we own personal property is to be able to bless other people. So as we think about our own personal property and we think about our homes, we think about our cars, we think about even the atmosphere of our home.

And we think about the things that we might do related to say hospitality or that we might do to share and help people in need. We have to work in such a way as to not steal from ourselves.
And so we can't be lazy at home. The Lord has given us six days to work and one day to rest. And what I mean by lazy at home is not doing what is necessary to be able to use our stuff for sharing with the needs of others.
We have to understand that you own what you own by God's grace, but for his purposes. They're not just for our own personal pleasures.
Yes, we get to enjoy them. But, you know, if somebody had a need and they walked up to you, and this is so ridiculous of an illustration, you're going to laugh at me, but just run with me here for a second.
[38:21] If somebody had a legitimate need for your TV, God gave that to you for you to be able to share with them. It's not just for you.

Now, nobody has a legitimate need for a TV, but you understand my point. We've got to do a better job of giving the full measure of our work, including in our marriages, in our parenting, in our housekeeping, in everything.
Because all of that is to be able to give to others. Last thing, I think, is we need to do a better job of being content with what the Lord has given us.
The whole point, or the underlying thing with stealing and taking is the discontent. Right? The dissatisfaction we have with where our life is.
And so we've got to do a better job of being content with what the Lord is giving to us. Being content is a hard thing. As a matter of fact, I would say that there were two big things that I really struggled with coming out of living with my parents that I have been discontent with periodically throughout my life.
[39:35] Where I am now, I'm fine. But early on, I was not fine. I wanted these things because I felt like that I needed them. Because I didn't understand why we had them at home and I couldn't have them myself, you know.

But that is that I wanted to go out to eat and I wanted a new car. And when I say I wanted to go out to eat, what I'm saying to you is that I wanted to eat out every single meal.
And I tried really hard in college to do that. Michelle and I, we met October of 1989. And in that first semester, I got there in August, right, and we met October.
Well, we started dating October. Probably really November, actually. But anyway. I had worked all summer as a summer youth minister and had made close to $2,000 as a summer youth minister.
And I had that in my bank account. And by December, it was gone. From going out to eat. You know, I would go to the cafeteria for the food that I had already paid for.
[40:41] And I didn't like it. So I would leave and I would go get something to eat. But I don't like eating by myself. So I'd invite all my friends to go. And I would pay for everyone.

And I blew through $2,000 because I learned to love to go out to eat. Because it's just what was happening for our family at the time. But also new cars.
I mean, I never saw my dad buy a used car. It was always brand new cars. And so I bought a couple of new cars. But like after a couple of years of marriage, it was like going upside down on that last one.
I was just like, that's it. I'm never doing that again. That's ridiculous. And I haven't bought a new car since the 90s. Because there's no need for it.
We must grow in our contentment and be content with what we have. And so I just want to talk about then, well, how do we grow in our contentment? And I want to give you a couple of verses that will, I think, help speak to this.
[41:48] One is from Philippians. Paul says here, not that I'm speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound in any and every circumstance.

I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. Think about the things he's talking about there. Plenty and hungry. Abundance and need.

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He's talking about the necessities of life. There are times that he had way more food than he needed. He had shelter. He had all the necessities of life.
That's what he's talking about. And he knew how to deal with it. He knew how to be content with having a lot and not letting that turn his heart to wanting more. And when he had nothing, didn't have a place to maybe stay or he didn't have the food that he wanted, he knew how to be content with that and not say to himself, I want more than this.
Well, how do you think Paul did it? He's told us, I have learned the secret. What is the secret of contentment? I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
[42:59] This is not a football verse. This is not a power lifting verse. This is not going to piano recital verse. This is a verse that tells us that it is divine power of God working in your heart that helps you be content.

You cannot be content apart from the power of God. You can't work it up in your own power. You can't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps and learn contentment by practice, experience, and wisdom.
You can only be content in the way that God wants you to be content by his power. How does he do this? Well, Hebrews 13, 5 says, keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have for, for.
That word for means how. He said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. This is the motivation right here.
This is the motivation for being content. We know the power. The power of contentment is from God. What's the motivation of being content? The presence of the Lord. He's Jehovah Shema.
[44:20] He's always with you. So you go to those moments of being discontent because life isn't the way you want it to roll. Because things aren't happening the way you want to.

Because maybe it's about your stuff or maybe it's about other things. Your lack of contentment is because you have forgotten God is standing right next to you. He planned for that moment of trouble for you.
And now he's walking you through it and you forgot he was there. The motivation to say I want to be content comes from realizing God is right there. I will never leave you nor forsake you.
What a promise. And lastly, Paul tells the Thessalonians, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God and Christ Jesus for you.
This is then our part. Those other two parts, right? God's power. God's presence. This is our part. Give thanks. Truly give thanks.
[45:24] And listen to this. It says give thanks in all circumstances. Not for. Not necessarily for. This came home to me when I was in high school.

Our pastor, my dad was a pastor until I was a junior in high school. And then he resigned the church and we went to church at First Baptist Mauriceville. And our pastor at First Baptist Mauriceville was Clifton Rankin.
And the Mother's Day of that year, to not drag out the story, is that his wife and daughter were killed in a car accident there on Mother's Day.
It says, ...for the death of his wife and his daughter, but that in the pain of that, he was thankful to the Lord for other things.
He could find so much to be thankful about. He didn't pass away. Matter of fact, he didn't get hurt at all in the accident. His son was safe and he still had his son.
[46:44] I mean, just on and on, he began to list all the things that he was thankful for in the middle of that. And I think what happens is that when we get in a moment of something that we're discontent with this, we have a tendency to look at the one thing missing rather than all the things that we have to be thankful for.

You know, I think that's what's going on with Eve to some degree in the garden. God had told them, you can eat from every tree in the garden except the one. And the statement was, you know, well, what about this one tree?
The eyes get focused on the one tree, but look at all the other trees you can't eat from, including the tree of life. They could have eaten from the tree of life. It was there. All of the trees there.
And they focus on the one thing that they can't have. It is. We need to grow in our thankfulness. And when we see that, that begins to demonstrate for us the problem.

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And that problem is, we break this commandment all the time. I know that you're not picking up Brock's candy out of the candy aisle.
[47:55] I know you don't go through H-E-B and grab chocolate almonds and throw them in your mouth. I know that you're not destroying other people's property. But are you being content with what you have and using it for the glory of God?

That mirror ought to shine in our hearts and examine it and say, wow, we're sinners. But that's why Christ came. He came because we're not content.
He came because we're not satisfied. And he died for us in that. And he paid the price for that. You remember, stealing brings eternal punishment.
And the end of that whole section of list of scriptures, you get this, and such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God.
You don't have to be a thief any longer. You don't have to walk around carrying the label thief, discontent, malcontent.
[49:04] You don't have to carry that label any longer. That's what you were. But because of Christ, washed, sanctified, and justified. And so if you find yourself with this commandment going like, wow, this is really hidden.

I have definitely broken this commandment. Then run to Christ. Run to Christ and realize the forgiveness that is there. The covering of his righteousness that is there.
And rest knowing he will remember your sins no more. Let's pray. Father, thank you. Thank you for your word.
We need it in our lives so much because we have so much turmoil and pain because of our sin. And so I just pray, Father, that you would help us to reckon with the fact that you have covered us in the righteousness of Christ.
And I pray, Father, that you would help us to live in such a way that honors you and lives up to the calling with which you have called us. help us by your power, by your strength to be content as you've called us to be, to uphold the property rights of others, to see you glorified in all things.
[50:29] And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Any, um, anything, anything,

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