

## BAHRAIN REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

### *C8: The Respect for Property (Exodus 20:15)*

May 2, 2024

#### Preliminary

Definition: Stealing someone else's property unlawfully

[WLC, Question 142]: What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

Answer: "The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing land marks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depopulations; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor: What belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God has given us."

Note: Every violation of the Ten Commandments involves some form of theft.

First Table (1-4): Bowing down to idols steals God's worship; desecrating the Sabbath steals his holy day.

Second Table (5-10): Disrespecting parents steals their honor; Murder steals life; adultery steals purity; lying steals the truth; Covetousness leads to stealing

Point: Real theft is that every sin we commit dishonors God and thus steals the glory that our lives ought to give Him.

#### 1. The Right of property

Note: The earth is the Lord – everything we have belongs to God... Ps 24:1; 50:9-12

➤ Adam did not own any property – he just managed it.

Gen 2:15 = "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it*"

Point: God granted us rights and freedom to use His property and wealth, but our given rights are only temporary... Gen 1:28-30

#### 2. Sins that underlie the sin of stealing.

##### (a) Sin of unbelief in God's providence

Note: Every theft is a failure to trust in God's provision

Point: Whenever we take something that doesn't belong to us, we deny that God has given us or is able to give us everything we truly need... Ps 78:18-19

Challenge: By keeping the eighth commandment, it is a practical exercise of our faith in God's providence

##### (b) Sin of covetousness

Note: Dissatisfaction with what God has given us is often the reason for coveting the possessions of others

Point: Covetousness is a form of idolatry... Col 3:5

##### (c) Sin of laziness

Note: Laziness has an aversion to hard work

➤ Laziness always wants a quick way to get what they want and that often prompts them to cheat others or steal other people's possessions.

Note: The three aforementioned sins can be compared to the character of Judas Iscariot which led him to betray our Lord Jesus... Jn 12:6

#### 3. Good stewardship as an answer to not stealing

Note: A steward is someone who cares for someone else's property.

➤ The steward is not free to use it however he pleases, but only to manage it in accordance with his master's intentions... Gen 2:15

➤ Good stewardship means taking care of what we have been given, not letting things fall into disrepair - not being wasteful!

Point: Whenever we squander money that could be better spent on something else, we are guilty of a kind of theft.

Implication:

##### (a) Gambling is a form of theft

➤ Gambling seeks personal gain and pleasure at another person's loss and pain

##### (b) Good stewardship is also means working hard.

Note: Poverty often prompts the temptation to steal from others

Ephesians 4:28 says =, "*Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need*"

##### (c) Not giving to others and also to the Church is disobedience to the 8th commandment ... Mal 3:8-9

➤ God's gifts for us is not given simply to satisfy our own desires, but also to provide for others.

[Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, 88] – "What's yours is mine; I'll take it." This is the attitude of the thief. The second says, "What's mine is mine; I'll keep it." Since we are selfish by nature, this is the attitude that most people have most of the time. The third attitude—the godly attitude—says, "What's mine is God's; I'll share it."

[Kent Hughes, *Set Apart to Save: Materialism*] – "Every time I give, I declare that money does not control me. Perpetual generosity is a perpetual de-deification of money"

##### (d) To give back to God our best time and our talents... Col 3:23

Point: When we withhold the things that are rightly His – our time and talents, our possessions and our finances, indeed our very lives – we are in effect stealing from Him

*The most lawful and honorable means of obtaining wealth is to work for it*