

The Eighth Commandment

by Cleveland Redding

If the **Sixth Commandment** is not to steal another man's *life* and the **Seventh** is not to steal his *wife*, then the **Eighth Commandment** is not to steal your neighbor's *Property*: "*Thou shalt not steal*" (Exodus 20:15). Here God is establishing the right of personal property. This is consistent throughout Scripture. Abraham returned property to the King of Sodom in Genesis 14 because it was his and to protect his own good name. In Acts 5:4 Peter rebukes Ananias by pointing out his own rights of property in the land and its proceeds from its sale. Ananias was killed by the Lord for lying, keeping back part of the price for himself, an act he was free to do according to Peter, while saying that he had given the entire sum. It was the **LIE** that cost Ananias and Sapphira their lives, nothing else.

Paul expresses the Lord's will on this matter in Ephesians 4:28, "*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.*" In the Lord's mind the man who eats from others' charity while he could be working and providing for himself is a thief. He further says in 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10, "*For ...we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's handFor even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.*"

Stealing another's property hurts his ability to provide for his own family. And there is no moral difference between stealing from the rich and stealing from the poor. A thief is a thief, period. And that is beneath human dignity.

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