

DO NOT STEAL

Scripture used: Exodus 20:15 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

As we continue our message series on God's Top Ten (The Ten Commandments), we take a closer look into God's heart behind His eighth commandment: do not steal. Stealing is defined as taking another person's property without permission, in secrecy or by force. One of the main areas in which we steal is at work—for both employee AND employers. Employees should give a good solid eight hours of work for the eight hours of pay that we've earned, but we sometimes steal from our employers by surfing the web, engaging with social media, and having extended conversation at the water cooler. Employers can steal by not paying their employees their fair wages. Some other forms of stealing are seeking relationships with a person who is married, downloading music and movies without paying for them, and embezzlement. The bottom line is that a thief thinks, "I can take what's not mine" and "I can keep what's not mine."

Pastor Hurmon also took some time to address the parents of our church and the potential damage that we can cause our children by not giving them chores or not holding them accountable for their bad actions. When we remove struggle from our children's lives, we damage them. God has shaped life in such a way that struggle is built into the birthing process of all life on earth, from birds and reptiles breaking free from their shells to the labor that it takes for a human to be born. When struggle is removed, the animals die or do not develop as they should. Likewise, when we remove struggle from our children's lives, they grow up entitled and are apt to take shortcuts to get what they want, including stealing.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **The Ten Commandments are reminders that:**
 - God loves us
 - God loves others - be mindful; if you live long enough, you will become the "other," e.g. you may steal from someone today, but someday you may be stolen from.
- 2) **Dangerous Attitudes Behind Stealing**
 - Trying to get something for nothing - like a person lusting after another but not wanting to marry them in order to have them.
 - Laziness and entitlement - we sometimes expect things to come easily to us, and when they don't, we look for shortcuts instead of working hard to get them.
- 3) **Three reasons why parents try to remove struggle from their children's lives:**
 - We feel guilty - particularly for single parents because of the absence of the other parent.
 - It's easier for us to do it - some of us are often impatient with our children when they don't do things to the standard that we like.
 - We think that school is their job - parents have work, children have schooling, but we all come home and need to do chores.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** Were there any particular examples of stealing that surprise you? Have you ever been the victim of theft? If you are willing, please share your experience.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** God uses struggle in our lives to develop us. How has God used your past struggles to develop you into the person you are today? How does this shape your view of the struggle you are going through today?
- 3) **DO & PRAYER** Take some extra time in prayer this week to ask God if there are any areas in your life that you are stealing. If there are, ask Him for forgiveness and identify any next steps you can take to not repeat the offense.