

DATE: June 6, 2010
TITLE: "PUT IT INTO PRACTICE"
TEXT: Exodus 20:15
SERIES: Back to Basics (#8 of 10)

INTRODUCTION: How many here have had something stolen from you at one time or another? Stealing can greatly disrupt a life.

ILLUSTRATION: (As reported, May 7, 07) In Attalla, Alabama, a judge ordered two shoplifters to stand at a Wal-Mart entrance for eight hours, wearing signs that read, 'I am a thief. I stole from Wal-Mart.' "Maybe they'll think twice about doing it," said store manager, Neil Hawkins.
Stories of stealing abound, ranging from the bizarre to very confusing.

ILLUSTRATION: In Missouri, a guy trying to pawn a stolen bracelet was apprehended by police when the pawn shop owner recognized the jewelry--it was his wife's.

In West Virginia, a knife-wielding mugger accepted a \$300 check from his victim. The thief was arrested the next day trying to cash the check.

In Tennessee, a burglar realized he'd left his Nikes at the home he'd just robbed. So he returned and asked the lady of the house if she'd seen his shoes. She called the cops, and the guy was arrested.

ILLUSTRATION: Once, a man had decided to rob a downtown Bank of America. He walked into the branch and, on a deposit slip, wrote "this iz a stikkup. put all your munny in this bag." However, while he was in line waiting to give the note to the teller, he began to worry that someone had seen him write the note and might call police before he reached the window. So, he left the Bank of America and crossed the street to a Wells Fargo bank. After waiting a few minutes in line there, he handed the note to the Wells Fargo teller. She read it and surmised from his spelling errors that he was not the brightest light in the harbor. She told him that she could not accept the stickup note because it was written on a Bank of America deposit slip. She told him he would either have to fill out a Wells Fargo deposit slip or go back to the Bank of America. Looking somewhat defeated, the man said "Okay," and left. The Wells Fargo teller then called the police, who arrested the would-be bank robber a few minutes later, as he was waiting in line back at Bank of America.

The commandment, "You shall not steal" is well known in the church and outside of the church. Yet, it can be one thing to know the commandment in your head and another to practice it in your heart. It can be one thing to know about a commandment and another to put it into practice. This morning, I want us to revisit this commandment with open hearts and minds and hopefully discover again what it means to you and me to put it into practice. **"You shall not steal." Exodus 20:15**

I. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY RESPECTING OTHERS AND THEIR PROPERTY

1. The Ten Commandments consist of ten principles for those who would live their lives in a relationship with God.
2. Stealing is a serious violation against the covenant relationship between God and His people.
3. The eighth commandment is a moral broadside against taking things that belong to someone else.

ILLUSTRATION: One pastor tells of his son, who is the Assistant Manager of a Potbelly's Sandwich Shop in the northern suburbs of Chicago. "When you ask for a glass of water, most restaurants, like Potbelly's, will give you a plastic cup. Of course, if you have one of those plastic cups, you can't go to the pop machine and take pop. You haven't paid for it. But, just about every day, something happens at Potbelly's that is often the most entertaining moment of my son's day. He watches, as the workers at Potbelly's hand the plastic glasses to those who have ordered water. Many of these obviously well-to-do people of the northern suburbs take their plastic cups, and, instead of pushing the little water tab, fill their cups with pop. There are no whistles or sirens that go off. Potbelly's doesn't call the police or haul out guns or take the customers captive. As graciously as he can, my son walks over to the customer and says, "I'm so sorry. I didn't realize we were supposed to charge you for pop. Can we go over and ring that up?" As he takes them over to the counter, he says it's pretty entertaining to see them turn crimson red in embarrassment. They were caught stealing."

4. Stealing can take many forms.
5. Stealing can be small or large, but it is stealing either way.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture with this, perhaps of a child) William Hendricks explains in Keeping Your Ethical Edge Sharp, "What we do in the small issues of life sets the stage for bigger issues."

6. To steal from another is not merely to steal one's possessions, it is to assault another's dignity as a human being who has the right to the toil of his hands, to the produce of their talents, to the property that is theirs.
7. In one sense, this commandment is the foundation of our economic system.
8. It recognizes the fact that man has a right to work, earn, save, and own personal property.
9. This law makes it clear that it is wrong in God's eyes to take from another what is rightfully theirs.
10. It is an issue of respecting people and their property.

ILLUSTRATION: Someone once observed, "If you wish others to respect you, you must show respect for them." (Ari Kiev)

11. In his general instructions on how to live, Peter writes, "**Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.**" **(I Peter 2:17)**
12. To steal is to violate another and is an act of disrespect.
13. To steal another person's ideas or reputation is an act of disrespect.
14. To take credit for another's thoughts, words, and concepts is stealing.

ILLUSTRATION: The Bible College I teach for, like many schools, puts a lot of energy and effort into holding students accountable for any plagiarism. They do this by using a program that papers have to go through that exposes plagiarism.

15. To steal a person's reputation is an act of disrespect for another person.

16. We can steal a reputation by a raised eyebrow, a word spoken, jealousy, gossip, or by silence, when we don't defend or speak up for the truth.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Put up with a background perhaps of an outdoor play?)

William Shakespeare wrote in Othello, Scene III, 156:

"Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his and has been slave to thousands;

But he that filches from me my good name

Robs me of that which not enriches him and makes me poor indeed."

17. Stealing is a selfish, self-centered act.

18. In America, through the millions of dollars spent on advertising, we have created a culture where we feel we need so many things.

19. We have created a culture where we feel we somehow deserve these things so that, many have concluded, we should have them no matter how we get them.

ILLUSTRATION: A would-be robber looked so goofy — well, Pluto, actually — that a convenience store clerk burst out laughing, foiling the attempted hold-up. Cranberry, Pa. Police Sgt., Dave Kovach told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, "The man walked into Gordon's Mini Market on a Tuesday evening wearing a mask, disguising himself as Pluto, Mickey Mouse's long-eared, tongue-wagging dog. The cartoon canine walked up to the counter, pulled out a gun and demanded cash from the till. The clerk, alone in the store with the robber, took one look and broke into laughter. The frustrated Pluto robber then left the store," Kovach said.

"Another witness saw a white male, about 20 years old, get into a car and drive away." Kovach added, "laughter isn't usually the best crime deterrent."

20. The reality is that robbing and stealing are not funny.

21. Many people have been touched by theft.

22. Millions of dollars are lost every year in this country over the theft of goods and services.

ILLUSTRATION: One estimate says that 1 out of every 52 shoppers carries something out of the supermarket for which they haven't paid. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 4 million people are caught shoplifting every year. But, for every one caught, 35 others get away. This means that there are over 140 million incidents of shoplifting every year in America! What's really tragic is that only 10% of all shoplifters come from low income status. 70% are middle class and 20% are classified as wealthy.

ILLUSTRATION: One new hotel reported that in their 10 months of operation, they lost 38,000 spoons, 18,000 towels, 355 silver coffee pots, 1,500 silver finger bowls and 100 Bibles to thieves.

23. These statistics reveal a strong indication of lack of respect for others and their property.

24. The verb translated 'to steal' can have as its object either a person or an object.

25. Some passages in the Old Testament are directed against stealing of a person or kidnapping for slavery, which reveals lack of respect of the person.

26. However, there is no doubt, all sorts of thefts included.
27. Though kidnapping is included in this commandment, the eighth commandment includes a prohibition of stealing of any kind, under any circumstances, for it speaks of all forms of unjust gain at the expense of others.
28. Any act that involves manipulation of another human being for personal gain is tantamount to the crime.
29. Scholars have pointed out that the particular nuance of this word translated, which distinguishes it from other types of misappropriation, is the element of secrecy.
30. The eighth commandment is frequently quoted and repeated in the Bible, and its seriousness is clearly seen in the Old Testament.

“Whenever I would heal Israel, the sins of Ephraim are exposed and the crimes of Samaria revealed. They practice deceit, thieves break into houses, bandits rob in the streets.” (Hosea 7:1)

31. The Old Testament has much to say about the penalty for stealing and, in general, was punished in Israel often by a fine or the like.

32. The seriousness of stealing is seen in the Apostle’s Paul’s writings, where he includes thieves and swindlers in those who will not be in the kingdom of God.

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” (I Corinthians 6:9-10)

33. Some have called this sin a double sin.

34. It is a sin against God, for it accuses Him of not giving adequately, and a sin against love, for it is not loving your neighbor.

EXAMPLE: An expert on law once asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked, “What is written in the Law, how do you read it?”

He summed up the law, answering “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;’ and, ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”(Luke 10:27) Jesus answered, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.” The man then asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” In reply, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, which is a story about a Jewish man who was robbed, and a Samaritan who helped Him.

The key characters in the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus told are instructive. The robbers that stole from the man traveling to Jericho depict selfish people, concerned only about themselves, who take from others so they can have it for themselves. They stripped him, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead, showing no regard or respect for the man. A Priest and Levite walked by on the other side, saw him, but offered no help. These religious people were self-centered and concerned about themselves more than the hurting man, so they offered no help. They had the concept that what belongs to me is mine and I will keep it. However, the Samaritan was a good and giving person, who gave oil and help, taking him to an inn and paying for his care. The Good Samaritan was an example of what it means to love our neighbor, as he showed mercy on him. He had respect for the hurting man he did not know.

35. Stealing is a breakage of the commandment to love your neighbor.
36. To put the commandment, 'you shall not steal' into practice is to respect others and their property.

II. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY LIVING A LIFE OF INTEGRITY.

1. Integrity should be a prevalent word that comes to mind when one describes a true follower of the Lord.
2. Integrity is the state of being innocent, trustworthy, morally upright and free from dishonesty.
3. Proverbs says, (*picture) **“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.” (Proverbs 11:3)**

4. God calls His people to be people of honesty and integrity in dealing with others.

ILLUSTRATION: Laura Panaro, of Florence N.J, wrote, “While I was helping to clean the church, I encountered a 12-year-old boy, who was working out his court sentence for theft by doing community service. He asked me what bad thing I had done to be working there. “Why son, I didn't do anything wrong. I'm just helping out the church. What did you do?” I ventured. “I didn't do nuttin' either,” he assured me. Alarmed, I asked why he hadn't told that to the arresting officer.

“What was the use?” he muttered. “He went to my house and found all the stuff.”

5. Some have stated that honesty is the best policy.
6. For the Christian, honesty is the only policy.

(*Picture) “The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.” (Proverbs 11:1)

7. In our dealings with others, we are not to take advantage of others, but are to be honest in our dealings.

“Do not have two differing weights in your bag-one heavy, one light. Do not have two differing measures in your house-one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.” (Deuteronomy 25:13-16) (Lev. 19:35-36)

8. To steal from another is to destroy social trust, which is the foundation for a healthy community.

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago, a large drug store chain, Super D Drugs, began integrity testing after what they termed, ‘a dramatic rise in shrinkage’. The testing centers in on screening out would-be thieves. The Vice President of Super D’s said, “we estimate that we have saved \$400,000 in employee theft.”

9. God calls us to be people of integrity.
10. This commandment cannot be separated from the 10th commandment, for the love of other things more than living a life of integrity is sin.
11. Theft was condemned by the prophets as an indication of social breakdown and lack of knowledge of God.
12. This prohibition is to guard integrity and the fellowship of the covenant community.

EXAMPLE: (*Picture of building of the temple with this) An example of the type of honesty and integrity called for in this commandment is recorded in II Kings, where Joash was building the temple. Money was collected to pay the workmen who used it to repair the temple. “They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty.” (II Kings 12:15)

13. God calls us to be people of integrity.

14. Ezekiel gave this description of a man of integrity.

He does not oppress anyone. but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest. He withholds his hand from doing wrong and judges fairly between man and man He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteousness; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign Lord.” (Ezekiel 18:7-9)

15. Are you a person of integrity?

16. Loss of integrity is clearly seen in the community.

17. The click sound you hear in a parking lot as people lock their cars reminds us that people are concerned about loss of their property

18. Internet passwords and Theft Identity companies abound.

19. It is a testimony to lack of integrity.

20. Integrity calls us to be givers, not takers.

“Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.” (Psalm 112:5-6)

21. Integrity must begin with us.

22. We must be a people of integrity.

ILLUSTRATION: “*Fairy Tale Princess Story Turns Sour After Newlyweds Lose Money.*” So read the headlines of the Daily Herald in Chicago on February 20, 1996. A newlywed couple had left a black-zippered case on the roof of their car as they sped away from the reception to begin their honeymoon. The case had all their wedding gift money in it—\$12,000. By the time they reached their destination, it was gone. According to the bride, upon realizing what had happened, she said, “I feel numb—that’s a good word for it. Overwhelmed!” Two days later, the same newspaper carried headlines to a related story: “*Finders Keepers? Not All Believe It!*” David Yi, an unemployed suburban resident, had come upon the black bag with the \$12,000 in cash. In spite of his mounting bills and jobless state, he didn’t keep any of the money. Tracking the couple down, he returned the full amount. When asked why he turned it all in, he said, “I guess it doesn’t matter whether it’s \$50 or \$1,000 or \$1 million. It doesn’t belong to you.” Upon investigation, the media discovered that David Yi, acting as a Good Samaritan, was consistent with his overall character. David had found \$50 the year before and turned it in, as well. When offered jobs because of the exposure he received, Yi said he would only consider jobs he was qualified for. He felt that accepting a managerial position for which he was unequipped was dishonest. He was a man who displayed integrity.

23. Put this commandment into practice by living a life of integrity.

III. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY REFUSING TO JUSTIFY OR EXCUSE STEALING.

1. The temptation to steal is real and ever-present in our society
2. There are many opportunities to apply the commandment today.
3. The list of temptations to break this commandment or opportunities to apply this commandment are too numerous to mention in entirety.
4. They would include taking of another's goods, robbery, stealing by force or threat, fraud, cheating, swindling, embezzlement, violations of trust, excessive charges, non-payment of debts, underpayment of employees, the failure to give an employer the labor for which he pays, gambling, time theft, phone theft, padded expense account, falsified tax returns, rigged contest, bribery of officials, cheating, for these are all contemporary violations of this commandment.
5. Every day, we are surrounded by opportunities and temptations to steal in a myriad of ways, and, we have opportunity to put into practice, "you shall not steal."
6. Every day, we have opportunities to put this commandment into practice, as we interact with others.
7. Paul reminds, us **"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."** (I Corinthians 10:13)
8. As pointed out, the work place provides many opportunities to put this commandment into practice.
9. Putting this commandment into practice protects us from time theft: coming in late, leaving early, overextended coffee breaks and lunch hours, not working when paid to work, etc.
10. Applying this commandment at work protects us from work theft, ie: doing shoddy sub-standard work.
11. Applying this commandment at work protects us from phone theft, expense theft or taking supplies for personal use.

ILLUSTRATION: It is estimated that employee theft accounts for 60 percent of all inventory losses. Some studies have shown that employee theft costs companies billions of dollars every year, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$120 billion. According to *USA Today*, 48 % of all American workers took something from an employer last year. A while back, CNN reported that one out of every three businesses goes out of business because of employee theft.

12. To put it into practice, we must take this commandment to work and school with us.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." (Colossians 3:23-24)

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago, after F. E. Marsh preached on this subject, a young man came to him and said, "Pastor, you have put me in bad spot. I've stolen from my employer, and I'm ashamed to tell him about it. You see, I'm a

boat builder, and the man I work for is an unbeliever. I have often talked to him about Christ, but he only laughs at me. In my work, expensive copper nails are used because they won't rust in water. I've been taking some of them home for a boat I am building in my backyard. I'm afraid if I tell my boss what I've done and offer to pay for them, he'll think I'm a hypocrite, and I'll never be able to reach him for Christ. Yet, my conscience is bothered."

Later, when the man saw the preacher again, he exclaimed, "Pastor, I've settled that matter and I'm so relieved." "What happened when you told your boss?" asked the minister. "Oh, he looked at me intently and said, 'George, I've always thought you were a hypocrite, but now I'm not so sure. Maybe there's something to your Christianity after all. Any religion that makes a man admit he's been stealing a few copper nails and offer to settle for them must be worth having."

13. We need to do careful and honest examination in our lives.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)

14. Stealing is a sin that some have sought to justify or excuse.

15. In our society, common phrases like, "they don't need it, they will never miss it," "they would waste it and I've got it coming," or, "it is so small, they will never miss it" can be heard to justify stealing. A person might steal a few sheets of paper who would never steal a whole ream of paper.

16. Even in the church, among those who proclaim to be follows of Jesus, excuses have been offered.

17. Failure to apply this command to our own lives keeps us from really putting it into practice.

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago, there was a young pastor whose first church was in a small logging community here in the Pacific Northwest. Nearly everyone in town worked for the logging mill. It was the biggest employer, a mill that was also involved in a fierce competition with another mill just upstream. One day, the pastor climbed up the slope overlooking the river and the mill. To his horror, he saw some of his church members pulling logs that were branded by the other mill from the river, cutting off the branded ends, and running them through their own mill. That Sunday, he preached a powerful sermon entitled, "Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Property." After the service, all the loggers shook his hand, patted his back, and told him how much they enjoyed his preaching. However, the next week, he saw that they were back in the business of stealing their competitor's logs. So, he fired off another scorching sermon called, "Thou Shalt Not Steal." Again, he was commended for his powerful delivery and his keen insights into the Scriptures. But, on Monday, the other mill's logs were still being swiped. Enough was enough! He'd had it. This time, he decided not to hold anything back. The next Sunday, he pulled out all the stops and preached a message entitled, "Thou Shalt Not Cut the Branded Ends Off Someone Else's Logs." The result? He was run out of town!

18. We must take this commandment into our lives, homes and daily actions.

19. As Christians, we need to throw away our excuses and look deep into our own lives and practices.
20. It seems that some have gotten caught up in the saying, “the end justifies the means.”
21. Churches steal music without paying appropriate fees or copy materials without paying appropriate royalties, and justify their stealing by saying, “it is for the Lord” or, “we can’t afford it and the Lord.”
22. We offer excuses but are simply trying to justify ourselves with excuses.
23. It is easy to get caught up in the trap of justifying what we do.

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago, I had the privilege of spending some personal time with a Christian businessman. Some years ago, I wrote a letter to him, for he was making a product that was invented by someone else. It was an expensive item, and he was selling it for less than half of the price the person with the rights was selling it for. I wrote to him regarding my concern. He sent me back a letter that saddened my heart. Using toasters as an example, he justified what he had done. He was evidently successful in justifying it in his own mind, so he continued on in the selling of a product he had literally stolen from another.

24. Justifying it in our own mind does not change the reality.
25. We must refuse to steal or justify stealing by calling stealing what it is.
26. Be ruthlessly honest about what is right.
27. Ask God to open your eyes and help you make any changes in your life that you need to make.

“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. (Ephesians 4:28)

28. Put it into practice by refusing to justify or excuse stealing.

IV. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY MAKING THE WRONG RIGHT.

1. In dealing with stealing, the Old Testament insists that restitution has to be made.
2. Scripture states **“If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.”(Exodus 22:1)**

3. The seriousness of stealing and the appropriate restitution for stealing is clearly stated.

“A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft.” (Exodus 22:3)

4. Restitution seems to be an almost forgotten word
5. Scripture teaches the principle of confession and restitution.

“and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged.” Numbers 5:7.

6. The good news is that there is forgiveness for sin.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9)

7. God's will is that His people never resort to stealing, and if we are guilty, then we confess and need to make restitution.

ILLUSTRATION: When I was a kid, we had a shopping store named, Food Giant, located on Foothill Blvd., in Fontana., California. They had a bin of candy. I was standing there looking at all that candy. Someone came and took a piece of candy and ate it and kept shopping. I did the same. It was a jelly strawberry candy. I started to chew it up. I was still chewing when I walked up to my Dad. "Son, what is in your mouth?" he asked. Have you ever tried to swallow or quickly get rid of a jelly candy? Did you know that it stains? I had to go back to the store, ask for the manger, confess that I had stolen one piece of candy and then pay for it. I tried to justify it to my dad by telling him, "it is only one piece of candy y and other adults were doing it." Dad said, "I am not responsible for them. And, it is not the candy but the principal that matters. Dad was teaching me confession and restitution.

8. I have never forgotten that lesson or what I learned from it.
9. I have never forgotten the seriousness of stealing or the importance of confession and restitution.

EXAMPLE: The Story of Zacchaeus, in the New Testament, is instructive and serves as an example.

10. He made restitution and sought to make the wrong right.

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." (Luke 19:8)

11. Restitution is seeking to make the wrong right.
12. We must seek to make right what is wrong.
13. If God has shown where you have borrowed something and not returned it, if you have taken something and you need to make it right, seek restitution through the power of Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: There is an old story that goes like this: One Sunday morning, a preacher of yesterday, Charles Finney preached a message entitled, "The Sin Of Borrowing Things And Not Returning Them." He said, "When I went to my tool shed yesterday with some men who were on hand to do some work, I found it practically empty. President Mahan had borrowed my plow and never sent it back. Professor Morgan had sent for my spade and I haven't seen it since. Deacon Beecher has had one of my monkey wrenches for so long a time that the memory of a man cannot recall how long ago it was borrowed. What does it mean? It means that there are some characteristics among the best of us such a carelessness concerning our fundamental everyday obligations." The sermon was extremely effective. The next morning, before dawn, one neighbor, trying to bring back a workhorse, had to be rescued from Finney's dog. All the rest of the morning, there was a steady stream of the neighbor's kids bringing back borrowed tools. They even returned things that were not Finney's.

14. Putting it into practice means making the wrong right.

V. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY NOT STEALING FROM GOD

1. God is the Giver of all we have.
2. Everything we have is a gift of God's grace.
3. David said this as he was preparing for the building of the Temple that Solomon, his son would build.

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this! Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.” (I Chronicles 29:14)

4. Because God has given us all we have, we are to honor Him with what we have.
5. It is all God's, and yet, He has entrusted it all to us.
6. God makes claim upon every dimension of our lives.
7. Stealing is a sin against God, for it accuses Him of not giving adequately.
8. We put this commandment into practice by trusting God to provide.
9. We are responsible to be faithful managers of all God has given us.

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings.” (Malachi 3:8)

10. When we fail to follow the biblical principles of tithing and giving, we are robbing God of what is His.
11. To put this commandment into practice is to not rob God of our resources and possessions.
12. To put this commandment into practice is to not rob God of the praise due His name.
13. To put this commandment of God into practice is to not rob God of our priorities and our passions.
14. To put this commandment of God into practice is to not rob God of the obedience due His name.
15. To put this commandment into practice is to not rob God of our time and talents.
16. This commandment speaks about our responsibility as the people of God not only to not take from others, but to give to God so that we don't take from Him.
17. Jesus was a giver not a taker.

“I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” (II Corinthians 8:8-9)

18. Jesus gave us Himself so that we might be rich in the things of God.

ILLUSTRATION: One author observed, “When Jesus was crucified, on His right and on His left were two thieves. The only difference was that one was redeemed and the other was not. It is the same today.” (Albert Mohler, Jr.)

19. Have you responded to the gift of salvation and forgiveness God offers to all who will turn to Him in faith?

ILLUSTRATION: At Valley Forge, in the winter of 1777-78, George Washington and his troops were in utterly desperate straits. He appealed to the government of Pennsylvania for help. Jacob DeHaven, a staunch believer in the revolutionary cause, lived near Valley Forge. Hearing of Washington's appeal, he loaned him \$50,000 in gold and \$400,000 in supplies. The army survived the winter, but after the war, DeHaven was never repaid. Now, his descendants are

trying to collect. They claim that the loan, compounded at 6% interest daily, amounts to \$141.6 billion dollars. In one sense, all the money in the world could never repay DeHaven for what he did. In reality, he saved the cause of freedom for all America.

20. There is another debt all of us owe that we can never repay.

21. It is the price Jesus Christ paid to give us liberty from the bondage of sin.

22. Have you received the gift God has so freely given God?

23. Give God your whole life.

ILLUSTRATION: We should be like the little boy in church who had nothing to give when the offering plate was passed. He set the plate down on the floor and stood in it, saying, "God, I give you all of me."

24. Don't rob God of the relationship He desires to have with you through the gift of His precious Son.

25. Put it into practice by not stealing from God.

CONCLUSION: "You shall not steal." Exodus 20:15

God has called us to put it into practice.

I. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY RESPECTING OTHERS AND THEIR PROPERTY

II. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY LIVING A LIFE OF INTEGRITY.

III. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY REFUSING TO JUSTIFY OR EXCUSE STEALING.

IV. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY MAKING THE WRONG RIGHT.

V. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE BY NOT STEALING FROM GOD