

“Theft and Its Alternative” Exodus 20:15

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You shall not steal. Exodus 20:15 (English Standard Version)

(See Exodus 22:4, 7; Deuteronomy 24:7, compare to 1 Timothy 1:10; Jeremiah 22:13-17; Amos 8:4-6; Mark 12:40; James 5:4; Isaiah 5:8; Deuteronomy 25:15; Proverbs 20:14; Malachi 3:8, compare to Joshua 7:11)

TWO GODLY PRACTICES THAT DISEMPOWER THEFT

. . . put off your old self, . . . ²⁴and . . . put on the new self, . . . ²⁸Let 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. Ephesians 4:22a, 24a, 28 (ESV)

- **Honest work** is a key practice that is antithetical to theft.
 - “Royal priesthood” and “kingdom of priests” (See 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6)
 - Believers are doing God’s work everywhere they are, including the workplace.

- **Generosity** is a second practice that is antithetical to theft.
 - Generosity happens best when a believer learns to be a good steward.
 - How stewardship works
 - God owns everything.
 - I am God’s steward. = a manger of God’s stuff
 - When God gives me a resource to manage, I am asked to focus on God’s plans and purposes for that resource.

- . . . *“Who then is the faithful and wise manager [steward] whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? ⁴³Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.”* Luke 12:42-43 (ESV)
 - “Faithful” = consistently executing the Master’s plans for His resources
 - “Wise” = effectively executing the Master’s plans for His resources
 - “At the proper time” = promptly executing the Master’s plans for His resources

TWO HEART-ATTITUDES THAT PROMOTE WORK AND GENEROSITY AND DISCOURAGE THEFT:

- Faith (See Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1)
 - “Faith, both in its initial and its later expressions, is also a mentality that pervades the Christian life.” (from *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* by John Frame)
 - Unless we trust God, we will never be able to use the resources He provides us in the ways He directs.

- Love

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.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:9 (ESV)