

**Pastor Jim Jackson, 7/3/16**

***Exodus: Finding Freedom, pt. 20—The 10 Commandments, #8***

**Exodus 20:15**

From Mount Sinai, God spoke the Commandments as an overview of the whole Law—given in descending order of honor and authority. #1 *No other gods before Me*, #2 *No carved images to worship*, #3 *Do not take name of God in vain*, #4 *Keep the Sabbath holy*, #5 *Honor your father and mother*, #6 *Do not murder*, #7 *Do not commit adultery*. The first four were people's relationship to God, the next six were people's relationship to others.

### **#8 Do not STEAL**

Immediately following the command to not commit adultery, which was 'theft' of honor and fidelity from a married spouse, God commands Israel to refrain from taking anyone's property. As former slaves living at the poverty level in Egypt, the people of Israel often struggled with stealing from the Egyptians and one another. While theft in poverty and desperation is understandable, it was never approved of and always carried punishment (Prov. 6:30, 31). Stealing (Heb. *gaw-nab*, 'to deceive/carry away') is an immoral desire and acquisition of goods by illegal, immoral, or unethical means. Theft is a combination of lust for 'now' rather than work for later and dissatisfaction in the providence of God (James 4:1-3). Israel had to learn that God will bless His children and take care of their daily needs which they would never need to make up for by stealing (Luke 11:2-4; 12:27, 28). *God will provide for all the needs but not all the greeds!*

Governments steal by overspending and deficit spending, employers steal from employees by not paying for extra work and employees steal from employers by taking materials and not working a full day. God's people are to work hard for their possessions, thank God for them, and enjoy them. Believers are to use their energy, talents, and abilities to bless others by working and giving rather than damaging by stealing and taking (Eph. 4:28). *Your blessings should not just bless you!* God approves of personal possessions (or else there wouldn't be a warning against stealing!), and work is His primary means of people gaining, appreciating and enjoying them. Believers realize God gives the ability to work and make wealth and the things bought with it (Deut. 8:16-18; Ps. 24:1; Prov. 10:22; 1 Tim. 6:17). *Regardless of the job, believers should remember it is Jesus they are working for* (Col. 3:23; Eph. 6:7).