

Loving Christ in All of Life  
Week 12 - Types of Theft  
Exodus 20:15, Proverbs 30:7-9

- Theft is opposing God's lawful means of obtaining wealth, taking what is not rightfully ours
  - Begins in the heart - Matt. 15:19, Jas. 4:1-2
    - Desire to short-circuit God's design, prosper by ignoring His law
    - Seen in man's first sin - stealing the fruit according to their own wisdom
  - Work is necessary for any wealth or value to be produced
    - A thieving heart rejects this - desires something for nothing - entitled
  - All are potentially prone to the temptation of theft (Prov. 30:9)
- Simple theft - taking what is not ours (Ex. 22:1)
  - Requires restitution, enforced by the state
  - "Necessity" does not justify theft - Prov. 6:30-31
    - To justify stealing based on real or perceived need is to elevate man's circumstances over God's standard - nullify God's law by our own wisdom
    - Humanistic perspective sees law as being about what is thought to be good for man, not as an expression of God's sovereignty
- Fraud - theft by misrepresentation/deceit (Lev. 19:11-13, 35-36)
  - Honest economic standards are foundational to a healthy society - Deut. 25:13-16
  - Refusing to fulfill terms of a contract (by employee or employer)
  - Knowingly selling something for a price far beyond its value
  - False advertising - altering or cheapening product and passing it off as unadulterated
  - Devaluation - Prov. 24:30-34, Is. 1:22
    - Can be a consequence of sinful laziness
    - Devaluation of currency (inflation, fiat currency)
      - Attempt to create wealth rather than obtaining and stewarding it
      - Result is actually robbing people of their wealth through "watering down" money
      - Unjust weight and measure - does not accurately represent purported value
- Usury - Using the misfortune of a fellow covenant member for one's own gain (Ex. 22:25-27, Lev. 25:35-38, Deut. 23:19-20)
  - Refusing God's command for charity and generosity - Neh. 5:1-13
  - Not a prohibition on interest/banking
  - Has in view a person who is in desperate need of a loan for his own survival

- Outside of this situation where charity is clearly called for, Christians may lend to one another at interest
  - God alone will judge usury - state is given no authority to define who is poor, who is a brother, or what a fair rate of interest is
- Man-stealing/enslavement - kidnapping a person or stealing his freedom (Ex. 22:16, Deut. 24:7, 1 Tim. 1:9-10)
  - Requires capital punishment - no restitution for robbing an image-bearer of his freedom
  - Treating man as property attempts to rob him of the image of God
  - Freedom and property are closely tied together - Rom. 6:16-18, 8:21, Jas. 1:25)
- What about those who do seem to prosper by disobedience? (Ps. 73:3-13)
  - Prov. 13:22 - God has promised the inheritance of the earth to His people
  - We are to walk by faith in God's promises, according to His law, regardless of appearances in this world - trust that God will set all wrongs right
  - Matt. 25:29 - God's word will not fail - we are to work faithfully, joyfully, and honestly, no matter how tempted we may be by the wealth of the wicked