

The Ten Commandments

Commandment #8: Thou shall not steal

Once again, we come to a commandment that seems to have a very basic, and narrow meaning. Stealing, or theft, is a crime in this country (at least technically!). Society in all of its depravity still recognizes the issue of taking that which is not yours but the commandment covers more than the overt act of lifting and smuggling an item away from its rightful owner!

1. A very important assumption
 - a. I admit that this might be secondary to the larger discussion but in light of some current events (particularly what is happening in New York City with their mayor) I do believe it wise to consider something that is implicit in this commandment
 - b. Notice here that “stealing” from a person assumes a person’s right to property!
 - i. I cannot steal from someone who does not rightly own or possess something
 - ii. The only way that I can commit theft is if someone else can have a right to what they own
 - c. As governments continue down the road of “warm collectivism”, recall that this is both foolish and based on an unbiblical foundation
2. A few hidden applications
 - a. Again, I am assuming here that we all understand what theft means and how it applies to this commandment in its most obvious iteration
 - i. Walking into a store or strolling into someone’s home, or breaking into someone’s car to take that which they possess is wrong
 - b. Nevertheless, as is often the case within the discussion of the 10 Commandments, there are other, less obvious, applications of the commandment. Here are a few:
 - i. Exorbitant or “predatory” interest or terms
 1. Theft is charging way too much for a service such that the collector gains more than they deserve from the transaction
 2. Years ago, there was a circumstance in our community that became known in which a person charged a special needs individual in Dinwiddie tens of dollars to pick him up and drive him a mile up the street to cash his check... this is theft

3. Payday loan operations which exact incredibly high interest or businesses which jack up the price of their service when they deem a person to be ignorant or helpless all commit theft
 - ii. Unfulfilled promises
 1. Another way that we can “steal” from others is when we neglect to fulfill the terms of a contract
 2. If a person pays us to complete a project or offer a service and that service does not get done... we are stealing!
 - iii. Unpaid debt
 1. When we rightly owe someone else for their time and/or expertise and refuse to pay them... we are stealing!
 2. This means that we must be very careful as to what terms we agree to, making sure that we “count the cost” of our decisions so that we can pay those we rightly owe
 3. Sometimes, theft is justified because people cry poor when the reality is that they wasted their money on items/pursuits they did not need which led them to a circumstance where they could not pay for what they owe
3. The ramifications
 - a. As I said at the beginning, people know that it is wrong to take that which isn't their own
 - b. This means that the world has a category for this kind of sin and, therefore, it is incredibly important that we, as Christians, do not practice this sin
 - c. You represent Christ and, therefore, your actions need to be in line with His character in this arena.