

The Ten: Stop, Thief! Breaking the Spirit of Thievery.

Dr. John Carmichael

[Exo 20:1-2, 15 NASB95] 1 Then God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ... 15 "You shall not steal.

- According to one estimate, as much as one-third of a product's cost goes to cover the various forms of stealing that occur in the marketplace. Customers steal. Employees steal. One hotel reported that they had to replace 38k spoons, 355 coffee pots, 40k towels and 100 Bibles. Under pay taxes. Lie for disability and Social Security. False timecards. Embezzle. Ride the time clock. False claims on insurance. Taking credit for someone's ideas. Manipulating theology just to get an offering from people. There are countless ways to steal.
- Heidelberg Catechism, "God forbids not only outright theft and robbery, but also such wicked schemes and devices as false weights and measures, deceptive merchandising, counterfeit money, and usury: we must not defraud our neighbor in any way, whether by force or by show of right. In addition, God forbids all greed and all abuse and squandering of His Gifts."

How do we break the thieving spirit that has affected our lives?

Here are four revelations to break the thieving spirit.

I. The Command Against Stealing – A Reflection of God's Nature

- a. Exodus 20:15 gives us a direct prohibition: stealing is a sin against both man and God.
- b. God is a God of justice, truth, and provision. When we steal, we fail to trust in His provision.
- c. [Eph 4:28 NASB95] 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have [something] to share with one who has need.
- d. When we steal, we align ourselves with Satan and false teachers. [Jhn 10:10 NASB95] 10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have [it] abundantly.
- e. Instead of stealing, believers should work hard and be generous.

II. Stealing is More Than Taking Possessions – It Includes Deception and Dishonesty

- a. Theft is not just physical but can include fraud, deceit, or withholding what rightfully belongs to another.
- b. This applies to business practices, cheating, lying, or not paying debts.
- c. Luke 19:8-9 – Zacchaeus, a former tax collector, repented and restored what he had stolen, demonstrating true repentance. [Luk 19:8-9 NASB95] 8 Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.
- d. A transformed heart leads to making wrongs right.

III. Stealing from God – The Sin of Withholding Tithes and Offerings

- a. Many Christians do not see withholding tithes as stealing, but Scripture is clear: failing to give to God what belongs to Him is robbing Him.
- b. Malachi 3:8-10 (Referenced in NT Doctrine) – 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation [of you!] 10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me

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now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

- c. Matthew 23:23 – Jesus affirms the importance of tithes, but also stresses justice, mercy, and faithfulness. [Mat 23:23 NASB95] 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.
- d. Achan – Joshua 7 – stole what belonged to God and it took the blessing off of the people of God.
- e. When we give, we trust God and acknowledge His Lordship over our finances.

IV. Living with Integrity and Generosity – The Heart of a True Christian

- a. The opposite of stealing is integrity, contentment, and generosity.
- b. A believer should be known for honesty, a giving spirit, and trust in God's provision.
- c. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 – [2Co 9:6-7 NASB95] 6 Now this [I say,] he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one [must do] just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- d. [Mat 6:19-20, 24 NASB95] 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ... 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
- e. Instead of taking, we should be a blessing to others, knowing that God provides abundantly.

V. Defeating the Thief – Open the Door to More

- a. We must break the spirit of thievery. We call in the restoration of all things stolen.
 - b. The thief must repay 7-fold. [Pro 6:30-31 NASB95] 30 Men do not despise a thief if he steals To satisfy himself when he is hungry; 31 But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold; He must give all the substance of his house.
 - c. God will avenge you for what has been stolen. [1Th 4:6 NASB95] 6 [and] that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is [the] avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned [you.]
- **God is calling us to live with honesty and integrity as we give, trust God for His provision, and believe for restoration of everything that has been stolen from us.**
 - **What now?**
 - **Confess any past sins of theft, dishonesty, or withholding from God.**
 - **Commit to a lifestyle of integrity, trust in God's provision, and generosity.**
 - **Seek ways to bless others rather than take from them.**
 - **Release your faith for restoration.**