

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS - PART 9

No Scrumping! Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Exodus 20:15
Subject:	what we should not do
Complement:	steal
Exegetical idea:	Do not steal.
Homiletical idea:	Instead of taking what doesn't belong to you, cheerfully give away what does belong to you!
Purpose:	To encourage my hearers not to steal, to be content, and to give away with we see modeled in the gracious giving of the LORD our God.

Introduction

Many of you know that I was born in England. Sometimes people ask me, "Where's your British accent?" Don't forget that I've lived here in the United States of America for the past 30 years, but I'm happy to inform you that my British accent is carefully stored somewhere in my brain and spontaneously emerges on special occasions. Like when I set foot on British soil. "God save the queen!"

I'm reminded of my heritage at times when I use an expression that makes perfect sense to me but elicits nothing but blank stares from my listeners. Take the title of this sermon, for example. No scrumping. Most of you have no idea what that means! Isn't that true? You know that we are studying about the 8th commandment today, and scrumping sounds naughty, but you have no idea what it means!

Scrumping is an English verb. I scrump. You scrump. He scrumps. We scrump. You scrump. They scrump. Does that help? Not too much. I have a vague memory of scrumping when I was a little boy. Either I actually did go scrumping or I heard a story about scrumping and it was so real that I thought I was actually there! Scrumping is the British expression for

stealing fruit. Has anyone here ever taken fruit from a tree or a bush that didn't belong to you?

Ah hah! Then *you* are guilty of scrumping too! You are a scrumper!

We laugh, but actually, it's no laughing matter. One of the ten commandments tells us that no scrumping is allowed. To be more specific, it's the 8th commandment: You shall not steal.

I'd like to explore the meaning of this 8th commandment with you today. First, what we shouldn't do, and then what we should do. Perhaps it comes as no surprise to you that the LORD our God would include this commandment as one of the 10 sayings that He wrote with His finger on tables of precious stone. "You shall not steal." Stealing seems as old as sin, as old as selfishness. Stealing has been going on here on planet earth since the day that Satan tempted Eve to take something that didn't belong to her.

The LORD our God clearly instructs us, you shall not steal. Do not take something that belong to others. Whether apples, or anything else. You don't like people to steal from you, do you? If you plant a garden, and carefully tend that garden, and pull out the weeds, and water, and fertilize, and wait and wait and wait. You wouldn't like it if someone comes at harvest time and steals all of your produce, would you? Then treat others the way that you would like to be treated. That is the Golden Rule of Jesus. Do not steal things that belong to others.

I went online this week and got a few current examples of stealing: (share examples)

Greg was impressed that he needed to teach the importance of this 8th commandment to his son Daniel. Daniel's teacher had just called to inform Greg that his son has stolen a bag of cookies from off of the teacher's desk. The principal apologized that he needed to call a parent over such a small matter, but Daniel's dad encouraged the principal not to minimize the

seriousness of this offence.

So Daniel was suspended from school for one day. His dad took off work in order to supervise Daniel's labor activities for the day—weeding the vegetable garden, cleaning the yard, shoveling dirt, washing the cars. When Daniel thought his work was done, his father sent him up to his room to get his allowance. Father and son headed to the nearest store and purchased all of the supplies necessary to make cookies. Daniel baked 5 dozen cookies under his father's direction. The next day Daniel returned to school. His dad took an extended lunch break and came over to Daniel's classroom. Having apologized to his teacher, Daniel was instructed to make a public apology to his classmates for stealing. If he needed some encouragement, his father was willing to introduce him! Daniel grabbed the tray of cookies, walked in front of his classmates and said, "I just want to apologize to the class because I'm the one who stole the cookies from the teacher's desk. I made a bunch of cookies for us to all share." The class erupted with applause. More than one of Daniel's friends came up to him afterwards and told him that it was cool that he told the truth and that he shared with the class!(as told to Laura Schlessinger, *The Ten Commandments: the significance of God's Laws in Everyday Life*, p. 239-240).

With his father's support, that failure became a growing experience for Daniel, and a lesson that he will hopefully never forget. You shall not steal—do not take things that belong to others. And don't steal their reputations either. People do that by gossiping and starting false rumors. We going to talk about not bearing false witness in the next message in this series, but let me say this much today. Gossiping about people is stealing. You're stealing their dignity. You're stealing their privacy. You're stealing their reputations. If you hear some problem that a

person is struggling with, don't talk to everyone else about it. Talk to Jesus about it. Pray for that person. Bless them, don't curse them. Don't steal from them.

There is a story in the book of Genesis about a woman who tried to steal a young man's moral purity. She tried to seduce him. He was just a slave. She was the master's wife. But Joseph refused to compromise his convictions. Joseph refused to dishonor his master and most of all dishonor God. And how did Potiphar's wife respond? She stole Joseph's reputation instead. She accused him of trying to rape her! That was a lie, but it was also a transgression of the 8th commandment. She was stealing Joseph's honorable reputation. Perhaps you haven't thought of gossip or spreading rumors as stealing, but it may actually be much worse than taking material possessions that don't belong to you.

I want to suggest to you today that not only should we not steal material possessions or reputations from those around us, but we shouldn't steal from God either. You say, "Steal from God? How in the world does a person steal from God?" Let me suggest at least two ways that people frequently steal from God. First, people steal from God by refusing to return to God something that belongs to Him. Look with me in Malachi 3:8-10. "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, "How do we rob you?" In tithes and offerings. [9] You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. [10] Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

That word of God is a wonderful promise, but it is also a rebuke for those who have been stealing from God. Returning a tenth of our income to God, that's what the word "tithe" means,

is a way of recognizing that all blessings come from Him. The tithe is holy. It belongs to God. The freewill offerings—that's just an additional thank you! Give as the LORD our God has blessed you. But tithe is not a gift. Tithe is holy to the LORD.

And I'm here to testify today that we have learned in our own family, you can never outgive God. He says, "Give, and it will be given to you, pressed down and running over!" When you are faithful to God with your finances, He does open the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that there is not room enough to receive it. Do I have a witness out there?

The 8th commandment says, "Do not steal." One way people steal from God is by failing to return to Him something that belongs to Him. A second way that people steal from God is by taking the glory that belongs only to Him. In a previous study on the book of Daniel, you may remember that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, but he couldn't remember it. God used that opportunity to show His greatness to that pagan king. God revealed to Daniel the content of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and also its interpretation. And Daniel was careful to give all of the glory to God. But Arioch, commander of the king's guard, sought the glory for himself. He said to the king, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means." Dan 2:26 Arioch hadn't found anyone. Daniel came to him! Arioch didn't deserve any glory. The glory belonged only to the God of heaven.

Many people act like Arioch, sometimes without even knowing it. We steal the glory that belongs only to God. God has blessed us, He has caused us to prosper, He has given us wisdom and success, and it's so easy to steal the glory that belongs only to Him.

We need always to remember the 8th commandment: you shall not steal. Do not steal from those around you. Do not steal from God. Some of us may have grown up in families

where stealing was commonplace. We stole by cheating on our income tax. We stole by taking advantage of people who were in vulnerable situations. We may have even stolen from God.

But the Word of God has this to say to all of us who have become followers of Jesus: Ephesians 4:28 “He who has been stealing must steal no longer...”

That’s a clear message from the 8th commandment—you shall not steal. But I want us to go beyond the negative of this 8th saying. I want us to find the positive. Not only should we not steal, but what should we do? What is the opposite of taking something that doesn’t belong to you? Any suggestions? What is the positive of not taking something that doesn’t belong to you? Giving something that does belong to you! Do you remember that comment from the apostle Paul about he who has been stealing must steal no longer? That’s was the first part of Ephesians 4:28. Let’s look now at the second half of that verse. Ephesians 4:48–“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.”

When we give away what does belong to us Jesus reminds us in His sermon on the mount that we should give not to bring attention to ourselves, but to bring glory to God. Look with me at the counsel of Jesus in Matthew 6:1-4. “.....”

And when you give away what does belong to you, give cheerfully. God loves a cheerful giver. That’s in the Bible, you know. Unlike “God helps those who help themselves.” People think that’s in the Bible, but it isn’t. But God loves a cheerful giver *is* in the Bible. 2 Cor. 9:7 “God loves a cheerful giver.” Why does God love cheerful giving? Because a cheerful giver is a beautiful reflection of His generous character. We can give of our resources—our money, our time, our talents. We can give words of affirmation. Words of encouragement. And we can do

all of these things cheerfully. God loves a cheerful giver! As we give away that which belongs to us, we will discover that the words of Jesus are true: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

Some of you may want to go home and repent of stealing. Either stealing for those around you or stealing from God. You may want to sit down with your spouse and talk about honoring God with your finances. He’ll bless you, you know. More than you can even imagine. Others may decide to give something away that can bless someone else’s life. If you have something special that you are impressed to give away and you don’t know who to give it to, bring it to the Gift and Thrift store. They’ll make sure that it blesses someone’s life and also provides some funds to bless other lives. Give away what does belong to you, and do it cheerfully. That’s the positive side of the 8th commandment.

And those gifts don’t just have to be material things. Give a word of affirmation. Give a word of encouragement. Give a word of hope. You could even do that today. Take one of the yellow cards in front of you. Write a message of encouragement. Leave it in the foyer, and we’ll address it and mail it for you!

If I have ever been scrumping in my life, I’m truly sorry. I have asked the Lord to forgive me. If I’m walking past someone’s apple orchard, and I see a delicious apple hanging over the fence, smiling at me, and saying, “Take me! Take me!”, I will ask permission first from the owner. Or buy a basket of apples from the fruit market!

And I’ll remember that this 8th commandment is about more than not stealing, from others and from God—it’s about cheerfully giving away what does belong to you.

And to help remind you not to scrump, to be content, and to be a cheerful giver, I brought

you a gift! (Uncover the apples) No, I didn't go scrumping! We bought these apples at the local fruit market. I want you to take one as a reminder of this message. Please don't eat it in the sanctuary! Perhaps you can share a bite with someone that you love! Remember the message of this 8th saying from the mountain: **Instead of taking what doesn't belong to you, cheerfully give away what does belong to you!**

Examples of people stealing:

A 53 year old female employee of an antiques and collectibles store in Farmington (New Hampshire) is charged with stealing more than 100 thousand dollars from the store.

A 23-year-old Seattle man stole 136 cars over a six month period. He would simply pry the car's window, force the ignition with a screwdriver and take off. Police said the likable young man has a girlfriend and a meth habit, lacks a job and a car -- and really likes to drive.

A 62 year old man who was president of his mobile home park association was charged with stealing thousands of dollars from his neighbors.

A 46 year old former NYPD narcotics detective was charged with stealing more than \$740,000 in drugs and money from drug dealers. He said that he was driven by greed and arrogance.

A former repair technician at an electrical engineering company was charged with stealing trade secrets worth more than \$1.4. He stole circuit chip boards and the directions for repairing them. Not just one or two boards. He stole 1522 of them over a 4 year period before quitting his job. Maybe he was afraid he might get caught.

A home health nurse was charged with stealing from one of her patients.

A man was arrested for stealing his neighbors air-conditioner. Police were suspicious when they saw the stolen air-conditioner installed in the next door neighbor's home! Dah!

And then there was the man who stole a garbage truck. That's right. A garbage truck. He was drunk, and called his wife to come and pick him up. When she arrived, he got angry with her because she refused to let him drive their car. She was a wise woman. But her husband wasn't so wise. He looked around for a vehicle to steal because he didn't want to walk home and has was too proud to be a passenger with his wife driving. The closest vehicle he could find was a city garbage truck. He jumped in the cab of the garbage truck while the city employee was loading trash in the back of the truck and drove off. Police didn't have too much trouble catching him. It's hard to look inconspicuous in a garbage truck.

We laugh! But it's sad, isn't it? Our society needs to hear the word of blessing from our loving God—you shall not steal!