

“Let Him Who Stole...”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Bible Matters Sources)

Introduction:

- A. Has been around since man has lived in this world.
 - 1. Rom. 13:9; 1Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 4:28; 1Peter 4:15
 - 2. One of the most thoroughly condemned sins in the Bible

I. WHAT IS STEALING?

- A. Seems simple and self-explanatory
 - 1. “Taking the goods of another feloniously; withdrawing imperceptibly; gaining gradually (Webster's)
- B. Many things fall under the heading of stealing
 - 1. Burglary - Entering someone's home or business and taking things; often involves breaking and entering, assault
 - 2. Shoplifting - Taking materials from a merchant without paying for them
 - 3. Piracy and Bootlegging - Modern technology has led to new kinds of stealing; copying software, music, movies, or other things, distributing or selling them to others, or taking a copy of such things
 - 4. Insurance fraud; unnecessary claims, including medical
 - 5. If the worldly understand this to be a crime, why is it that some professed Christians cannot see it as sin?
- C. Stealing in various settings
 - 1. At work: taking supplies beyond what is necessary to complete work tasks, using work time to deal with personal issues, spending company money on unnecessary or personal matters, falsifying expense reports
 - 2. At school: copying the work of others, plagiarizing the work of others, wasting or taking supplies
 - 3. In life: discovering money or other items and not giving it to the authorities, being overpaid in change and not returning it, etc.
- D. Whenever you take something or obtain a benefit for which you have not paid or to which you are not entitled, you are stealing!

II. ISSUES WITH STEALING

- A. Why is it such a big deal?
 - 1. "Inexpensive" stealing in store, school, or in the office; pirating songs, movies, or software? The companies make enough money, right?
 - 2. As hard as I work, I deserve a break!
- B. God calls it sin
 - 1. Rom. 13:9 - One of the first Ten Commandments; it is still wrong today
 - 2. 1Cor. 6:9-10 - Those who do it will not inherit the Kingdom of God
 - 3. If God says it is wrong, it is wrong
- C. It deprives others of what is rightfully theirs
 - 1. When stealing takes place, someone always loses
 - 2. Stores charge higher prices to make up for stolen items
 - 3. Companies suffer from employee theft, and are not able to perform as well and thus benefit the employees

4. It causes trauma and sorrow to victims
 5. Everyone pays more
- D. It violates the Golden Rule - Luke 6:31
1. If you spent months or years writing a book or songs or software, and the profits from it were to support you in your old age, how would you like it if selfish people found a way to cheat you out of your labor?
 2. If you paid someone to put an addition on your home and provided them with building materials, and then they took a large portion of it home to use on their own house, how would you like it?
- E. There is no excuse for stealing; it is wrong, it hurts, and it is sinful

III. THE RIGHT ANSWER TO STEALING

- A. Eph. 4:28 - Not just stop stealing; go well in the other direction and sacrifice
1. Repent - The thief must change the way he thinks and acts, be willing to make restitution for the injuries done, and face any penalties
 - a. Zacchaeus - Luke 19:8
 2. Find labor - 1Tim. 5:8
 - a. He must transform into a healthy asset to the community
 3. Help others in need, as opposed to defrauding people for his needs or wants, he now works to have something to freely give to those in need, who themselves might be tempted to steal
- B. In the past, we have sinned; now we need to live properly as a blessing to others, even if before we were a burden and sorrow to them
1. "But what if we are starving; can we steal to survive?"
 2. "But what if we are going to be killed unless we deny the Lord?"
 3. Sin is sin, regardless of our motivation