

The Seventh Commandment

Thou shalt
not steal.

EXODUS 20:15

Introduction

What is your most prized possession? Out of all the things that you have, which one is your favorite. Where did it come from? How did you get it? With the seventh commandment, God protects our possessions. God has given them to us, not to anyone else, to support us in our lives.

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, I have indeed transgressed your commandments. I have been impatient in trials. I am unsympathetic and unmerciful. I do not help my neighbor. I am unable to resist sin. I do not tire of doing wrong. Dear Lord, pour out your grace on me and give me your Holy Spirit to help me to avoid seeking any dishonest gain at the expense of others. Help me to help others who are in need and to always be content with what I have. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Lesson Aim: What attitude does God want us to have toward the possessions he gives us and other people?

Part One

Read Exodus 20:15.

1) What is the Seventh Commandment?

Read James 1:17 and Ecclesiastes 5:19.

2) Where do our possessions come from?

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, Matthew 7:11, and Job 42:15.

3) How does God give these possessions to us? - Look up each of the passages listed to answer this question three different ways.

One way God gives possessions to us is through (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)...

One way God gives possessions to us is through (Matthew 7:11)...

One way God gives possessions to us is through (Job 42:15)...

Read 1 Corinthians 4:2 and Psalm 24:1.

4) What does God want us to remember about our possessions?

5) How might remembering that affect the way we take care of our possessions?

God wants us to remember that he still owns all things and that we are responsible to him for how we use possessions as his trusted caretakers. Everything in this world is God's and he wants us to faithfully take care of the things he gives us.

KEY POINT 1 - God teaches me that my possessions are his gifts to me, to use in ways that please him.

What I've learned so far:

Part Two

Read John 12:4-6, Proverbs 20:17, Luke 15:11-20, Luke 10:30-35, and Luke 12:15.

1) How do we sin against God's gifts of our possessions? - Look up each of the passages listed to answer this question in five different ways.

One way people sin against God's gifts to others is (John 12:4-6)...

One way people sin against God's gifts to others is (Proverbs 20:17)...

One way people sin against God's gifts to others is (Luke 15:11-20)...

One way people sin against God's gifts to others is (Luke 10:30-35)...

One way people sin against God's gifts to others is (Luke 12:15)...

Read 1 Timothy 5:8, 1 John 3:17, Romans 13:6-7, Mark 12:41-44, and 1 Timothy 6:17.

2) How does God want us to use the possessions he gives us? Look up each of the passages listed to answer this question in five different ways.

One way God wants us to use our possessions is (1 Timothy 5:8)...

One way God wants us to use our possessions is (1 John 3:17)...

One way God wants us to use our possessions is (Romans 13:6-7)...

One way God wants us to use our possessions is (Mark 12:41-44)...

One way God wants us to use our possessions is (1 Timothy 6:17)...

Read Colossians 3:23, 1 Corinthians 10:24, and Proverbs 11:25.

3) What other good attitudes to have in regards to possessions (whether ours or someone else's) do these passages mention?

Colossians 3:23—

1 Corinthians 10:24—

Proverbs 11:25—

KEY POINT 2 - God wants me to be satisfied with what he's given me and to be ready to help others keep their possessions.

What I've learned so far:

Part Three

Study questions 99-107 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

- 1) What is protected by the Seventh Commandment?
- 2) Where do all our possessions and money come from?
- 3) In what ways does God usually give us our money and possessions?
- 4) Who really owns everything we have?
- 5) Why are we responsible to God for how we use the things we have?
- 6) What different things does God forbid regarding his gifts of money and possessions?
- 7) What different things does God want to see us do with his gifts of money and possessions?
- 8) How will our love for Jesus and our thanks to him lead us as Christians to live in regard to this commandment?
- 9) What is to be our attitude and actions toward our neighbor according to this commandment?
- 10) How can we help our neighbor according to this commandment?



Helpful Passages

1 Timothy 6:6-8

What attitude should we have at all times toward God and all things?

What did we bring into this world?

What should be enough to make us content?

Hebrews 13:5

Why else do we know that we can always be content?

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

Why is the truth that this passage teaches important to keep in mind?

Proverbs 3:9 and Malachi 3:8-10

In the Old Testament, God required that his people, who had the promise of the coming Savior, give ten percent of all they owned to support the worship activities at the temple. In this passage, God says that they were robbing him if they didn't do this regularly and cheerfully. During New Testament times, God does not demand ten percent of us who have the fulfillment of his promises in Christ. Rather, he gives us the freedom to decide how much to give and in this way to show how much we love him. It can be less, it can be more. What percentage of your allowance or the money you earn on your job do you give back to God to express your thanks to him for all he has done for you?

No one can steal my joy.
It is mine to give,
to share, and to enjoy.

Main point — God teaches me that my possessions are his gifts to me, and he wants me to respect them by using them in ways that please him.

Final considerations:

- 1) The Seventh Commandment teaches us ____
 - A. that money and possessions are evil and bad for us.
 - B. how to use possessions faithfully to the glory of God.
 - C. that stealing is sinful, but not as bad as murder.

- 2) In the Seventh Commandment, God tells us that ____
 - A. we must not only refrain from theft, but must also help protect our neighbor's property.
 - B. we have no special responsibility toward others financially, as long as we do not steal what is theirs.
 - C. honesty is the best policy, because whoever is honest will be saved.

- 3) As God's stewards, we are to use our money and property ____
 - A. for our own and our family's needs, and we need not worry about others.
 - B. to accumulate as much as possible, since this is what any good steward is expected to do.
 - C. to provide for ourselves and our dependents, to help those in need, to meet our obligations to the government, and to support Christian ministry.

- 4) So far as money is concerned, our attitude should be ____
 - A. that it's the most important thing in the world because it buys so many pleasures and good things.
 - B. that we should be content if we have enough to meet our most necessary needs.
 - C. easy come, easy go.

- 5) The possessions of other people ____
 - A. belong to God, who wants them to manage their possessions for his glory.
 - B. should be given to us, since as Christians we can use them more wisely.
 - C. are their reward for their hard work.

- 6) The best attitude to have toward our possessions is ____ .
 - A. thankfulness
 - B. love
 - C. pride



Agree or Disagree

- 7) ___ It's wrong to set money aside for yourself in a savings account.
- 8) ___ Giving a needy person a handout is actually harmful because it teaches that person to be lazy.
- 9) ___ We tip the waitress at the restaurant 15 percent to thank her. It seems to me that any decent Christian would give at least that much of their income in offerings to thank God.
- 10) ___ I don't have to help out the needy because I already help them by paying for welfare with my taxes.
- 11) ___ In order to be generous a person has to have a lot of money.

- 12) Do we thank God enough? Can we?

- 13) Have you ever gotten a birthday present from God?

What I've learned:

Commit to Memory:

- The Seventh Commandment with Luther's explanation.
- The Ten Commandments—Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5