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Section: Commands (Law)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q52. Why does God give the eighth commandment: You shall not steal?**

So we will be content with what we have and seek to be generous.

**Introduction**

**Exodus 20:15** “You shall not steal.”

**Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 110**: What does God forbid in the eighth commandment? He forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law. But in God’s sight theft also includes cheating and swindling our neighbor by schemes made to appear legitimate, such as: inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume; fraudulent merchandising; counterfeit money; excessive interest; or any other means forbidden by God. In addition he forbids all greed and pointless squandering of his gifts.

**Forbidden: Theft & Robbery**

**Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 110**: What does God forbid in the eighth commandment? He forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law …

**The Webster’s Dictionary of 1828 definition of theft**:“The act of stealing. In law, the private, unlawful, felonious taking of another person's goods or movables, with an intent to steal them. To constitute theft the taking must be in private or without the owner's knowledge …”

**The Webster’s Dictionary of 1828 definition of robbery**: “In law, the forcible and felonious taking from the person of another any money or goods, putting him in fear, that is, by violence or by menaces of death or personal injury.”

1. God apportions for us in His economy of stewardship—personal property.
2. These possessions are not to be taken unlawfully.

**Genesis 1:28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Christians, whether they live in a capitalist, socialist or communist society, should *not* support laws that encourage theft in any way, shape or form.

**Part 2 – Forbidden: Cheating**

**Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 110**: He [God] forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law. But in God’s sight theft also includes cheating …

**Cheating**: Violating the rules in order to gain advantage from someone or something

**Genesis 3:5** “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

We should make efforts to follow the rules.

Cheating always harms ourselves and our neighbor.

Sin is never done in a vacuum; it always damages our relationship with God and our relationship with our neighbor.

**Part 3 – Forbidden: Swindling (Defrauding)**

**Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 110**: … But in God’s sight theft also includes cheating and swindling our neighbor by schemes made to appear legitimate, such as: inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume; fraudulent merchandising; counterfeit money; excessive interest; or any other means forbidden by God …

The intent behind defrauding is to gain access to anything through means that employ deception.

**1 John 4:19-21** We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

**Part 4: Forbidden: Greed & Pointless Squandering**

**Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 110**: … In addition he [God] forbids all greed and pointless squandering of his gifts.

1. Love of Money

There are 2,350 Bible verses about money.

**1 Timothy 6:9-10** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

**Proverbs 28:25** A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.

**Proverbs 15:27** Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.

**Hebrews 13:5** Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

**Luke 12:15** And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

**Matthew 19:24-26** “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

If you are in service to money as a false god, then you will often do everything and anything to protect it.

**Mark 12:41-44** And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

God is not calling us to give up all of our wealth; no–He is asking that we put it in the proper category.

Prior to conversion, the wicked sinner cannot and will not truly overcome his covetous nature. Secondly, as American Christians, we must be diligent to be on guard, always seeking out the true motives of our heart.

We are called to be set apart; we are called to submit to Christ and His lordship.

**Word of Truth Catechism Review**

**Q52**: Why does God give the eighth commandment: You shall not steal? So we will be content with what we have and seek to be generous.

The positive commandment for Christians is that we would be content with what we have.

**Acts 4:32-35** Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

**Ephesians 4:28** (NIV1984) 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.

**Acts 20:35** “... remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

**Gospel Exhortation and Conclusion**

**Luke 23:39-43** One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”