



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : "10 DUMB WAYS TO MESS UP OUR LIVES"

November 13, 2005 Study 8 : "Taking "What Doesn't Belong To Us.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE SERIES

10 Dumb Ways To Mess Up Our Lives a fresh look at the 10 Commandments (See Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) Note that they are not the Ten Suggestions! They are not arbitrary religious rules. They are not outdated curiosities that belong to an ancient and less sophisticated society. Whilst their introduction has a specific context, the 10 Commandments are not bound to a particular culture or time or nation.

They continue as the basic moral laws of creation for all people. If followed, they produce a healthy society by fostering proper relationships with God and with others. If ignored, they produce a mess in both our individual lives and our society as a whole.

Our task in this series is to understand what they mean and how to follow them in our lives and circumstances.

TO TODAY'S STUDY

You shall not steal. Ex20:15

While the Eighth Commandment specifically prohibits stealing, most of the Commandments are based on this principle. Eg - stealing a parent's honour (C5), a person's life (C6), a person's spouse (C7), or a person's character (C9)

This command is not hard to understand. Even thieves object to being robbed. "Thou shalt not steal" appears to be so self-evident that we may wonder why God bothered to include it! This morning we will suggest a wider view of the command, how it helps us understand the purpose of the commands as a whole, and finally, the positive side of the command.

A. WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMMAND

C8 is about more than just about the simple act of taking something that does not belong to us. Consider these examples :

BUSINESS ETHICS : *In the houses of evil men are treasure which they got dishonestly. They use false measures, a thing I hate. How can I forgive those who use false scales and weights? Mic 6:9-13, (see also Deut25:13-16 and Lev19:35 -36)*

..... particularly of "Religious people" : *"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."* Mk12:40

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE POWERLESS: *I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. Mal 3:9*

The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and (have) have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts" Ja5:4

.... no matter who they are : *You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy labourers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns. Duet24:14*

The real issue is our personal integrity toward others in ALL our dealings and relationships

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another Ex19:11

B. C8 ESTABLISHES TWO PRINCIPLES

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP ... established by the very nature of the command. If it is not yours, then it is someone else's!

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSONAL INTEGRITY

Whoever can be trusted with very little, can be trusted with much. Whoever is dishonest with very little is will also be dishonest in much. So if you have not been trustworthy handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? Lk16:10-13

C. C8 AND THE PURPOSE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In Study 1, we listed as one of 3 purposes To Reveal Our SHORTCOMINGS .

Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. Deut31:26

.... so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Rom3:19-20

Here is a simple question : You who preach against stealing, do you steal? Rom2:21

Here is a simple standard : You have no excuse, you who pass judgement on someone else. At whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself because you do the same thing. Rom2:1

The 10C's convict us of sin before a holy God and God does not need to use his standard to rightly judge us, **he just has to use our own standards!**

D. THE POSITIVE SIDE OF C8

'Let him that stole steal no more. He must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Eph4:28

Note 1 : It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts20:35

Note 2 : God loves a cheerful giver 2Cor9:7

The positive side of C8? Do not TAKE! Give.

Giving that pleases God requires

1. An OPPORTUNITY

(The Macedonian Churches) pleaded with us to share in this service to the saints (in poverty in Jerusalem) 2Cor8:4

2. A CAPACITY

They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability 2Cor8:3

3. A PASSION

You were the first not only to give, but to have the desire to do so. 2Cor8:10. If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable. 2Cor8:12 I know your eagerness to help. 2Cor9:2.

4. A FREE, JOYFUL choice

Each ... should give what he has decided; not reluctantly under compulsion 2Cor9:7

.... their overflowing joy whelmed up in rich generosity 2Cor8:2

A DUMB WAY TO MESS UP YOUR LIFE?

Stealing?

We prove ourselves to be untrustworthy and lacking integrity

We stand without defence before God; not only guilty of breaking his law, but also our own.

We miss out on the greatest discovery - the joy of giving instead of taking.