

10: You Shall not Steal

8 - Exodus 20:15 You shall not steal.

What is the command?

- Do not steal
- Don't steal money
- Don't steal ideas
- Don't steal time

What does this reveal about us?

- Stealing is rooted in three things:
 - **Discontentment** – I am not happy with what I have.
 - But the Bible says - **Philippians 4:11-13** Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹²I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
 - **Fear** – I will never have enough
 - But the Bible says - **Matthew 7:7-11** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

- **Trust** – I cannot trust God to provide for me, I must supply my own need.
 - **But the Bible says - Philippians 4:19** And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

What does it reveal about God?

God is a giver.

- God gave His Son. He gave His Spirit. He gives us everything including our breath and life.
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

God loves givers.

- **2 Corinthians 9:6-7** But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ *So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

What are the promises?

That God will take care of us. He is our provider.

We get to be a part of it. God gave us promises that if we give to others, we will receive back:

- **Acts 20:35** I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'
- Do we agree with Jesus about that?

- **Luke 6:38** Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

Why is it setup by God this way? Because He wants us to be like Him, and to join Him in what He does. And He is a giver.

- **2 Corinthians 9:6-8** But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ *So let each one give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.

As we give, God gives, so that we may give...

The law of reciprocity, or seedtime and harvest, is not for what some call the prosperity Gospel. It was created by God so that we could participate with Him in generosity towards others thereby loving others.

Let’s look at a passage where this is more detailed:

2 Corinthians 8:1-8 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³ For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God. ⁶ So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. ⁷ But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also. ⁸ I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

Break it down

2 Corinthians 8:2-4 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³ For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and **beyond *their* ability, they were freely willing,** ⁴ **imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift** and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

- Macedonia is in a state of persecution. This also meant that they were in deep poverty.
- Joy + poverty = generosity
- Beyond their ability, Freely willing, imploring us, with much urgency
- The Macedonian Christians didn't have much to give, they really *wanted* to give. They saw it as a *privilege* to give.
- I believe most Christians know that being generous is a great character trait to have. I think we even know on some level that being generous is something to strive for. I even believe that for most Christians that when we aren't having financial problems and poverty that being generous isn't really that hard.

How do we go from Problems and Lack to Rich Generosity?

- The answer is in the text. Joy. Specifically, the joy of the Lord.
- But where does joy come from when you have problems and lack?

2 Corinthians 8:5 And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God.

- What does it mean they first gave themselves to the Lord?
 - This is surrender. The Macedonians were living a surrendered life.
 - What does real surrender look like?

- **Galatians 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*
- Break down that verse
- **Galatians 5:16** *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*
 - The degree to which you surrender is the degree to which you'll experience Christ's life in your soul.
 - If you have areas in your life that you haven't surrendered completely to the Lord, then you won't be able to experience the fullness God's life in those areas until you do.
- What about giving themselves to us by the will of God?
 - They esteemed others as more important than themselves.
 - **Philippians 2:3** *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

So it appears that the Macedonians secret weapon for joy was Surrender to God, and in humility esteeming others as better than themselves.

- The mindset of the world is that happiness, or joy, comes from ourselves. Self-care. Provide for yourself. Make sure you have enough. Do what makes you happy. But the Macedonians found joy during extreme times (where it is the hardest to find joy) in doing what makes God happy, and then putting others needs ahead of their own.

2 Corinthians 8:7 But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

- Paul is looking at the Corinthians and says they have faith, speech, knowledge, diligence and love. Now they need generosity.

- Did the Corinthians have those things? Not really. So why does Paul say this?
- Those are the traits Paul is building up in the church at Corinth. And I believe these things are related. They build on each other.
 - Faith – What we believe
 - Speech – Reason – Think Biblically
 - Knowledge – Knowledge – Knowing truth
 - Diligence – Concern or care
 - Love – agape – unconditional love
 - Generosity
- So these form a basis for generosity.
 - Faith – Do we believe God is our provider?
 - **Philippians 4:19** And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
 - Speech – What do we confess about our situation. This shows what we really think
 - **Matthew 12:35** A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Knowledge – Do we know the character of God. Do we know His promises?

- **Luke 6:38** Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”
- Diligence – Do we genuinely care for others?
 - **Matthew 22:38-39** This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’
- Love – Pure agape unconditional love. Do we allow the love of God to flow through us?

- **1 John 4:7-11** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

When we find it difficult to give, here are the things to look at:

- Have I fully surrendered this area to God?
- How do I relate to others?

And then

- What do I actually believe? What is my faith saying?
- What is actually coming out of my mouth. Or in my thoughts?
- Do I know what God's Word says about this?
- Do I love with unconditional love?

The attitude of David

1 Chronicles 29:13-14 "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. ¹⁴ But who *am* I, and who *are* my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things *come* from You, And of Your own we have given You.