

“How to Make Godly Decisions, Part 9”
(Lord’s Day School, 8-5-01)

This morning, we need to cover three commandments -- the eighth, ninth and tenth -- so let’s get to it right away.

VIII. First, let’s consider, briefly, the eighth commandment. What is the eighth commandment? “You shall not steal” (Ex. 20:15).

A. What does this commandment forbid us to do?

1. It forbids us to take anything that doesn’t belong to us. Does it forbid us to steal only things? What are some other things we can steal? What about people? It also forbids us to kidnap someone.
2. Should we ever receive something from someone that is stolen? No. If you receive it, then you have become involved in that theft.
3. What are some other things that might be considered stealing?
 - a. Selling something for too high a price. Taking advantage of high demand situations.
 - b. Selling a service for too high a price.
 - c. Using a scale that isn’t set properly, to weigh what you are selling balanced in your favor.
 - d. Making an agreement with someone, but then not carrying out what you said you were going to do. Breaking your promises.
 - e. Charging too much interest.
 - f. Taking someone to court unjustly, or suing them for more than what is legitimate damage.
 - g. Extortion, or trying to force someone to give you something by blackmailing them.
 - h. Not giving back something you borrowed, or in the time you said you would.
 - i. Finding something and not trying to find the owner, or knowing who the owner is and keeping it for yourself. When I find money, I don’t like to pick it up anymore, because the person who lost it might come looking for it.
 - j. Withholding good from our neighbor when he needs it, and it is in our power to give it to him.
 - k. Of course coveting and envy, the source of all stealing, is also forbidden by this commandment, as well as the tenth commandment.
 - l. Idleness, or not using our time profitably, is stealing from ourselves, as is wasting what we have through uncontrolled spending.
 - m. We can also rob ourselves by not allowing ourselves the comfort that the Lord gives us.
 - n. We can steal from our families by not working and providing for them what we should.
 - o. We can steal from our employers by taking some of the supplies we use at work.

B. What does this commandment tell us to do?

1. Instead of stealing, we should work and give.
2. Instead of kidnapping, we should do all we can to protect the lives and liberties of others.
3. We need to deal honestly in our selling of things and services.
4. We need to be faithful to our promises. If we promise to help a neighbor with his car, or with his yard, or to fix something on their house, we need to do it.
5. If we have taken something that doesn't belong to us, we need to give it back. If we no longer have it, we need to make restitution.
6. We need to lend and to give to those in need.
7. We must make a budget and live wisely and frugally, but not too strictly.
8. We must provide for ourselves and for our families.
9. We must make sure that we earn our money in a honest way and in an honest and lawful business.
10. We must not only protect the wealth of others, we must also try and help them increase it if we can.

IX. What is the ninth commandment? "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Ex. 20:16).

A. What does the commandment actually say?

1. It forbids us to say something which isn't true about our neighbor.
2. Why would someone want to bear false witness against their neighbor?
 - a. To get them into trouble, e.g., like the two false witnesses Jezebel hired to accuse Naboth, so that he would be killed and Ahab could have his vineyard (1 Kings 21:13).
 - b. To get themselves out of trouble, e.g., blaming someone else for something you did.
 - c. We must never injure our neighbor with our words. What are some other ways we can injure our neighbor with our words? Slander, spreading rumors, even telling something that is true about them for the purpose of making people think less of them. Receiving bad news about them too easily.
 - d. We should try to protect our neighbor's good name.

B. More broadly considered, what does this commandment call us to?

1. It calls us to tell the truth.
 - a. When we speak about ourselves, as well as others.
 - b. When we are called to bear witness in matters of justice.
 - c. We should not flatter.
 - d. We should be willing to tell someone the truth about their actions.
 - e. We should be willing to tell the magistrate when we have witnessed a crime. We are forbidden to remain silent when a crime has been committed, or a sin.
 - f. We should not read things which are not true into their words or actions.
 - g. We should not close our ears to the truth.
2. Are there ever situations when we can lie? If you had been Corrie TenBoom in Nazi Germany, and Nazi soldiers showed up at your door and asked you if you were hiding Jews, what would you say?
 - a. It is permissible to lie in wartime situations. The purpose of military

strategies is to fake out the enemy by making him think one thing, when you are actually doing another. You don't reveal your battle plan to the enemy.

- b. When it is necessary to protect someone's life. If you can kill someone to keep them from killing someone else, then it is also lawful to lie to them to keep them from doing it.
- c. When Absalom's soldiers came to capture Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, and Ahamaaz, the son of Zadok, at Bahurim, a woman covered over the well they were hiding in and told the soldiers that they went somewhere else (2 Sam. 17:17-20).
- d. Rahab did the same thing with the Israelite spies. When the king of Jericho sent soldiers to take them, she hid them on her roof and told the soldiers that they had already left (Josh. 2).

X. What, finally, is the tenth commandment. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (v. 17). What does this teach us?

- A. It teaches us to be content with what the Lord has given us. If we are not happy with what He has given us, we are sinning.
 - 1. Contentment doesn't extend to just the things we have.
 - 2. What else does it include? The way God made us.
- B. And it teaches us to be happy with what the Lord gives to our neighbor and not to envy him. Envy is the first step toward stealing.
 - 1. We should not envy the things they have, but be thankful.
 - 2. We should not envy the way the Lord has made them. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6).