

“From Stealing To Sharing”

Ephesians 4:28

Sermon Series: “The Walk”

Main Idea: As new people in Christ, we are to put off stealing and put on hard work and generosity in its place.

1. Choose integrity instead of theft. We are told to stop stealing. We can steal in overt ways or more subtle ways. Are we taking shortcuts that amount to stealing? Are we living with integrity? -Exodus 20:15, Romans 13:8-10, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Ways We Steal (Hughes): Directly taking things that are not ours, Tax theft, debt theft, borrowing theft, welfare theft, digital theft (copyrighted material), plagiarism, cheating, management theft (“This occurs through abusing employees by paying inadequate wages for services rendered or by allowing unsafe working conditions to exist. Businesses can also steal by the deception of consumers, unfair profit-taking, marketing inferior products or building obsolescence into goods.”), employee theft (time theft, work theft, expense account theft, dishonesty about time worked, supply pilfering, embezzlement)

2. Be a producer instead of a consumer. We are to work hard (balanced out with Sabbath). The word, “labor,” in this verse means “to toil to exhaustion.” We are to do “what is good.” Negatively, this means that we are not to engage in employment that is unethical, immoral, or dishonoring to God. Positively, it means that we are to be a blessing to others and make a difference through our work. There is no biblical distinction between the sacred and secular. We can serve God through any honorable work.

-1 Timothy 5:8, Genesis 1:26-28 (Cultural Mandate)

R.C Sproul writes, “The big idea of the Christian life is Coram Deo. Coram Deo captures the essence of the Christian life. This phrase literally refers to something that takes place in the presence of, or before the face of, God. To live Coram Deo is to live one’s entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.”

3. Be a giver instead of a taker. We are created to work. This is true for all. It is under common grace. **But for those who are new creations in Christ, we work to give and not just to get.**

In actuality, Christians are probably guilty of stealing from God more than we do from anybody or anything else (Malachi 3:8-12). How often do we give God our leftovers instead of our first and best (Malachi 1:6-8, Colossians 1:18)? Giving is ultimately a heart issue. We are commanded to help the needy (Romans 12:13, Galatians 2:10). We are also commanded to give in general. Here are some Bible basics about giving. We are to give:

- 1. Our first fruits (Proverbs 3:9)** We are stewards. This is an act of obedience where we acknowledge it all comes from God, and He deserves our first and best.
- 2. Systematically (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)**
- 3. Sacrificially (2 Corinthians 8:1-3)**
- 4. With a surrendered heart (2 Corinthians 8:5)**
- 5. Gracefully (2 Corinthians 8:6-9)**
- 6. Proportionately (2 Corinthians 8:12-15)**
- 7. Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)**
- 8. Confidently (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)** We give in faith.
- 9. Worshipfully (2 Corinthians 9:12-15)**

John Wesley said, “If those who gain all they can and save all they can will likewise give all they can, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.”

