

# “Eighth Commandment”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigsandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of July 19, 2025.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with our series. The topic is the Ten Commandments. The presentation was titled “Eighth Commandment.”

I decided to discuss five main concepts in the presentation.

## **Foundational scripture**

■ Exodus 20:2—“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Then, the Lord proceeded to remind the children of Israel about the Ten Commandments.

Old Testament lesson = After God delivered them from Egypt, He reminded them of His expectations from them.

New Testament lesson = When God offers His bountiful grace to New Testament disciples, He still has expectations of them (Romans 6:1-2, Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-8).

## **Eighth Commandment**

■ Exodus 20:15—“You shall not steal.”

## **Stealing from God**

The Bible teaches the principle of tithing.

According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the Hebrew word for tithe is *maser* (*Strong’s* No. 4643), which is described this way: “tithe, setting aside a tenth.” In the book of Malachi, the Lord of hosts addressed the subject of tithes.

■ Malachi 3:8-10—The Lord of hosts said: “Will a man rob God? But you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this—if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

Many religious people have built a relationship with the Lord of hosts by giving Him a 10th of their income and by reaping the rewards of His promise.

At this time, I want to remind you about the history of our congregation concerning receiving tithes from individuals.

First—we have a clear history of not pressuring (or begging) people for tithe money.

Second—we thank the many people (often widows) who make any size of donation to our congregation.

Third—when we first started as a congregation, we originally provided a service of being a bookkeeper for congregations around the country (keeping their funds in separate categories for their use). We quickly encouraged the individual congregations to handle their finances themselves.

Fourth—it is our tradition and practice that I as pastor do not see the details of tithes and offerings donated to our congregation.

Before we leave this topic, allow me to make a statement about tithing that is not taught by many religious organizations—the Bible shows that poor people do not necessarily pay tithes.

Someone could object: “Dave, you better have some good biblical reason for saying such a statement.”

Please consider Leviticus 27:32.

■ Leviticus 27:32—“And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.”

Did you catch that? The 10th animal was the tithe. What if the person had only six animals? (For the record, how this verse applies to modern financial structures would deserve quality examination and interpretation—but the overall principle was clear.)

## Stealing items

■ Exodus 21:16—What did the Bible say about kidnapping?

■ Exodus 22:1-13—What did the Bible say about stealing animals?

■ Joshua 7:2-25—When the powerful people of Israel had trouble defeating the little country of Ai, Joshua wanted to know the reason—learning that Achan’s action of stealing (verse 21) had hindered them from having God’s blessing.

■ Proverbs 6:30-32—While stealing food is a sin and brings consequences, it is generally more understandable than adultery.

■ Luke 3:12-13—The Son of God told the tax collectors to avoid stealing.

- John 18:40—Barabbas was a robber.
- 1 Corinthians 5:11—Paul told his friends that there was a time to avoid sinners—including an extortioner.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10—Paul said thieves would not inherit the Kingdom of God.

### **Stealing civil freedom**

- Matthew 20:25-28—Do not lord it over people, and do not exercise authority over people.
- 1 Corinthians 15:24—Human rule, authority and power regularly steal civil freedom.

### **Stealing religious freedom**

In 2 Corinthians 11:20, Paul was actually correcting the disciples who let people abuse them.

- You put up with people taking you into bondage.
- You put up with people devouring you.
- You put up with people stealing from you.
- You put up with people exalting themselves over you.
- You put up with people hitting you.

As much as lies within your power, do not allow people to steal your religious freedom.

And, of course, do not be stealing the religious freedom of others.

- Do not lead people into bondage.
- Do not devour people.
- Do not steal from people.
- Do not exalt yourself over people.
- Do not hit people.

### **Stealing truth—by substituting information for truth**

- Jeremiah 23:16—Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless. They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD."
- Jeremiah 23:21—Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied."

- Jeremiah 23:30-31—The Lord of hosts said: “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets, who steal My words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, who use their tongues and say, ‘God says.’”
- 2 Peter 2:1—There were false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you.
- 2 Peter 2:2—Many will follow their destructive ways.
- 2 Peter 2:3—By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.