

Exodus 20:15 Property, properly



This might appear to be the most obvious and clear of this set of ten Words, or Commandments. It's certainly very broad ranging, and we need to be careful not to justify things that we do "because everyone does them". But could some of the other Commandments also be seen as different expressions of theft? So, most important of all, then, must be a consideration of the question, "Will man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8)

➤ **What doesn't it ban?**

The Marxist / Anarchist slogan "Property is Theft" is probably so memorable because it looks so self-contradictory. But for a while some Christians were troubled by the "communist" lifestyle that seems to have been adopted in the early church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:44 and 4:32). Is anything similar expected of believers nowadays?

➤ **Don't be limited by the literal**

What "minor" thefts are we tempted to overlook?
Is theft from organisations (or "The State") any less theft?
What if "We Was Robbed!!"? What do we do now?

Which of the other Commandments can also be seen as expressions of less literal, but still serious, theft?

What do we "owe", in less literal senses? (Romans 13:7-8)

If what is due from us is not spelled out clearly ... what are we supposed to do? ... Or does only a legalist ask this question?

➤ **Flip it over**

Even if theft is a sin (1 Corinthians 6:10), remember that thieves can be saved (1 Corinthians 6:11) and thoroughly changed (Ephesians 4:28).

So how, now, can we cultivate a grace-informed spirit of generosity? (1 Timothy 6:18, Acts 2:46)