

# **Heidelberg Catechism 110-111 – Are you satisfied with what you have?**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You must not just work to preserve life (Law 6). You must not just live a pure life (Law 7). You must live a satisfied – contented -life also. You will hear about this today.

This doctrine is important, very important, especially at a time when you are being indoctrinated in schools, in work places, and even from pulpits – that the true sign of success in life is having more stuff...and that you are never to be satisfied until you have more stuff.

Our headings are:

**Prohibitions of Law 8**

**Prescriptions of Law 8**

Our goals are: That as God's children through Christ, you **will learn to trust God's promise that he will provide all things necessary for your body and soul, you will be contented with what he provides, and you will then share with the needy.**

Exodus 20:15 You shall not steal.

110 Q. WHAT DOES GOD FORBID IN THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT?

A. He forbids not only **outright theft** and robbery, punishable by law. But in God's sight theft also includes **cheating and swindling** our neighbor by schemes made to appear legitimate, such as: **inaccurate measurements** of weight, size, or volume; **fraudulent merchandising**; **counterfeit money**; **excessive interest**; or any other means forbidden by God. In addition, he forbids all **greed** and pointless **squandering of his gifts**

## **Prohibitions of Law 8**

**1. Because all sins, including stealing, start in the heart, God prohibits covetousness, the root of stealing.**

Covetousness is a disease worse than cancer. Look at the description and the warning concerning covetousness.

1Timothy 6:10 For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

**2. God prohibits you from stealing by words.**

**Think of false advertisements.** If you lie about the effectiveness of a product, that is stealing. If you suggest a certain drug will cure all your bodily troubles, but it doesn't, then you are guilty of stealing by words. Some companies argue they are not technically stealing because they have "fine print." But "fine print" does not make the attempt to deceive **morally acceptable.** **You can even steal by words by lying about what you are buying by condemning the product to get a better price!**

Proverbs 20:14 "**It is good for nothing**," cries the buyer; But when he has gone his way, **then he boasts**.

**3. God forbids you from taking what does not belong to you...secretly as a thief, or with weapons, or as a robber.**

**God forbids you from robbing others to eat**, as some religions allow.

**God forbids you from using the pen or computer keystrokes to steal**, like in **typing lying figures on your taxes**, or **forging a check** by signing someone else's name.

**4. Consider some non-classical, but real forms of stealing that God forbids:**

**a. God forbids shorting someone in the weight of what you sell.** Translated for today: If you put sawdust in your car's transmission...or thicker oil to slow engine leak, and then sell it "as-is," it is still stealing. You might argue: It is the buyers' duty to find out, but God knows your heart. Remember also, **"legal" doesn't mean "moral."**

Micah 6:10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness In the house of the wicked, And the short measure that is an abomination? 11 Shall I **count pure those with the wicked scales**, And with the bag of deceitful weights?

**b. God forbids from paying an unfair wage to an employee.** God declares war on those abusers.

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, **weep and howl** for your miseries that are coming upon you! 2 **Your riches are corrupted**, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. 4 Indeed the **wages of the laborers** who mowed your fields, which **you kept back by fraud**, **cry out**;

If you steal this way, you are not only stealing from a person, but **you are also stealing from God** – for that man may not be able to do the Lord's work. You are also stealing from his children. **It is literally stealing food from a baby**. Sometimes people argue that it is just "capitalism." But capitalism can be abused when greedy people take advantage of the poor.

**c. God forbids taking bribes.** Why? Bribes are not money earned by true labor. It is not a gift. So it is theft.

Psalm 15:5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

**d. God forbids stealing from the rich to give to the poor, as is common in socialist countries and God forbids overtaxing.** It was welfare that destroyed Rome from the inside. When Rome **had no more pork and grain** to give its citizens the Republic fell apart.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

**e. God forbids governments from printing money without a backing.** Why is inflation so high this year? Our governments are thieves. It is our way of shaving the edge of coins as the Romans did.

**f. God forbids gambling...** trying to earn money without working... trying to get "luck" to work for you. Lottery is for the lazy. If you want money, work! **Governments support it...even though it destroys families...because they want a cut!**

**g. God forbids laziness...and lateness. One robs production and one robs time.** So you can steal without putting your hand in someone's pocket.

**h. God forbids monopolies – that drive others out of business by undercutting them.**

**i. God forbids bankruptcy.** Bankruptcy may be legal, but it is a form of stealing.

**j. God forbids you from robbing him!** If you don't spend your money wisely, don't steal from God. Your tithe doesn't belong to you. Don't rob Peter to pay Paul.

Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse...

## **5. God forbids you from associating with those who are known thieves.**

There are those who will lure you into sin, even so-called friends who encourage you to sin God.

1 Corinthians 5, Apostle Paul warns you not to even keep company with the covetous! "Show me your company and I will tell you who you are."

## **Prescriptions of Law 8**

111 Q. WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF YOU IN THIS COMMANDMENT?

A. That **I do whatever I can for my neighbor's good**, that I treat him as I would like others to treat me, and that I work faithfully so that I may share with those in need.

### **1. God prescribes that you learn and practice contentment.**

**This is the cure for theft.** Unless you learn contentment, you will die a frustrated man. This is a key doctrine to children in our “everyone-has-it” society. So often children are trained to believe **they have a right to get whatever they want (like Israel in the desert)**. When they can't get whatever they want, stealing becomes attractive. **But...**

Philippians 4:11...for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

And note that **contentment is a means of making you RICH!**

1Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

So when you begin to have the urge to covet something... a car...a job.... you have to kill those desires and replace them with thoughts about sharing with other what you do have.

Colossians 3:5 Therefore **put to death your members which are on the earth:** fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and **covetousness, which is idolatry.**

**2. God requires you use your words to stop others from stealing.**

**a. Teach others to live within their means – not to desire or buy what they cannot afford.**

**b. If someone doesn't have great abilities, don't urge him to get many material possessions.**

**c. Speak up if you see a thief at your neighbor's house.** Failure to report it makes you guilty of stealing.

**3. What action does God require in this command?**

**a. Protect your property.** Make sure you do not throw away, lose, waste, or destroy God's gifts to you (including food). **Children:** Don't leave your bike in front of your house unlocked or Laptop on the couch. If you see your neighbor's garage door opened when you come home late at night, lock it...or call him.

**b. Make restitution** if you have stolen or if you caused someone's property to be destroyed.

Exodus 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. 5 "If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. 6 "If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

**"No-fault" auto insurance is wrong.** Politicians who proposed this are guilty of theft. It contradicts this fundamental law of restitution. If someone damaged your car, he or his insurance company should pay... not you or your insurance company. It throws off proper justice.

**c. Be fair in your business dealings.** Ask: Is this the right thing to do? Pay a fair wage.

Deuteronomy 25:15 "You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that **your days may be lengthened in the land** which the LORD your God is giving you.

Proverbs 3: 27 **Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due**, When it is in the power of your hand to do so.

**d. Learn not to hold on too tightly** to what God has given you.

Luke 6:35 "But love your enemies, do good, and **lend, hoping for nothing** in return;

If you **don't hold on to things too tightly and you have to give something to someone, it won't hurt!**  
If someone stole something from you, or your house were burned down, you won't have to get therapy.

**e. Work hard** so you have enough for yourself and your family and more to share with the needy.

1Timothy 5:8 - But if anyone **does not provide for his own**, and especially for those of his household, he **has denied the faith** and is worse than an unbeliever.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather **let him labor, working with his hands** what is good, that **he may have something to give him who has need**.

**But don't feel bad about being rich.** Being rich and being Christian are compatible. **Poverty is not a virtue!**

**f. Help your poor brother by not making money off of him by interest.** Profitmaking on your needy brother in Christ is wrong. On your rich brother, profit making is okay, but not in excess.

**g. Save up money for hard times.** In doing this you avoid debt and bankruptcy.

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, 8 Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest.

**h. Trust God's providence.** He will provide for you.

### **Conclusion:**

Don't steal from men or God! Stealing is the caterpillar of the earth. Be **contented** in your heart with what God has given you. **Teach** others to live within their means. Speak up when someone is stealing-like when someone is spray-painting another's property. **Provide** for your needs, your family's inheritance, and for the poor.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. What is the antidote to stealing? Know that you are rich – very rich.** You have Christ-an exceedingly great reward. He is your All-in-All! All your sins are gone through Christ's shed blood and your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Your real treasures are in heaven and none can steal them. They are there for eternity. Capture this in your heads and into your hearts.

**2. When you get a sense of your riches in Christ the things of this world will become dimmer.** You will **not hold on too tightly to things** of this world.

**3. You will share what God has given to you without sadness.**

Finally, Jesus paid for all my sins. Do you want to pay the price for your sins or you would like him to take your sins? If you want him to do it, ask him. He promised to do it for free.