

Heidelberg Catechism 110-111 – A Satisfied Life

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: After hearing that you must preserve life (Law 6) and that you must live a pure life (Law 7), you will hear from God today about the need to have a satisfied life and how you can get a satisfied life.

Our headings are: **Prohibited Things in Law 8; Prescribed Things in Law 8**

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

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

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

Prohibited Things

1. As all sins, including stealing, start in the heart. You think about stealing before you actually steal. So God prohibits covetousness –stealing in the heart. It is a wrong to desire anything that belongs to others.

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.

Luke 12: 15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

2. You are forbidden to steal by words. Can you really steal by words? Yes. God forbids lying in advertisements about the effectiveness of a product, for instance, like those who suggest that a certain tablet or tea will cure all your bodily troubles, or like the Dominica Republicans speak of MamaJuana elixir. Legal fine prints do not morally excuse theft.

3. God forbids you from taking what does not belong to you...secretly as a thief, or with weapons, as a robber. God does not permit you to rob 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 伪造 a check by signing someone else's name.

4. Consider some lesser known, but real forms of stealing that God forbids:

God forbids shorting someone in the weight of what you sell – like selling a car you know to have significant problems but selling it "as is," but hiding that information. You might argue: It is the buyers' duty to find out. And you may be legally right in some cases, but are you morally

right?

Micah 6:9 The LORD'S voice cries to the city—Wisdom shall see Your name: "Hear the Rod! Who has appointed it? 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?

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

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

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, **weep and howl** 嚎哭 for your miseries that are coming upon you! 2 **Your riches are corrupted**, and your garments are moth-eaten 虫蛀的. 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;**

When you steal from someone, you are not only stealing from that person personally, but you are also stealing from God – for that man may not be able to give to the Lord's service. You are also stealing from his children – as he would have less inheritance to leave for them. It is literally stealing food from a baby. Sometimes people argue that it is just "capitalism." But even capitalism can be abused when greedy people take advantage of the poor. It may be legal, but it may not be moral.

God forbids the taking of bribes. Why are bribes mentioned so prominently 显著地 and frequently in the Scriptures? Bribes are not money earned by true labor. It is not a gift. So it is theft.

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

God forbids stealing from the rich to give to the poor, as is common in socialist countries or overtaxing. Any form of welfare or redistribution of wealth causes someone else to be robbed. It was welfare that destroyed Rome from the inside...when they had no more pork and grain to give their citizens the Republic fell apart.

God forbids governments from stealing from their citizens by printing money without a backing. Does Quantitative Easing sound like a bad thing? It is. It is theft by the Federal Government. It is the Canadian way of shaving the edge of coins as the Romans did.

God forbids gambling...trying to get money without working... trying to get "luck" to work for you. Lottery is for the lazy. If you want money, work!

God forbids laziness...and lateness. One robs production and one robs time.

Proverbs 18:9 -He who is slothful 偷懒的 in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

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

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

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, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.

5. God forbids you from associating with those who are known thieves. There are those who will lure you into sin, or they are so-called friends who might encourage you to sin against God.

1Corinthians 5:9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners 勒索者, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

Remember the quote: Show me your company (friends) and I will tell you who you are.

Prescribed things

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 prescription in Law 8 is that you learn and practice contentment 满足 . This is the cure to covetousness. It is the cure for theft. Unless you learn contentment, you will die a frustrated man or woman. This is a key doctrine, especially to children in our "gotta have it" society. So often children are trained to believe they will get whatever they want. When those children realize that they can't get whatever they want, then stealing becomes attractive. But consider the warnings of Holy Writ.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, 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 强烈欲望 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.

Luke 3:14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate 恐吓 anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

Don't be discontented with what the Lord has given you as the Israelites were in the desert and died.

2. God prescribes that you teach others to live within their means – not to desire or buy what they cannot afford. This way you can stop someone from becoming a thief. Is someone doesn't have great abilities, **don't urge him to get many material possessions.** You are setting him up to be a thief. Speak up if you see a thief at your neighbor's house or at your job, or on the bus. Failure to report the thief makes you guilty of stealing.

3. What does God prescribed for you to physically do in this command?

a. Protect your property. Make sure your gifts are not thrown away, lost, wasted, destroyed, or stolen. Children: Don't leave you bike in front of your house unlocked or you iPod on the couch. Adults, if 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. 2 "If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. 3 "If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 "If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double. 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" insurance, as we have in Ontario, is evil, just as the politician who made this deal with the insurance companies. 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. See how civil governments contribute to stealing!

c. Be fair in your business dealings. It doesn't matter if it an act were legal. Don't sell a car after putting heavy oil in the engine to stop the leaking, or put sawdust in the transmission so it becomes quieter. Ask yourself: What is the right thing to do? And note the reward!

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 as much. If someone were to steal something from you, you won't have to get therapy 治疗.

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

1 Timothy 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**.

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

Leviticus 25:35 -'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then **you shall help him**, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you.

BTW, 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**. Profit making on your needy brother in Christ is wrong. On your rich brother, profit making is okay, but not on your poor brother.

g. **Save up money for hard times**. In doing this you avoid what is common in society today: debt and bankruptcy.

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, you sluggard 懒汉! 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:

Be **contented in your heart** with what the Lord has given to you. **Teach others to live within their means** and 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.** Don't steal from men or God. Stealing is the caterpillar of the earth.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Want an antidote 解毒剂 to stealing? **Know that you are rich.** You have Christ...an exceedingly great reward. Capture this in your heads and into your hearts. When you get this **the things of this world will become vainly dim.** You would **not hold on too tightly to things** of this world. You would **share without sadness.** May God help you to keep Law 8.

A word for those who are not Christians: We are all thieves and no thief can have eternal life, unless someone takes the punishment for his sin. Jesus took my punishment. Would you ask him to take your punishment so you can have eternal life? If not, hell waits for you!