



Family Study Guides

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

8. "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL"

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### Family Study Guide

#### 8. "You shall not steal."

**[We suggest that as you use this Family Study Guide, select and focus on a main portion or two that you feel will help your family's study into the commandment. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented in this guide. Select the aspects or principles most relevant or helpful to your family.]**

#### **Objectives:**

- Help your children understand the importance of honesty in every aspect of life.
- Review and discuss the example of Achan and the city of Jericho.
- Help your children gain deeper understanding of what it means to steal.
- Answer the question: *How honest am I?*

#### **Memory Verse:**

**Exodus 20:15, 17** *You shall not steal... You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.*

One of God's Ten Commandments tells us not to steal. We may have not robbed a bank or armored car but you can use this Family Guide to examine other ways the Eighth Commandment can be broken.

#### **Let's play *To Catch a Thief*:**

**[Read each scenario and discuss what the godly action should be]**

- You find that the store clerk gave you too much change—it seems like it's not enough to bother returning.
- You are taking notes with a pen you took from work or your school.
- You didn't study for the test. You can see your smart classmate's test answers and could copy them.
- You check your social media page or play internet games while supposed to be studying in class.
- Your friend has bag of cookies at lunch. You have none. Your friend turns away for a moment...
- Your trash can at the house is full, so you drop your trash by the dumpster at the strip mall.
- You download a "free copy" of the latest video, song, game or software from a friend.
- You got your allowance or got paid, but did not give God the first 10%.

Dishonesty plagues our society everywhere today. (Dishonest car salesman, people scamming old people out of their savings, the crooked contractor, the person who stole your iPad). Discuss if any in your family has been stolen from or cheated. What was the effect? How did it feel?

#### **God tells us what He thinks about dishonesty:**

**Leviticus 19:11-13** (NCV) *You must not steal. You must not cheat people, and you must not lie to each other. You must not make a false promise by my name, or you will show that you don't respect your God. I am the LORD. You must not cheat your neighbor or rob him.*

**Zechariah 5:3-5** (ISV) *This is the curse that is going out over the surface of the whole earth, because, according to this side of the scroll, all thieves will be ejected, and according to the other side of the scroll, all liars will be ejected.*

**Basically, we get things in three ways:**

1. Work for it. (Job and labor / trading / investments /etc.)
2. It is given to us. (Inheritance / gift / found and un-returnable / free stuff from giver)
3. Steal it.

Although the Bible speaks directly to various principles regarding stealing, the above three principles will cover most areas of our lives.

**HONESTY IN EVERYDAY LIFE SITUATIONS**

**Read each scripture and discuss with your family:**

- **Everyday examples of how people demonstrate honesty or dishonesty.**
- **If you know of specific ways people have been hurt as a result.**

**1. DISHONESTY IN BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL DEALINGS.**

**Deuteronomy 25:13-16** (GNT) *Do not cheat when you use weights and measures. Use true and honest weights and measures, so that you may live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. The LORD hates people who cheat.*

**Leviticus 25:14** (NLT) *When you make an agreement with a neighbor to buy or sell property; you must never take advantage of each other.*

**Proverbs 20:14** (KJV) *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.*  
**:14** (NLT) *The buyer haggles over the price, saying, "It's worthless," then brags about getting a bargain!*

- ✓ We all like a bargain—and often times “haggling” is expected, but are we honest in all our dealings? You can be “cheap”—but don’t be a cheat. Are we always trying to get something for nothing, at the expense of someone else?

**Proverbs 20:17** (GNT) *What you get by dishonesty you may enjoy like the finest food, but sooner or later it will be like a mouthful of sand.*

- ✓ Have you ever stolen something or cheated someone, then felt bad about it later? Many of us have done something wrong that still bothers us, maybe it was a long time ago and has been forgiven. Can you think of such an instance in your life? How do you feel about it now?

**Proverbs 16:8** (GNT) *It is better to have a little, honestly earned, than to have a large income, dishonestly gained.*

- ✓ Can you think of a time you were honest—even though it cost you something? How does it make you feel now? (We can know that God is pleased. We have a clear conscience. We feel good that we did the right thing.)

**2. STEALING FROM THE BOSS**

**Titus 2:9-10** (AMPC) *Tell bond servants to be submissive to their masters, to be pleasing and give satisfaction in every way. Warn them not to talk back or contradict, Nor to steal by taking things of small value, but to prove themselves truly loyal and entirely reliable and faithful throughout...*

- ✓ What are ways people take “small things” [v10 “*not pilfering*” NET Bible] from employers? Why is it wrong even though the company can “afford it”?
- ✓ If you are a child under your parent’s roof, who is your boss? Doesn’t this verse sound like “*Honor your*”

- father and mother?"* Sometimes kids steal candy or other things parents told them not to get into.
- ✓ How does it feel when someone takes your stuff—even though it may be something small?

### 3. PAYING WHAT'S DUE TO EMPLOYEES

**Deuteronomy 24:14-15** (GNT) *Do not cheat poor and needy hired servants... Each day before sunset pay them for that day's work; they need the money and have counted on getting it. If you do not pay them, they will cry out against you to the LORD, and you will be guilty of sin.*

- ✓ Parents, is there an example of an employer not paying you your wage?
- ✓ Sometimes kids will “exchange” household chores with siblings—and not follow through with doing their part. Example: *“If you clean up after the dog today, I will do the dishes all next week?”* (then not do what was promised. You stole their time.)

### 4. REPAYING DEBTS

**Psalms 37:21** (NKJV) *The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives.*

- ✓ Do you need to look around the house, office or yard to see if you have things that don't belong to you? If you do, then return or replace them.
- ✓ Are there things you lent to someone and they kept them?

**Exodus 22:14-15** (LIV) *"If a man borrows an animal (or anything else) from a neighbor, and it is injured or killed, and the owner is not there at the time, then the man who borrowed it must pay for it. But if the owner is there, he need not pay; and if it was rented, then he need not pay, because this possibility was included in the original rental fee.*

- ✓ If you borrowed someone's bike and broke it, it is up to you to pay for it or see that it is fixed.
- ✓ Has someone borrowed something of yours—and broke it? How does it feel?
- ✓ If it is rented you broke it—and it is insured—then you have done the right thing.

**Exodus 22:5-6** (GNT) *If someone lets his animals graze in a field or a vineyard and they stray away and eat up the crops growing in someone else's field, he must make good the loss with the crops from his own fields or vineyards. "If someone starts a fire in his own field and it spreads through the weeds to someone else's field and burns up grain that is growing or that has been cut and stacked, the one who started the fire is to pay for the damage.*

- If you open your car door into another's car—you owe them a repair.
- Be responsible. If you damage another's goods—you owe them.
- If your dog ripped a friend's pants—you owe your friend a pair of pants.

### 5. DEBTS AND TAXES

**Romans 13:5-10** (NIV) *Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

- ✓ Do you have debts? **V7** *Give everyone what you owe him.*
- ✓ Discuss what debts each person has and how you are working to pay those debts off.

**6. STEAL BY BEING LAZY** (Steal by having others provide for you and by you not providing for others.)

**Ephesians 4:28** (NKJV) *Let him that stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something good.*

- ✓ Don't expect others to pay what you should be paying for. Do we do our share—even at “pot-lucks”?
- ✓ Do we save our second tithe? Do you save for summer camp? Do what you can for yourself.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6-13** (NIV) *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.*

- However, don't steal time from your family by being a workaholic.

**Jeremiah 22:13** (NIV) *Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.*

- Don't expect people to do things for you all the time. When you can do things or pay for things yourself, it is stealing someone else's time if we expect them to do for us.

**7. OUR DEBT TO THE NEEDY** (Give to whom due.)

**Proverbs 3:27-28** (NIV) *Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow"—when you now have it with you.*

**Isaiah 10:2** (NKJV) *To rob the needy of justice, And to take what is right from the poor of My people, That widows may be their prey, And that they may rob the fatherless.*

**Malachi 3:5** (NLT) *At that time I will put you on trial. I will be a ready witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.*

- ✓ Does your family give of your time to "strangers"—maybe people visiting or attending for the first time?
- ✓ Just as a portion of our money is due the needy, so is a portion of our time due to the lonely! Includes helping people in their needs.
- ✓ What does each do to care for the widows in the church or neighborhood?

**8. OUR OBLIGATIONS TO GOD**

**Malachi 3:8-11** (NIV) *"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty.*

If you don't tithe your tithable income God calls you a thief!

- ✓ In what other ways could we steal from God? (God's time: the Sabbath, Holy Days, prayer.)

### Old Testament Example: Joshua 7:1-26

There are many examples in the Bible of people wanting things they could not have. Some went on to steal, which led to terrible consequences and results.

Read and then discuss a man named Achan and his greediness. While reading the story, have family members think of the Ten Commandments and at the end of the story talk about which ones Achan broke.

- ✓ Who can remember the story about the battle of Jericho?

God had told Joshua and his army to destroy everything that was in Jericho. However, they were to save the silver and gold, and vessels (containers) of bronze and iron. These items were to be put into the treasury of God's house. God had warned that the items were not to be kept by the people of Israel, but set apart for God's house.

One man, Achan, disobeyed and took some treasures for himself. He saw a beautiful garment, some silver and a bar of gold. He knew that no man was to take gold and silver or anything from Jericho, but gold and silver were what he always wanted. His desire was so strong that he took them and hid them in his tent.

- ✓ What do you think happened as a result of his actions?

He was found out. He got into trouble. He felt guilty and gave the items to Joshua.

Because Achan stole the things, which God said the people should not have, all the people of Israel suffered. Joshua sent men to attack a place called Ai. They were not afraid because they saw what God had done for them at the Battle of Jericho. But this time things did not go so smoothly. Instead of winning the battle, they lost and lost big. The enemy chased them and many of them died.

Joshua could not understand why this had happened. He and some of the elders bowed before God, and Joshua asked God why He had allowed them to be destroyed by their enemy. God told him that they had sinned. They had stolen.

God then told Joshua to find out who had disobeyed and to destroy that person. After searching family by family, Achan was found out. He confessed and showed them where the hidden treasures were buried. Then Achan and his family were killed as God commanded.

- ✓ Which commandments did Achan break? (Go down the list of the 10 – and discuss which would have been broken and why. If you have several children – possibly have a contest to see how many they can identify.)
- ✓ How is coveting often connected to the act of stealing?

### New Testament Example: Matthew 22:15-21.

In **Matthew 22**, Christ shows the importance of not stealing from God, our neighbor, or authorities. During that time, the Romans ruled over the Jews and they despised the Romans for charging high taxes every year. Each year they owed a denarius, a silver coin with the emperor Caesar on it.

The Pharisees knew that if they asked Christ about paying taxes and said that it was not necessary, he could look like he was rebelling against Caesar and be in trouble with the Romans. They also knew that if Christ said the tax should be paid, it may make him very unpopular with the people. **Read Matthew 22:15-21.** Christ instructed that it is our responsibility not to steal from anyone, whether it is our neighbor, our boss, the present government, or God. This includes the very important principle of tithing, or giving “one tenth” of our increase back to God.

- ✓ How might people today be guilty of breaking the Eighth Commandment based on Christ’s description in this passage? What other commandments could be broken in relation to this one?

**Ephesians 4:28** (NIV) *Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.*

### What if we have hurt others? How to make things right? (The Principle of Restitution)

The Bible makes it very clear that when a wrong has been done, one should repent not only by being sorry but also by providing restitution. In the Old Testament, God gave direction that those who hurt their neighbor would make things right by restoring what was lost with some type of payment, often up to several times more than the worth of what was originally lost or damaged. Exodus 22:1-4 and the book of Leviticus gives specific guidelines for restitution.

The New Testament story of Zacchaeus shows that God still expects His people to “make things right” when we have hurt someone through breaking God’s commandments. Luke 19 describes Zacchaeus as a chief tax collector who was rich. Zacchaeus had not only collected taxes for government and business, but had also collected additional taxes for himself. It had been very easy to take more than he should from others. This is why no one was happy when Christ chose to fellowship with him. **Read Luke 19: 1-9.**

Zacchaeus was overjoyed to have Christ as his guest and learn God’s truth that he said in Luke 19:8, *“Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”* At the time, in order to “make things right” or give restitution to those he had wronged, Zacchaeus would have been required to give 20 percent more than what was originally taken. His generosity in giving amounts far beyond the owed restitution showed a repentant heart and a willingness to once again follow God and love his neighbor.

The story of Zacchaeus shows that we as Christians should make restitution when we have done wrong. In some cases, there is no adequate restitution. Yet, whenever possible, our attitude and actions should show that we have repented and desire to follow God.

- ✓ When we have stolen or sinned against God and/or someone else, what are we expected to do about it? Is the principle of restitution only about restoring physical belongings? Why would God want us to follow this principle?

The law of the Eighth Commandment is always in action. Whether a person sees us steal or not, God always sees and knows when we steal. How would you feel if someone stole your special item? You would be hurt, sad and possibly angry each time you suffered a loss. Stealing is always hurtful.

If you obey the Eighth Commandment, you will not hurt others by taking their things nor will they hurt you by taking what you like. God's laws are rules of behavior for humans. They show us that God loves us, and show us how we are to love God and each other, which leads to having a happy life.

Remember **Mathew 6:19-21**: the important thing is to store up treasure in heaven, rather than physical goods that can be taken from us. Spiritual character is the most important thing we can attain. These cannot be taken away by another person.

The Eighth Commandment is a test of our inner character on a daily basis. Remember the command from God, ***"Thou shalt not steal!"***

#### Additional Family Resources:

- UCG Study Booklet "The Ten Commandments" <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-ten-commandments>
- Beyond Today "Tithing: God's Financial Key to Success" <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/tithing-gods-financial-key-to-success>
- UCG Beyond Today Article "Tithing: Where Is Your Treasure?" <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/tithing-where-is-your-treasure>
- UCG Study Booklet "What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?" <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/what-does-the-bible-teach-about-tithing>
- UCG Teen Bible Study Guide "First Tithe" <https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-6-practical-christian-living/first-tithe>
- UCG Teen Bible Study Guide "Money Management" <https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-6-practical-christian-living/money-management>

## Possible Class Activities

1. **Make up a skit or scenario to illustrate the Eighth Commandment.** Discuss the benefits or curses that come as a result of obeying God's ways.
  
2. **The Hook—Resisting the Temptation to Steal**  
 Bring in a fishing lure. Use **Proverbs 29:6** to discuss how temptation looks good and lures us to sin but results in a bad ending. While fish may be lured in because of their lack of wisdom or reasoning, we have help from God (**James 4:7; Matthew 6:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13**). Discuss the ways we can overcome temptation with God's help. Encourage students to memorize one of the verses about God's help during temptation.
  
3. **Tithing Discussion for Older Students**  
 Use the UCG resources provided to discuss the principle of tithing and its benefits. One option is to break up the group into four teams in advance of the lesson, assigning each team a section from the UCG Booklet on Tithing. Have them create a summary of the most important points, with 1-2 key scriptures from the section, and explain why they think those points/scriptures are important. As a bonus challenge, have them bring back a story of a blessing from tithing from someone in the congregation. To add accountability, you can assign the section as individuals, and then have them synthesize their learning in teams at the beginning of the lesson before discussion.
  
4. **Case Studies from the Bible**  
 Read and discuss any of the following Biblical examples that apply to the Eighth Commandment. Who is hurt in the situation? What lessons can we apply to our lives based on this example?
  - **Genesis 14** Abraham Tithes to Melchizedek
  - **Genesis 27-29** Jacob Steals Esau's Birthright
  - **Genesis 30: 25-43** Jacob and Laban's Flocks
  
5. **The Eighth Commandment—Hurting Others and Restitution**  
 Discuss the ways the following situation can hurt others. Then, think of ways to help make things right again.  
 For younger students:
  - Sarah accidentally leaves her new iPod at lunch. Her friend Jenna decides to take it home, then never gives it back.
  - You just finished your homework for school. Someone asks to look at it for a minute, then copies the answers.
  - Michael is walking through a store with his family. On his way out, he swipes a pack of gum. No one in the store notices.
 For older students:
  - You see \$20 on the ground. You pick it up, deciding what to do.
  - Austin has been procrastinating on studying for final exams. He sits by his friend Justin who he knows has been studying for days. When Austin gets stuck on answers, he glances in the direction of Justin's test. Justin looks up at Austin. The teacher notices and takes both their exams.
  - You're heading out of work at the burger joint and snag a cheeseburger for the road on the way out the door.

## Possible Class Activity for Teens:

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST THESE MEN'S LIVES

- **Have one group research Bernard Madoff**

From <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-bernie-madoffs-ponzi-scheme-worked-2014-7>

*Bernie Madoff was sentenced to 150 years in prison for running the biggest fraudulent scheme in U.S. history. Even now, only a few of his victims have since regained all of their losses. A well-respected financier, Madoff convinced thousands of investors to hand over their savings, falsely promising consistent profits in return. He was caught in December 2008 and charged with 11 counts of fraud, money laundering, perjury and theft.*

- **Have the other group research Abraham Lincoln**

From <https://greatamericanhistory.net/honesty.htm>

*Mary Todd Lincoln once wrote to a friend that "Mr. Lincoln . . . is almost monomaniac on the subject of honesty." The future president was first called "Honest Abe" when he was working as a young store clerk in New Salem, Ill. According to one story, whenever he realized he had shortchanged a customer by a few pennies, he would close the shop and deliver the correct change—regardless of how far he had to walk. People recognized his integrity and were soon asking him to act as judge or mediator in various contests, fights and arguments. According to Robert Rutledge of New Salem, "Lincoln's judgment was final in all that region of country. People relied implicitly upon his honesty, integrity, and impartiality."*

### WHAT IS A LEGACY?

- From <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/legacy>

*Use the word, legacy, for something handed down from one generation to the next. A retiring company president might leave a legacy of honesty and integrity.*

- From HUFFPOST - THE BLOG April 7, 2015. What Is Your Legacy? By Katherine Meadowcroft

*"A legacy should be deeply considered. It takes on immortality, and it is how we live on after death. If we think of our legacy as a gift, it places an emphasis on the thoughtful, meaningful and intentional aspects of legacy. The consequences of what we do now will outlive us. What one leaves behind is the quality of one's life, the summation of the choices and actions one makes in this life, our spiritual and moral values."*

### Write down a one or two sentence "legacy" about:

- Achan (**Joshua 7**)
- Mr. Bernard Madoff
- Mr. Abraham Lincoln

### How is the Eighth commandment reflected in their legacy?

Think about various sports figures, entertainers and politicians. What is the legacy those people leaving?

### WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

- Think about the kind of person you intend to be as you grow up.
- Write a one or two sentence description of what you would like your legacy to be.
- In what way are the Ten Commandments reflected in your answer?

### A COMMANDMENT MESSAGE

Louis Braille was a Frenchman who invented a raised dot writing system for the blind. A special type-writer presses against paper to form the different dot sequences.

Use the Braille letter dot code to read the message. Then try to "make" it, by pressing a dull pencil where the dots are. Turn your paper over and feel the message.

 A	 B	 C	 D	 E	 F	 G	 H	 I	 J
 K	 L	 M	 N	 O	 P	 Q	 R	 S	 T
 U	 V	 W	 X	 Y	 Z	 and	 of	 the	 with

