



#7

Theme: Stealing and Hypocrisy

Scripture: Exodus 20:15 (NIV) *“You shall not steal.”*

Matthew 15:7-9 (NIV) *“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are from me. They worship me in vain their teachings are merely human rules.”*

A Thought: Once or twice a year my wife and I clean out the closets...old and shamefully clothes that we have never worn. We generally call the Salvation Army to pick up the goods and they do so within two days. The current donation includes three boxes and three plastic bags filled with knickknacks, clothes, movies tapes (remember those?). Early one morning I neatly arranged the boxes and bags and placed them next to the garage. I also placed two large signs with the wording Salvation Army Pick-up. Two hours later I heard a knock on the door. Two gents politely ask me *“Where are the goodies?”* I responded...*“In the back.”* We all trekked to the garage...whoosh! Empty, gone.even the signs. We were ripped off! I felt violated! With a humdrum attitude the driver told me it happens all the time. This type of donation goes directly to the Army’s Adult Rehabilitation program to serve the needy. How noble is that? How can someone walk away with three boxes and three plastic bags and two signs! I was so angry with the thief and or thieves. Sadly, for a quick moment I was incensed that the thief had the gumption to steal something that belonged to me and not one thought of the Army’s loss in this injustice. Later that day my self-righteous fingers found their way to the Bible...specifically to James 1:20 (NIV) *“because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”* Pow! Punch... sense of discomfort my way! I finally settled down and realized that this incident wasn’t about me. In the end it was the Army’s Rehab program that experienced the loss. Of course it is natural to be angry. Though in this incident it was all about my self-interest and not the loss to the Salvation Army. Read James 1:19-20. Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

Talk to yourself:

- What would have been your response to the above scenario?
- What are your thoughts about stealing? Is your answer Biblical?
- Have you ever been tempted to steal?
- Do you sneak some extra “zzzz” after your lunch break?
- A transaction mistake with extra \$\$\$ to you....do you return it?

Scriptures to read:

- Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 19:11-13; Ephesians 4:28; Mark 10:19; 1 Corinthians 6:10
- Matthew 5:23,24, 6:2, 9; 15:8,9; 21:30; Leviticus 6:1-7

Quote: G.K. Chesterton, Christian author

“Thieves respect property. They merely wish the property to become their property that they may more perfectly respect.”

Bottom Line:

On my part there was a sense of cockiness to be sure or at least low-level vanity. I would never steal from someone - so I thought. Not so fast, backup Mr. Scribe. What about your past and present writings? The essays, speeches, compositions and the Bottom Line papers? Not a thought. That is until I ran across a quote by Wilson Mizner playwright and raconteur and a scoundrel of sorts.... *“If you steal from one author its plagiarism; if you steal from many its research.”* Got-cha!! Yes - there are times I will use a line and or sentence without giving full credit to the author. Yep, guilty as charged! Many of us would never associate stealing from God. Yet, if we believe we are created in God’s image, the way we treat and mistreat each other is a reflection (personal and material) of the relationship with our Lord.

NOW.....THAT’S THE BOTTOM LINE.

Spiritual Dabbler, Your bro, Ray

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