**EIGHTH COMMANMENT**

*You shall not steal*.

Exodus 20:15

Doris Payne, a notorious 86-year-old jewel thief with a long rap sheet in Southern California, was arrested yet again in December 2016 on larceny charges in an Atlanta suburb. This time she

was arrested trying to steal a $2,000 diamond necklace from

a department store. The report said she slipped the necklace

into her back pocket and tried to leave the store.

Her decades of theft were chronicled in a 2013 documentary called, “*The Life and Crimes of Doris Payne*.” The Jewelers’ Security Alliance sent out bulletins as early as the 1970s

warning about her.

In November 2013, she stole a $22,500 diamond-and-white gold ring from El Paseo Jewelers in Palm Desert. She pleaded guilty to one felony count of burglary and grand theft and was sentenced to four years in custody.

She was previously convicted in 2011 for stealing a ring in San Diego and another in Santa Monica. She was released from prison three months before the Palm Desert theft. Last October, she was arrested in Atlanta after she stole a pair of $690 Christian Dior earrings from Saks Fifth Avenue department store in a mall.

**The purpose of this command is to protect personal property.**

God has blessed individuals with property that belongs to them.

So, we are to respect their personal property.

Pink – “The root from which theft proceeds is *discontent* with

the portion God has allotted and therefore a coveting of what

he has withheld from us and bestowed upon others.”

People want more than they own and therefore take what is not theirs to make them content at the moment. Once someone steals it become easier to steal the next time just like lying becomes easier and eventually a habit as part of one’s life.

**Defined**

*Steal* – Heb. *to carry away secretly*.

Job 4:12 *A word was secretly brought to me*.

Job 21:18 *Like chaff that the storm carries away*.

Webster defines stealing: “To take clandestinely without right.”

People steal when no one is around so they will not get caught.

They steal secretly knowing what they are doing is wrong.

Genesis 31:19 *Laben went to shear his sheep* (three days away) *and Rachel stole the idols that belonged to her father*.

These were small idols which she stealing for her own family.

She hid them in her baggage so they would not be discovered.

By hiding them she knew that what she did was wrong.

Westminster Confession of Faith (Q. 142) What sins are forbidden in the Eight Commandment? “Theft, robbery and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts . . . extortion, charging high interest, bribery, unjust lawsuits and all other unjust

or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor.”

Louis L’Amour (d.1988), was a writer of Western novels –

“Thieves are usually those who have something and want more.”

**Examples**

1. The first sin, which happened in the Garden of Eden, was when

Eve took the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:6 *When Eve saw that the tree was good for food,*

*and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was*

*desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.*

*Took* – Heb. *to take with your hand or possess*.

Genesis 18:6 Abraham took a calf to have it killed for a meal.

By taking possession of something you claim ownership of it.

Eve took what was not hers to take which is stealing.

God had told Adam and Eve they were not to eat of the tree

of the knowledge of good and evil, but she took the fruit.

2. The first sin when Israel entered the Promised Land was when Achan stole the spoils of war for himself. Joshua 7:21 He took a beautiful embroidered cloak and 200 shekels of silver and a bar

of gold weighing 1¼ pounds today worth over $60,000 .

These would have made him a very wealthy person when compared to the other people who lived around him.

3. The first sin in the early church was when Ananias and Sapphira lied about the money they had given. Acts 5:1-2 *They sold a piece of property and with his wife’s knowledge Ananias kept back for himself some of the proceeds* (money) *and brought only a part*

*of it and laid it at the apostle’s feet.*

This was a deliberate attempt to deceive the church leaders into thinking they had given all of the money from the sail of the land. They wanted to look like they were totally devoted to the Lord.

**Punishment**

Note: In each of these instances the punishment was death because they had stolen what belonged to the Lord, not just a neighbor.

1. Adam and Eve would not live forever, but return to dust from which they had been created (Genesis 3:19).

2. Achan was stoned to death by the people of Israel at the specific command of God as a warning to the nation (Joshua 7:25).

3.Ananias and Sapphira both dropped dead when confronted about the truth of their lying to the Holy Spirit by Peter (Acts 5:5,10).

**Causes of theft**

**Internal**

**1. Doubt** **that God will provide for my needs.**

Watson – “A high distrust of God’s providence.”

Psalm 78:19 *The Israelites spoke against God, saying,*

*“Can God spread a table in the wilderness?”*

Even though God had delivered them from Egypt with ten plagues and crossing of the Red Sea, in the wilderness they questioned whether God could provide them with food regularly to eat.

**2. Covetousness** **which is the root of theft.**

Joshua 7:21 Achan said, “*When I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak, 200 shekels of silver and a bar of gold then I coveted them*

*and took them*.” (He *saw* . . . he *coveted* . . . he *took*).

If we do not control our sinful desire it leads to the decision to take what does not belong to us. The tenth commandment says that we are not to covet anything that belongs to our neighbor (:17).

**External**

You can be tempted by Satan to take something you see and

then desire even though it does not belong to you.

I John 2:16-17 *All that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away.*

**Kinds of theft**

**1. Taking what does not belong to you.**

John 12:6 *Judas was a thief and having charge of the money bag he used to help himself to* (steal) *what was in it.*

**2. Not paying what you owe.**

Leviticus 19:13 *You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning.* Workers were paid each evening so they could buy food for their family. To withhold their money was harmful.

James 5:4 *The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you have kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.*

**3. Harming others to take their money.**

Proverbs 1:11,13 *Let us lie in wait for blood;* *let us ambush the innocent without reason . . . we shall find all precious goods*,

*we will fill our houses with plunder*.

Luke 10:30 *A man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho and*

*he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and*

*departed leaving him half dead.*

**4. Deliberately being dishonest to help yourself.**

Amos 8:5 *Make the ephah* (6 gallons) *small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances*. Watson – “By making their weights lighter, men make their accounts heavier.”

**5. Stealing from your neighbor.**

Deut. 23:25 *You shall not put a sickle to your neighbor’s standing grain.* You cannot deliberately take what belongs to someone else.

**6. Stealing from your employer.**

Luke 16:6-7 The dishonest manager changed the bill of one man from 100 measures of oil to 50 and of another from 100 measures of wheat to 80 so when he was fired, they would in turn help him.

**7. Charging more than you should.**

Luke 19:8 Zacchaeus the tax collector said to Jesus,

“*If I have defrauded anyone, I restore it fourfold*.”

*Defrauded* (NIV *cheated*) – Gk. *to take unlawfully*.

They charged people more than they legally could and kept the balance. The result was that it made them wealthy by stealing.

**8. To borrow without the intention of paying it back.**

Psalm 37:21 *The wicked borrows but does not pay back*.

II Kings 4:7 Elisha told the widow to sell the oil to pay off

her debts because that was the right thing to do.

**The principle is being content with what God has provided.**

**Money**

Proverbs 30:8-9 *Give me neither poverty nor riches;*

*feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be*

*full and deny you and say, Who is the Lord?” or lest*

*I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.*

Henry – “He desires to be kept from every condition of life

that would be a temptation to him. Poverty is a strong

temptation to dishonesty, and many are overcome by it.”

**Circumstances**

Philippians 4:11-12 *I have learned in whatever situation*

*I am to be content. I have learned the secret of facing plenty*

*and hunger, abundance and need.*

**Learn to be content with what God has provided for you.**

**Lack of contentment is a temptation to steal from others.**

**CONCLUSION**

John Bode was an Anglican clergyman serving a small parish near Cambridge, England when his three children, a daughter and two sons, were ready for confirmation.  Bode not only presided over their confirmation, but also wrote the hymn, *O Jesus I Have Promised*, in 1866 for the occasion—telling his children that the hymn included “all the important truths I want you to remember.”

*O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end;  
Be Thou forever near me, my Master and my Friend;  
I shall not fear the battle if Thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway if Thou wilt be my Guide.*

*Oh, let me feel Thee near me; the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;  
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;  
But, Jesus, draw Thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.*

**PRAYER**

Dear Lord,

Help me to find contentment today in the life

You have given me. Teach me to cherish the blessings

I often overlook and to trust that

You provide what I truly need

and just what I want.

May my heart rest in the peace of

Your sufficiency and the joy of

Your love, no matter my external circumstances.