

March 12, 2023

## Abounding Grace: The Grace of the Law

### Work to Give

Exodus 20:15



### For Discussion and Reflection

1. Paul asks the wealthy Corinthians, "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) Read about God's provision and concern for his people in Deuteronomy 8:1-18. How did God train his people to depend on him? What is his great concern with increased wealth and prosperity? What does he want them to know about their wealth?
2. Scripture teaches that we are not "owners" but "stewards" of everything that God gives us. Consider Jesus' parable, Matthew 25:14-30. This parable is in a section of Jesus' teaching that discusses the "Kingdom of Heaven." What is the central point of this parable? What does it communicate to us about our responsibilities with what we have? What is God looking for from us as stewards? 1 Corinthians 4:2. How are you stewarding everything that God has given you? Are you stewarding so that God will receive a return on investment?
3. Stealing doesn't just refer to property. It includes things like reputation. Consider what Absalom stole from King David, 2 Samuel 15:1-17. How did he steal from David? What did he insinuate about his father? How did he win the people? Compare that with David's treatment of King Saul, 1 Samuel 24:1-7.
4. This commandment protects private property and personal freedom. While indentured servitude (for people who are broke) and servitude for conquered enemies are permitted, Israel is given multiple rules for fair treatment, marriage rites, and long-term commitment to the family. This commandment forbids what the Bible calls "man stealing." Consider several passages: Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 24:7, 1 Timothy 1:10. Not only would the human trafficker be guilty, but also the buyer. What does this tell us about modern human trafficking or the historical slave trade? What is the assumed inalienable right of every human?
5. We grew up hearing the phrase (often from our siblings) "Finder's keepers." What does God think about this phrase? How does this commandment speak to that? Consider Exodus 23:4, Deuteronomy 22:1-4. How does the commandment speak to this issue?
6. Did you know that Scripture speaks against high interest charges? Famous Reformer John Calvin worked to set a reasonable interest rate for Geneva. Rome limited the national interest rate maximum to 12%. (from Kevin DeYoung, *The Ten Commandments*) What do these texts, Matthew 25:14-30 and Exodus 22:25) say about charging interest? One recognizes the economic incentive of interest for loaning money, while the other commands compassionate lending practices. How does this commandment speak to predatory lending?
7. Consider the implications of each of these passages: Matthew 6:25-33; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; Hebrews 13:5,6. This is a small sampling of the New Testament's teaching on money. Why do Jesus and the Apostles speak so much about money?
8. In Malachi's lawsuit speeches against Israel, God accuses them of robbing him, Malachi 3:6-12. While New Testament believers are not under the multiple tithes of the Old Covenant, as stewards of God's gifts, what responsibilities do we have with what he gives us?
9. How does this commandment speak to you? What can you do to grow in God's grace?