**Stealing**

**Grace for Self-control . . .**

“Urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything: they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

(Titus 2:6–12)

You have truth, trust, and integrity when you have Christ living inside you. Thus, when you steal from others, you steal from yourself the very character of Christ.

—June Hunt

**Q:** “What is kleptomania?”

Kleptomania is the recurrent failure to resist impulses to steal unneeded items, accompanied by subjective tension before and emotional reward after the theft. Kleptomania is not motivated by anger, vengeance, delusion, or other disorder.¹

- The English word “kleptomania” is made up of the two Greek words klepto, which means “to steal,” and mania, which means “madness.”²

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.”

(Matthew 6:19)

**Q:** “What is a copyright? When is it wrong for me to copy other material?”

A copyright is the exclusive, legal right of the originator to control the use or sale of a work.³ Unless the copyright owner gives permission or the work goes out of copyright after a certain number of years, it is illegal to copy the work. To copy any copyrighted work without permission is stealing.

“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.”

(Proverbs 21:6)
Checklist for Stealing

Stealing from the government (Luke 20:25)
- Have I claimed an invalid deduction on my income tax return?
- Have I neglected to report cash income on my tax return?

Stealing from the office (1 Corinthians 4:2)
- Have I taken office supplies and postage for personal use?
- Have I taken a friend to lunch on a business expense account?
- Have I charged personal items to the company?
- Have I come in late, left early, called in sick when I wasn’t, wasted time?

Stealing from other businesses (Proverbs 20:17)
- Have I falsified insurance claims?
- Have I pilfered food supplies from a restaurant?

Stealing from relatives and friends (2 Corinthians 8:21)
- Have I taken food without permission?
- Have I taken money without permission?

Stealing from God (Malachi 3:8–18)
- Have I withheld my tithe?
- Have I failed to serve God with my talents?

“We aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man.” (2 Corinthians 8:21)

Causes of Stealing

Stemming from: **Low self-worth**
Resulting in: **Greed**
- Grasping for worldly success (materialism)
- Rationizing that you deserve more than you have
- Envyng the possessions of others
- Expecting fulfillment from possessions
- Desiring to “outsmart” others at their expense

Stemming from: **Insecurity**
Resulting in: **Fear**
- Failing to trust God
- Endeavoring to be free of worry
- Allowing peer pressure to have too much influence
- Relying on possessions to provide a sense of well-being

Key Verse to Memorize

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.” (Luke 16:10)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

**Titus 2:6–12**

**Alibis and Answers**

- **Alibi:** “This will never be noticed or missed.”
  **Answer:** Even if you fool people, you can’t fool God. (Proverbs 15:3)

- **Alibi:** “Everyone steals.”
  **Answer:** Not everyone steals. (Acts 5:29)

- **Alibi:** “This is just the way the system operates.”
  **Answer:** Stealing is not the way God operates. (1 Corinthians 3:18–19)

- **Alibi:** “If I can get ‘extra’ money, I’ll be able to give more to God.”
  **Answer:** God doesn’t want stolen money—He wants a contrite heart. (Micah 6:6–8)

- **Alibi:** “This will get me more cash to give to others.”
  **Answer:** God cares more about my character than my charity. (Proverbs 21:2–3)

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.” (Proverbs 21:2)
“Catch the Thief” in Your Heart

Denounce willful ignorance and seek to understand God’s standards on stealing. (Romans 13:10)

Admit that your heart is deceitful, and ask God to reveal the ways in which you steal. (Psalm 139:23–24)

Make a commitment to be totally honest, no matter the consequence, and confess any habits of stealing to a friend who will hold you accountable.7 (Proverbs 10:2)

Know that everything you do is seen by the eyes of a loving God. (Proverbs 5:21)

Think and pray before acting to make sure you are not rationalizing. (Proverbs 16:2)

Be sensitive and accountable to the Spirit of Christ within you. (Galatians 5:25)

Make restitution when you realize you have defrauded someone. (Luke 19:8)

Accept the forgiveness of God and continue to grow in Christlikeness. (2 Peter 3:18)

Related Topics . . .

• Ethics & Integrity:
  The Same in the Dark as in the Light
• Financial Freedom:
  Principles of Wise Money Management
• Habits:
  Success in Self-Control
• Prosperity:
  Strategies for Success
• Temptation:
  Promise of Pleasure—Lured by a Lie

4. For this section see Russell Kelfer, The Issue of Integrity (San Antonio, TX: Discipleship Tape Ministries, 2002); www.dtm.org.