



Eight

The Eighth Commandment

Family Study Guides • The Ten Commandments Series

Eight

The Eighth Commandment



“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.

Additionally, this Study Guide has suggested lessons and activities that can be used in a classroom setting. These are at the end of the guide.

Objectives:

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



Memory Verse

“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.” (Exodus 20:15, 17).

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.

1. What Does it Mean to Steal?

Dishonesty plagues our society everywhere today. (Dishonest car salesman, people scamming others out of their savings, the crooked contractor, the person who stole your iPad or your lunch.)

- 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. “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. You must not keep a hired worker's salary all night until morning" (Leviticus 19:11-13, New Century Version).

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. In this lesson, 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.



2. Being Honest and Trustworthy with Money

a. We all like a bargain—and often “haggling” is expected, but are we honest in all our dealings?

- “Don’t try to cheat people by having two sets of weights or measures, one to get more when you are buying, and the other to give less when you are selling” (Deuteronomy 25:13-14, Contemporary English Version).
- “The buyer haggles over the price, saying, “It’s worthless,” then brags about getting a bargain!” (Proverbs 20:14, New Living Translation).
- 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?

b. Have you ever stolen something or cheated someone, then felt bad about it later?

- “What you get by dishonesty you may enjoy like the finest food, but sooner or later it will be like a mouthful of sand” (Proverbs 20:17, Good News Translation).
- Many of us have done something wrong that still bothers us. Can you think of such an instance in your life? How do you feel about it now?

c. “It’s better to be honest and poor than to be dishonest and rich” (Proverbs 16:8, Contemporary English Version).

- 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.)

3. Showing Love by Being Honest and Responsible

“If someone borrows an animal [or anything] from a neighbor and it is injured or dies when the owner is absent, the person who borrowed it must pay full compensation. But if the owner was present, no compensation is required. And no compensation is required if the animal was rented, for this loss is covered by the rental fee” (Exodus 22:14-15, New Living Translation).

- Do you have something around the house, office or yard that doesn’t belong to you?

If you do, then return or replace it.

- If you borrow someone's bike and break it, what does the Bible say you should do?
- 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.
- Be responsible. If you damage another's goods—you owe them.

4. Showing Honesty by Paying What We Owe Others

a. “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.” (Proverbs 3:27, New International Version).

b. Read Romans 13:5-10 as a family.

- Discuss how many principles there are about stealing and honesty, and being a good citizen, neighbor and friend.
- A good summary of this passage can be found in Psalm 37:21, “Evil men borrow, but do not repay their debt, but the godly show compassion and are generous” (New English Translation).

c. “At that time I will put you on trial. . . 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” (Malachi 3:5, NLT, emphasis added).

- Does your family give **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 the lonely! This includes helping people in their needs.
 - What can your family do to care for the widows in the church or neighborhood?



5. Stealing by What We Don't Do

a. We steal by being lazy. (By having others provide for you while you don't provide for others.)

- “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (Ephesians 4:28).
- We should do our share of paying for things, sharing the work-load and fulfilling responsibilities.
 - Do you save your second tithe? Do you save for summer camp? Do what you can yourself.
 - How does 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13 apply today to us in the church? What do you think “Anyone who refuses to work should not eat” means? Do you think it is a fair rule?
 - Note that we could also steal time from family by being a workaholic.

b. We steal by taking advantage of people.

- “How horrible it will be for the person who builds his house dishonestly and his upper rooms through



injustice. He makes his neighbors work for nothing and doesn't pay them for their work" (Jeremiah 22:13, Names of God Bible).

- Don't expect people to do things for you all the time. It can be stealing someone's time and resources when you can do or pay for things yourself, but don't want to.

c. Contrast what Paul did.

- Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9.

- Discuss how Paul showed an example of being careful not to take advantage of others.

6. Our Obligations to God

Read Malachi 3:8-11. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, "In what way have we robbed You?" In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,' says the Lord of hosts."

- This tells us that we can actually steal from God!

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



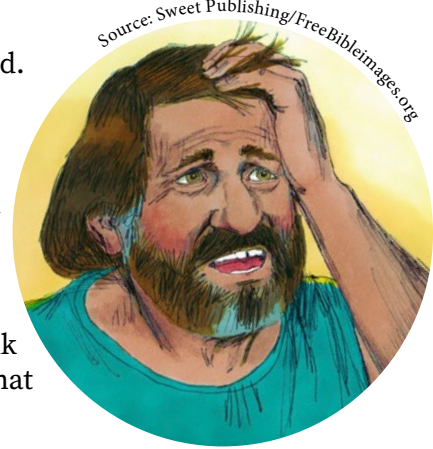
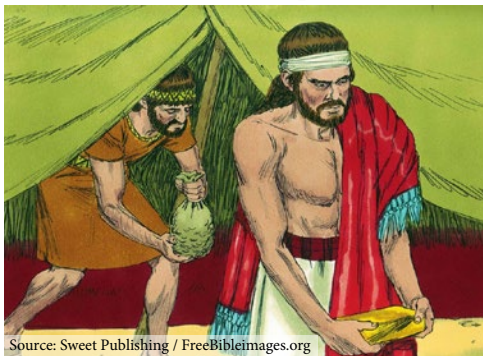
An Old Testament Example

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

Discuss the story of a man named Achan—and his sin and greed.

- Read **Joshua 7:1-26** and/or:
- Have your kids look up “the story of Achan for kids” on the Internet or watch an animated version of Achan’s sin.

Discuss the following questions:



- Why do you think Achan stole the items that he did?
- Do you think he felt that he wouldn’t get caught?
- Sometimes people “get away with” stealing or other sins, but **God always knows**.
- How do you think God felt when Achan stole from Him?
- Many times people think that stealing—“won’t hurt anyone”—especially if they steal from someone who is rich. How many people in the story “got hurt” as a result of Achan’s stealing?
- Review the 10 Commandments and identify which commandments Achan broke.

A New Testament Example

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

The Pharisees knew that if they asked Christ about paying taxes and He 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 could make Him unpopular with the people. Read **Matthew 22:15-21**.

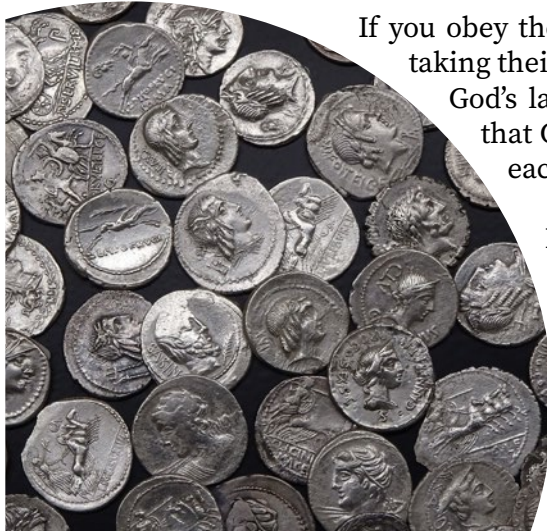
Christ instructed that it is our responsibility not to steal from anyone, whether it is our neighbor, our boss, the present government, or God. This includes the very important principle of tithing, or giving “one tenth” of our increase back to God.

- 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?

“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” (Ephesians 4:28, NIV).

Summary

The law of the Eighth Commandment is also 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 Matthew 6:19-21, and store up treasure in heaven, rather than physical goods that can be taken away. Spiritual character is the most important thing we can attain, which 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 Resources for Your Family Studies

UCG Article: “Tithing: Where is Your Treasure?”

<https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/tithing-where-is-your-treasure>

UCG Teen Bible Study “First Tithe”

<https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-6-practical-christian-living/first-tithe>

UCG Teen Bible Study “Money Management”

<https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-6-practical-christian-living/money-management>

Optional Classroom Activities

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 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 percent.

Performance Time!

Make up a skit or scenario to illustrate the Eight Commandment. Discuss the benefits or curses that come as a result of obeying God's ways.

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.

Tithing Discussion (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 4 teams in advance of the lesson, assigning each team a section from the UCG study aid on tithing. Have them create a summary of the most important points, with one or two 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.

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

Hurting Others and Restitution

Discuss the ways the following situations can hurt others. Then, think of ways to make things right.

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.

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.

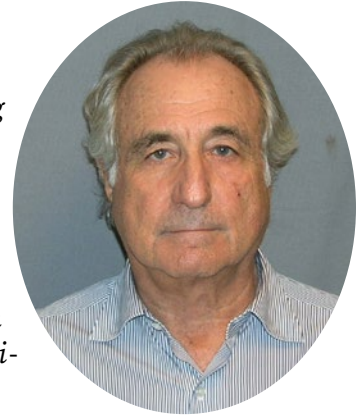


What is a Legacy? (Teen Activity)

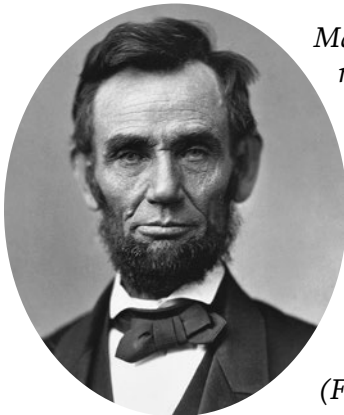
Compare and contrast the lives of two men and the legacies they left.

Have one group of students research **Bernard Madoff**:

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



Have one group of students research **Abraham Lincoln**:



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 short-changed 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.” (From <https://greatamericanhistory.net/honesty.htm>)

What is a 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 <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/legacy>)*

“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.” (From HUFFPOST—THE BLOG Apr 07, 2015. What Is Your Legacy? By Katherine Meadowcroft)

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 legacy are they 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 10 Commandments reflected in your answer?

First Commandment Word Search

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

Eighth
Commandment
Diligence
Steal































Restitution
Responsible
Honest
Obey

Consequence
Trustworthy
Give
Legacy

A Commandment Message

Louis Braille was a Frenchman who invented a raised dot writing system for the blind. A special typewriter 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

