

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Thirty-Three: “The Covenant Model and Commandment Eight, Part 1”

Commandment Eight is the third law in the second set of five commandments, which gives instruction as to the just and lawful dealings with one’s neighbor. This commandment answers to the ethics portion of the covenant model. Each individual has the authority to set the rules as to how his or her property will be used, and no other individual is allowed to assault, misuse, or usurp the use of that private property.

Commandments 1-5 (Love God)	Covenant Model	Commandments 6-10 (Love thy neighbor)
No other gods	Transcendence	Do not Kill
No graven images	Hierarchy	Do Not Commit Adultery
Do not take God’s Name in vain	Ethics	Do Not Steal
Remember the Sabbath Day	Sanctions	
Honor thy Father and Mother	Continuity	

1. Possessions are covenantal in origin.

A person’s latent talent, mental capacity, family birthright, etc. are God-chosen gifts and everyone will answer to God for how he or she uses these.

Mankind is called to develop their potential and fulfill their earthly mandate in covenant partnership with God.

- Adam and Eve were positioned as keepers of the Garden and gave account of their stewardship.
- It is required of stewards that they be found faithful (I Cor. 4:2).
- Jesus told the parable of the distribution of talents to servants and the reckoning that took place between the Lord and his servants (Mt. 25:14-30).

2. Original life and original gifts represent God’s covenant to a person while management and increase of the original life and gifts represent the covenant response back to God.

Assets are accumulated from the following two sources: inheritance from God and family and that which is developed from laboring with the gifts.

- God planted a Garden and placed the first couple in that place of bounty.
- God commanded Adam and Eve (and all humanity in them) to be fruitful and fill up or to do something with the inheritance so that more would be developed from their labors.

A person who is responsible with gifts and possessions must gain knowledge and must work.

- Adam was called to dress the garden (Gen. 2:15); dress is the Hebrew verb *Abad* (Strong’s # 5647) that means to work, serve, till, or husband).
- Knowledge precedes work because understanding the purpose and design of all assets is required to avoid abuse and to release potential.
- Work is the Hebrew feminine noun *Melaka* (Strong’s # 4399) and is first used in Gen. 2:2 when God finished all his work of creating the earth.
- Work is activity or effort that must be exercised in tending the earth to care for it and to release its fruitfulness.

3. To steal a person’s assets is equivalent to invading the covenant between that person and God.

All owners have exclusive rights to manage their private property, make decisions or chose the ethics of it, and receive the profit or loss from the management of it.

Each owner will determine whether or not to work as under the Lordship of Christ as a co-laborer in the earth or as an autonomous sovereign seeking to impose an independent standard of right and wrong to the earthly labors.

The use of a person’s private property testifies to that person’s belief and relationship to God. Commandment Eight forbids every form of theft against one’s neighbor, which would change the conditions of covenant management. Assets not only test the heart as to love of God or love of money but also testify to the heart’s submission or rebellion to God’s offer for covenantal stewardship.