

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Thirty-Four: “The Covenant Model and Commandment Eight, Part 2”

Commandment Eight places a responsibility upon every man to care for the property and well-being of one’s fellowman. To accomplish this, one must not, by any method, diminish the assets of a neighbor and one shall manage his or her own assets so as to be aware of the needs of the neighbor. The dominion mandate is worked out in the context of community and shared resources.

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 <i>(Do not misuse God’s assets)</i>	Ethics	Do Not Steal <i>(Do not misuse another man’s assets)</i>
Remember the Sabbath Day	Sanctions	
Honor thy Father and Mother	Continuity	

1. Commandment Eight answers to the third section of the covenant model – ethics – as does commandment three.

No non-owner may arbitrarily use the property of another; only the owner has the authority to define the rules of use for his or her assets.

The commandment against stealing includes the following:

- Coercion
- Fraud
- Confiscation or seizure
- Unjust weights and balances
- Destruction of property
- Misrepresentation by buyer or seller

2. Assets and ownership means responsibilities.

A man who does not develop his potential and his assets, which have been placed within his care, reflects an ignorance of or abhorrence to the assignment God has entrusted to him.

- Faithfulness, dependability, capability, and reliability reflect the nature of God.
- A sluggard dares God and defies God’s providence and guidance in creation.

Man is not only accountable to God for the use of his assets, but man is also responsible to other men.

- Charity is required of all people commensurate to each person’s ability (Prov. 19:17; Lev. 19:9-10; James 1:27).
- Boss must demonstrate fair hiring practices (Pharaoh and the Israelites)
- Boss may not use a neighbor’s labor with just wages (Jer. 22:13), falsify his pay (Prov. 11:1; Lev.19:35-36), or in any other manner steal from his worker (Amos 8:4-6)
- Employees must exercise honest and faithful stewardship (Joseph and Potiphar).

Scripture clearly approves of godly wealth that can be acquired by obedience to God, consistent labor, and faithful dealings (Prov. 10:22; 13:11; Ps. 112:1-3; Eph. 4:28).

The use of wealth expresses a man’s love for God and God’s laws, as well as love for one’s neighbor.

- There is a social responsibility attached to wealth.
- If a man uses none of his wealth to love his neighbor, he does not love God.
- If a man uses all wealth upon his neighbor, he does not love the laws of God.

Biblical stewardship is using one’s assets in responsible and accountable choices so that a man tithes, lays up an inheritance for his children’s children, does acts of charity, and enhances the quality of life of his neighbor. Commandment Eight not only addresses not trespassing against one’s neighbor by stealing but also encompasses the practice of philanthropy and burden bearing through conscientious management.