

**UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE CLASS**

Fall/Winter, 2018

Pastor Jim Otte

“Foundational Truth for a Confused World: The Ten Commandments”

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**Session Twenty-Three: You shall not steal. (To Each His/Her Own)**

“We should fear and love God, that we may not take our neighbor’s money or goods, nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business. (M. Luther)

**Opening Discussion:**

- a. Look at the following items. Put a check mark by those items, which you feel are breaking the seventh commandment. Rank their significance to you: 1-5 (5 is most significant).

Situation	7 <sup>th</sup> Comm. Sin?	Significant 1-5
Cheating on a test		
Resenting or being jealous of your co-worker’s success		
Making false/exaggerated claims on your resume		
Taking charity under false pretenses		
Gambling		
Usury (charging outrageous interest on a loan)		
Price gouging during an emergency		
“Borrowing” your sibling’s stuff without asking		
Copying Sunday School lessons to save money		
Claiming others’ intellectual property as your own		
Attending to personal business on company time		
Church raffles		
Filing for bankruptcy		
Refusing to give God a proportion of your earnings		
Gossiping or hearing gossip without challenging the speaker		
Stuffing the ballot box in support of your cause		
Claiming your own will as “God’s will.”		
Slacking in a team/group project		
Others?		

- b. Which items did you rank the most significant (5’s) and why?

***Ephesians 4:1-5, 25-32.*** As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love..

<sup>25</sup> Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. <sup>26</sup> “In your anger do not sin”<sup>[d]</sup>: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil a foothold. <sup>28</sup> 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.

- a. **“live a life worthy of the calling you have received”** – (klayseos – vocation, calling) – Paul asserts that your “calling/vocation” holds a higher status in your life, than whatever is your role or career.
  - a. **“Calling/vocation” as a Christian informs your behavior, attitudes, and decision-making** regardless of the role you fulfill in the contexts you serve, i.e. home, work, church, society, etc.,
  - b. Your “calling” began at your Baptism, where God called you to be His own; gave you a new identity; promised His loving presence; and established you as of highest worth:

***“You are My child, whom I love. With you I AM Well-Pleased.”***

- c. Your “calling” is the standard of how you live with your neighbor.
- b. **“humble and gentle...patient, bearing with one another”** – humility breeds gentleness; patience/bearing with one another’s quirks, irritating habits, personalities, character flaws, etc.
- c. **“each of you must put off”** – the intentional work of not giving in to the temptation of deception; instead to “speak truthfully.”
- d. **“in your anger, do not sin”** – the more angry/hurt you are, the more likely you are to treat your neighbor in a shabby way
- e. **“do not give the devil a foothold”** – your contribution, when you fall into temptation, is by feeding resentments by:
  - a. Replaying and reliving old hurts caused by others.
  - b. Rehearsing the old grievances by telling other people about them.
  - c. Refusing to forgive and move on.

f. **How to diffuse your anger?**

- a. Decipher what your anger is telling you...
- b. Visualize a baseball...
- c. Cut in half...



- d. **Outer cover:** your anger
- e. **Tightly wound string:** the tension/worry about the future
- f. **Pink/Black ring:** disappointment or hurt you experienced
- g. **Cork core:** what you needed but didn't get (respect; credit; not blamed; validation; etc.)
- h. Dig down as far as you need to **BEFORE** you react at the one who triggered your anger
- g. **"Anyone who has been stealing, must steal no longer"** – the act of stealing kills trust in a relationship, because it also involves the deception of claiming something is yours, when it isn't.
- h. **"But must work, doing something useful, that they may have something to share"** – work, for work's sake, is not intended here. The purpose of work is to have the means to share with others.

**Jeremiah 22:13.** "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

- a. **"unrighteousness...injustice"** – suggests slavery or unscrupulous business practices; profit by cheating the laborers

- b. **Question:** Should God's beloved patronize businesses which employ workers, who are paid well below minimum wages?

**Psalm 37:21.** The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously;

- a. **“borrow and do not repay”** – stealing without making amend.
- b. **“righteous give generously”** – because a grateful heart breeds generosity

**Malachi 3:8-12.** “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup>You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. <sup>10</sup>Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. <sup>11</sup>I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>12</sup>“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

- a. **“the whole tithe”** – religious leaders were skimming a percentage off the top of what the people were giving in their offerings BEFORE it was counted.
- b. **“Test Me and see”** – the test of faith in tithing: give first; watch how God works!
- c. **“pour out so much blessing”** – an abundance of God's blessings flow out of giving generously (note: not limited to material blessings).
- d. **“I will prevent”** – a blessing of protection from loss
- e. **“yours will be a delightful land!”** -

**1 Timothy 5:17-18.** The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup>For Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,”<sup>[a]</sup> and “The worker deserves his wages.”

- a. **“an ox...the worker”** -

**Exodus 23:4.** “If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it.

- a. **“help him to improve his property and business”** – assisting the neighbor, even when it is inconvenient for you to do so.

v. “Don’t be deceived”

b. Covetousness often flows out of a heart, which is insecure and discontented with God’s will (the “what” & the “when”) for it.

a. Discontent easily opens the heart to the self-deception of: “I know, better than God, what is good for me.”

b. **Genesis 3:1-7.** *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,<sup>3</sup> but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”<sup>4</sup> “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.<sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

- i. “Did God really say” – Satan approached Eve, tapping into her discontent with what God had provided and prohibited.
- ii. “and you must not touch it” – Eve had already added an extra prohibition, which God had not mandated.
- iii. “You will not certainly die” – Satan’s strategy of deception was to make rational promises of his own
- iv. “you will be like God” – the ultimate solution for insecurity and discontent is to be able to control everything and everyone, i.e. be like God.
- v. “and also desirable for gaining wisdom” – a self-justification for engaging in sinful activity.

c. Discontent & insecurity render you vulnerable to believing that inner peace can be gained ONLY if you can control your external circumstances.

a. **Matthew 4:1-11.** *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted<sup>[a]</sup> by the devil.<sup>2</sup> After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.<sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man*

shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.<sup>1b]</sup>”

- i. **Satan’s strategy:** Tap into normal, human discontent with the current circumstance (hunger).
- ii. **Undercurrent message:** “You’ll be happy, if you use your power to serve yourself and not God.”
- iii. **What’s the deception?**

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”<sup>1c]</sup> <sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’<sup>1d]</sup>”

- v. **Satan’s strategy:** Tap into normal, human desire to be liked and approved of (popularity).
- vi. **Undercurrent message:** “Think how many followers you’ll have and all the good you can accomplish.”
- vii. **What’s the deception?**

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. <sup>9</sup> “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’<sup>1e]</sup> <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

- viii. **Satan’s strategy:** Tap into the normal, human pursuit of security through prosperity.
- ix. **Undercurrent message:** “Having more will be enough.”
- x. **What’s the deception?**

d. Contentment is an inner peace, which trusts (centers its security in) God’s will (the “what” & the “when”), no matter what the external conditions might be.

- a. **Philippians 4:10-13.** *I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the*