

Catechetical Sermon, May 4, 2025
Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 42 "Stealing"
Scripture Lesson: 2 Corinthians 8:1–15

Lesson Aim

- To understand:
1. What the eighth commandment *proscribes*
 2. What the eighth commandment *prescribes*
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Steps to Learning

Read the [Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 42](#) and [2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#). Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.

Discuss

How is a theology of creation and providence important to our understanding of the eighth commandment?

When God created, he made it clear to people that they were to follow after him in working and cultivating within the creative realm. Also, they were to fill the earth with children who would also go on to work and to cultivate. As people carry out their God given callings, God rules or provides. All things come from God and are under his care even as mankind works and provides for his own. Stealing ignores God's rule over all and ignores that each person is responsible to provide for himself and for others.

What does the eighth commandment *proscribe*?

The eighth commandment proscribes stealing through secret and overt actions. Secret actions are related to wicked tricks and devices to deceive others into thinking that we are being honest when we are lying about our interactions with them, say in exchanging goods and services. Sometimes when we acquire debt we will be slow to repay or will choose not to pay hoping the other person will forget about the debt; that is stealing as well as lying. Overt actions are related to robbery or forcing things from the hands of others. Related, is squandering money buying things we don't need or shouldn't have.

What does the eighth commandment *prescribe*?

The eighth commandment prescribes generosity and thoughtfulness with respect to our neighbors. The basis of this prescription is rooted in our theology of creation. We were created to work to provide not only for ourselves and our families but for our neighbors. According to [Eph. 4:28](#) we need to work so that we may have something to share with anyone in need. Also, Paul addresses generosity in 2 Cor. 8 where we need to be sensitive to others in need and then meet those needs. As we are content, we will be more likely to give our money and time away to others.

Bible Reading

[Acts 8-14](#) (Reading through the New Testament)