

Small Group Discussion Guide

Exodus 20:15

“Communism Bad, Generosity Good”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 4/12/2026

Background

This commandment deals with taking that which does not belong to you. This can manifest itself in a number of ways. This even goes back to the beginning when man sought to take what did not belong to him—the fruit from the tree in the garden of Eden. The opposite of this is to remember what God has graciously given us. Rather than stealing, we should have thankful hearts that rejoice in what God has provided for us.¹ The Hebrew word for stealing (*ganaf*) literally means to carry something away, as if by stealth. To give a more technical definition, to steal is to appropriate someone else's property unlawfully.² The Torah requires the thief to return double the amount stolen (Exod. 22:7). Thus, in an ironical turn of events, the criminal loses the exact sum he had hoped to gain. It is the concept of *restitution*, in which not only is the original condition restored, but a payment is made for time and trouble.³

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. Have as many in the group that will share their fill-in-the-blank for this statement:
“You shall not steal my _____!”

Observation

2. Read Exodus 20:15. What does this command reveal about God's view of property and stewardship?
3. When you read the word “steal,” what actions or behaviors immediately come to mind?
4. Contrast Exodus 20:15 with Exodus 20:17. What is the difference between these two commandments?

¹ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 129–130.

² Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 642.

³ John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Exodus 19–40*, vol. 2, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: Evangelical Press, 2001), 48.

Interpretation

5. Why do you think God includes a command about stealing in His covenant with Israel? What does it reveal about His character?

6. What does the New Testament add to the conversation (e.g., Ephesians 4:28 — “Let the thief no longer steal...”)? How does the gospel transform a thief into a giver?

7. What does stealing imply about our view of God — His generosity, His sovereignty, His ability to provide?

8. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. How does this passage show the positive opposite of Exodus 20:15?

Application

9. What are some modern forms of stealing that Christians might overlook (time theft, plagiarism, digital piracy, tax dishonesty, cutting corners at work)?

10. Where do you see the temptation to “take” rather than “trust” in your own life?

Prayer List: