

You Shall Not Steal.

Overview

The Commandment, *You shall not steal* has different levels of meaning. Here are some of the things that are meant by stealing:

- Taking what doesn't belong to you, either openly or secretly
- Fraud
- Illegitimate gain
- Craftiness, cunning
- Passing judgment in a court of law based on friendship, relationship, reward, profit, etc.
- Doing your work unfaithfully or deceitfully
- Pretense
 - Pretending to be someone or something that you're not
 - Being an imposter
- Deceit
 - Deceiving other people or yourself (self deception)
- Doing things for the sake of attention, recognition, approval, honor, praise, reputation, personal gain, wealth, etc.
- Impatience
- Insincerity
- Worry, anxiety, self-centered fear, etc.
- Depriving people of their faith
- Taking divine power from the Lord and claiming it as your own
 - Attributing God's goodness and truth to yourself or to others, rather than to God
 - Claiming credit for yourself or your actions
- Functioning from self rather than from God
 - Living on your own terms rather than God's
 - Thinking from yourself rather than from God
 - Loving and serving from self rather than from God
- Trusting in yourself, not God
- Believing in yourself, not God

Here are some other things that may be meant by stealing:

- Selfish pride, arrogance, conceit, vanity
- Perfectionism
- Compulsion to be right

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Quick Reference
- from -
Secrets of Heaven

Emanuel Swedenborg

[Stealing defined:]

1. Taking away spiritual goods from any one¹
2. [Notes:]
 - a. Spiritual goods must [not] be taken away from [anyone].²
 - b. [By "spiritual goods" is meant the following:]³
 - 1) Knowledge of good and truth.⁴
 - 2) All those things which are of faith and charity, that is, which are of spiritual life in a person.⁵
 - 3) [These things are symbolized by] "riches" and "wealth" [in the Word].

[Stealing further defined:]

1. Attributing what is the Lord's (that is, faith and charity)...⁶
 - a. To others
 - b. Especially to [yourself]
 - 1) Placing merit in works
 - 2) Making [yourself] righteous
2. Attributing to yourself what belongs to the Lord⁷
 - a. [Note:] Those things which belong to the Lord are not to be attributed to self.⁸
3. [Such a person] enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way.⁹
 - a. [Scripture:] The thief comes that he may steal, slay, and destroy.¹⁰

[Stealing relates to the following:]¹¹

1. [Working] a lie.¹²
2. Intellectual reasoning from falsity as if from truth.¹³
 - a. [Scripture: Having an] appearance as the appearance of horses¹⁴
3. Reasoners.¹⁵
 - a. [Scripture: Having an] appearance as the appearance of horsemen who run¹⁶
4. Doctrinal things of falsity.¹⁷
 - a. [Scripture: They] run, as the sound of chariots on the tops of the mountains.¹⁸
5. The [false] doctrine itself.¹⁹
 - a. [Scripture: They] run to and fro in the city.²⁰
6. "Essential falsity".²¹
 - a. [Scripture: They] run on the wall.²²
7. [Falsity which...]
 - a. [Enters] into a person's will.²³
 - 1) [It takes] possession of a person's will.²⁴
 - 2) [Scripture: They] climb up into the houses.²⁵

- b. [Enters by means of] intellectual things,²⁶
 - 1) [It takes] possession of a person's understanding.²⁷
 - 2) [Scripture: They] enter in through the windows.²⁸
- c. Takes away truth.²⁹
 - 1) [Scripture: They] enter in like a thief.³⁰

[Effects of falsity:]

- 1. Love to the Lord no longer appears.³¹
 - a. [Scripture:] The sun [is] made black.³²
- 2. Faith in the Lord no longer appears.³³
 - a. [Scripture:] The moon [is] made black.³⁴
- 3. Knowledge of good and truth no longer [has] light from faith and love, thus from heaven.³⁵
 - a. [Scripture:] The stars withdraw their shining.³⁶
- 4. Desolation of the church³⁷
- 5. [Truths are taken away by falsity.]³⁸
 - a. Falsity (a lie) takes away truth [like a thief].³⁹
- 6. [Truths are destroyed.]
 - a. Falsities (lies) break in and destroy truths.⁴⁰
- 7. [There is] no longer any truth.⁴¹
- 8. Falsity (a lie) takes possession of the whole person, both his or her will and understanding.⁴²
 - a. [In this way] falsity takes away all truth and good.⁴³
- 9. Falsity (lies) in the place of truth...⁴⁴
 - a. [Based in] a desire of evil, and a consequent desire of falsity⁴⁵

Statutes:

- 1. [Some of] the statutes commanded the sons of Israel by the Lord [make reference to the following:]⁴⁶
 - a. [Stealing] an ox and [selling] it.⁴⁷
 - b. [Stealing] a sheep and [selling] it.⁴⁸
 - c. [Stealing] a man and [selling] him.⁴⁹
 - d. [Stealing] a soul of [your] brethren and making gain in him while [selling] him.⁵⁰
- 2. [Notes:]
 - a. [In the above references from the Word,] "the men of the sons of Israel" denote the following:⁵¹
 - 1) Those who are in the truths and goods of faith.
 - 2) The truths and goods of faith [themselves].
 - b. [In the Word, "stealing a man" symbolizes] to take away the truths and goods of faith, to cast them off, and to make them serve.⁵²
 - c. When they are cast off they then come into a servile state.⁵³
 - d. [In that state] they serve any evil of the love of self or love of the world, thus any bodily lust.⁵⁴
 - e. Thus from being free and alive the truth and good of the church become dead.⁵⁵
 - f. The penalty, which is the effect, is "death".⁵⁶

Obligation:

1. [According to the statutes commanded the sons of Israel by the Lord, a person who has stolen is obliged to] put away the evil from the midst of [him or her].⁵⁷

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Quick Reference
- from -
The Apocalypse Explained
Emanuel Swedenborg

[Theft defined:]

1. Thefts⁵⁸
2. Frauds⁵⁹
3. Unlawful gains⁶⁰
 - a. Unlawful modes of gain and usury⁶¹
 - b. Unlawful gains through fraud and craft⁶²
4. Thefts that are manifest and those not manifest, such as...⁶³
 - a. Usury and gains...
 - 1) Effected by fraud and craft,
 - a) Under various pretenses,
 - b) To make them appear lawful,
 - 2) Or done clandestinely,
 - a) So as not to appear at all
5. Such gains are commonly made [for example] by:⁶⁴
 - a. Judges.⁶⁵
 - 1) Not doing judgment and justice⁶⁶
 - 2) Selling judgments, and thus...⁶⁷
 - a) Making justice venal (that is, purchasable)⁶⁸
 - 3) Making decisions (that is, judging) for the sake of...⁶⁹
 - a) Rewards⁷⁰
 - b) Favors⁷¹
 - c) Friendship or favor⁷²
 - d) [Note: These are forms of] profit and gain.⁷³
 - 4) Judgment in which there is more or less of a regard for friendship, favor, or gain⁷⁴
 - 5) Doing justice, yet regarding profit as the end [in view]⁷⁵
 - 6) Using justice (which is divine) as a means [to an] end [of] gain⁷⁶
 - 7) Perverting the right of the poor, the needy, the fatherless, the widow, and the innocent⁷⁷
 - 8) Not abstaining from evils because they are sins, but only because [of fear of] the punishments of the civil law and the loss of reputation, honor, and office, and thus of gain⁷⁸
 - 9) Loving the function of judging for the sake of gain from judgments, and not for the sake of useful services to their country⁷⁹
 - 10) Loving what is unjust as well as what is just⁸⁰
 - b. Managers (higher and lower managers of the goods of others).⁸¹

- 1) Depriving [people] of their goods by fraud...⁸²
 - a) Secretly by [means of] arts⁸³
 - b) Under some pretext⁸⁴
- c. Merchants.⁸⁵
 - 1) [Making] illegitimate gains⁸⁶
 - 2) [Practicing] unlawful usury⁸⁷
 - 3) [Practicing] fraud and craft⁸⁸
 - 4) [Note:] Such works cannot be done from the Lord, but are done from the person him- or herself.⁸⁹
 - 5) Skillfully and artfully contriving devices from within for overreaching your companions⁹⁰
 - 6) Bringing such devices into effect under the pretense of sincerity, justice, and piety⁹¹
 - 7) [Taking] delight in such things⁹²
 - 8) Acting sincerely and justly in order to acquire...⁹³
 - a) Reputation and...
 - b) Wealth through reputation,
 - c) Even so as to seem to act from a love of sincerity and justice
 - 9) Seeking to steal through a pretence of sincerity and justice⁹⁴
 - 10) Thinking about and devising nothing but sharp practices and robberies⁹⁵
 - 11) Withdrawing yourself from those who are sincere⁹⁶
 - 12) Betaking yourself either to forests or deserts, [spiritually speaking, and devoting yourself] to stratagems⁹⁷
 - 13) [Being] inwardly insincere and unjust⁹⁸
 - 14) [Practicing] interior and hidden thefts, which are effected by craft and deceit⁹⁹
 - 15) Becoming a robber¹⁰⁰
6. Injustice¹⁰¹
7. Insincerity¹⁰²
8. [Using] sincerity and rectitude [as] a mask, disguise, and deceit¹⁰³
9. Works done from [self, rather than] from the Lord. Works done from [self] are like...¹⁰⁴
 - a. Tombs outwardly whitened, which within are full of the bones of the dead.
 - b. Platters and cups outwardly clean, but containing unclean things of every kind.
 - c. Fruits inwardly rotten, but with the outer skin still shining.
 - d. Nuts or almonds eaten by worms within, while the shell remains untouched.
 - e. A foul harlot with a fair face.
10. [Claiming] merit¹⁰⁵
11. [Not looking to the Lord to be taught and led, but only to yourself]¹⁰⁶

[Effects of theft on the person who commits it:]

1. Influx from the Lord through heaven is intercepted¹⁰⁷
 - a. Influx from the Lord through heaven is intercepted by [thefts of every kind].¹⁰⁸

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Quick Reference

- from -

*The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem
from the Ten Commandments*

Emanuel Swedenborg

Earthly sense:

1. Theft¹⁰⁹
2. Robbery¹¹⁰
3. Taking goods from another under some pretext¹¹¹
4. Fraud, cunning, and deceit¹¹²
5. Being insincere¹¹³
6. [Being in] sincerity, [that is, in] integrity, justice, fidelity, and rectitude [from yourself and not from the Lord]¹¹⁴

Spiritual sense:

1. Depriving another of his or her truths of faith and his or her goods of charity¹¹⁵

Heavenly sense:

1. Taking away from the Lord that which is His and attributing it to yourself,
 - a. Thus claiming righteousness and merit for yourself¹¹⁶

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Quick Reference

- from -

True Christianity

Emanuel Swedenborg

Earthly sense:

1. Stealing¹¹⁷
2. Robbing¹¹⁸
3. Committing piracy in time of peace¹¹⁹
4. Taking away anyone's goods secretly or under any pretext¹²⁰
5. All impostures and illegitimate gains, usuries, and exactions¹²¹
6. Frauds in paying taxes and duties and in discharging debts¹²²
7. [Examples:]¹²³
 - a. Laborers
 - 1) Doing their work unfaithfully and deceitfully¹²⁴
 - b. Merchants
 - 1) [Practicing] deceit in merchandise, weight, measure, and [accounting]¹²⁵
 - c. Military officers
 - 1) Deducting from soldiers' wages¹²⁶
 - d. Judges
 - 1) Giving judgment for friendship, reward, relationship, or other reasons¹²⁷

Spiritual sense:

1. Depriving others of the truths of their faith¹²⁸
 - a. Note: This is done by means of falsities and heresies.¹²⁹
2. [Example:]¹³⁰
 - a. Priests, [or] those who discharge priestly functions¹³¹
 - 1) Ministering solely for gain, and / or from a lust for honor¹³²
 - 2) Teaching what they see (or might see) from the Word to be untrue¹³³
 - 3) Teaching what is false and heretical, and persuading the common people that it is true and orthodox, [even though the priest reads] the Word, and from it may know what is false and what is true¹³⁴
 - 4) Establishing all kinds of falsity¹³⁵
 - 5) Confirming falsities of religion by fallacies, and seducing people thereby¹³⁶
 - 6) These take away from people the means of salvation.¹³⁷
 - a) The means of salvation are the truths of faith.¹³⁸
 - 7) Regarding truths as of no moment¹³⁹
 - 8) [Such priests] enter not by the door into the sheepfold, but climb up some other way.¹⁴⁰
 - 9) [Scripture: They] come not but to steal, to kill, and to destroy.¹⁴¹
 - 10) They have committed falsehood.¹⁴²
 - 11) [They] may be compared to:¹⁴³

- a) Impostors and their impostures of all kinds.¹⁴⁴
(1) Such impostures are, in the spiritual sense, essentially thefts.¹⁴⁵
- b) Counterfeiters who strike false coins and guild them or give them outwardly the color of gold, and pass them for pure coins.¹⁴⁶
- c) Those who know how to cut and polish crystals skillfully and harden them, and who sell them for diamonds.¹⁴⁷
- d) People who carry apes or monkeys, clothed like people and with veiled faces, on horses or mules through cities, and proclaim that these are noblemen of an ancient stock.¹⁴⁸
- e) Those who put on false faces smeared with paints of various colors, over the living and natural face, concealing it's beauty.¹⁴⁹
- f) People who exhibit selenite and mica, which shine as if from gold and silver, and try to sell them as coming from veins that are very precious.¹⁵⁰
- g) Those who by theatricals lead people away from true Divine worship, or from churches to playhouses.¹⁵¹
- h) Thieves who carry keys with which they can open the door of any house.¹⁵²
- i) Leopards and eagles which, with sharp eyes, search for the fattest prey.¹⁵³

Heavenly sense:

1. Taking away from the Lord His divine power¹⁵⁴
2. Claiming for [yourself] His merit and righteousness¹⁵⁵
3. Not trusting in Him but only in [yourself]¹⁵⁶
4. Not believing in God, but only in [yourself]¹⁵⁷

Endnotes

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- ¹ SH 8906:1
² SH 8906:1
³ SH 8906:1
⁴ SH 8906:1
⁵ SH 8906:1
⁶ SH 8906:1
⁷ SH 8906:1
⁸ SH 8906:1
⁹ SH 8906:1, Jn. 10:1,2,9,10
¹⁰ SH 8906:1, Jn. 10:1,2,9,10
¹¹ The overall Scriptural reference for this section is Joel 2:1-10.
¹² SH 8906:2, Hos. 7:1-3
¹³ SH 8906:3
¹⁴ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:4
¹⁵ SH 8902:3
¹⁶ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:4
¹⁷ SH 8902:3
¹⁸ SH 8902:2, Joel 2:4-5
¹⁹ SH 8902:3
²⁰ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:9
²¹ SH 8906:3
²² SH 8906:2, Joel 2:9
²³ SH 8906:3
²⁴ SH 8906:3
²⁵ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:9
²⁶ SH 8906:3
²⁷ SH 8906:3
²⁸ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:9
²⁹ SH 8906:3
³⁰ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:9
³¹ SH 8906:3
³² SH 8906:2, Joel 2:10
³³ SH 8906:3
³⁴ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:10
³⁵ SH 8906:3
³⁶ SH 8906:2, Joel 2:10
³⁷ SH 8906:2
³⁸ SH 8906:2-3
³⁹ SH 8906:2-3
⁴⁰ SH 8906:2
⁴¹ SH 8906:3
⁴² SH 8906:2,3
⁴³ SH 8906:3
⁴⁴ SH 8906:2,3
⁴⁵ SH 8906:3
⁴⁶ SH 8906:4
⁴⁷ SH 8906:4, Ex. 22:1
⁴⁸ SH 8906:4, Ex. 22:1
⁴⁹ SH 8906:4, Ex. 21:16
⁵⁰ SH 8906:4, Deut. 24:7
⁵¹ SH 8906:4
⁵² SH 8906:4
⁵³ SH 8906:4
- ⁵⁴ SH 8906:4
⁵⁵ SH 8906:4
⁵⁶ SH 8906:4, Ex. 21:16, Deut. 24:7
⁵⁷ SH 8906:4, Deut. 24:7
⁵⁸ AE 949:3
⁵⁹ AE 935:2
⁶⁰ AE 935:2, AE 978:3
⁶¹ AE 972:2
⁶² AE 973:2
⁶³ AE 967:3
⁶⁴ AE 967:3
⁶⁵ AE 967:3, 976:2
⁶⁶ AE 976:2
⁶⁷ AE 967:3
⁶⁸ AE 976:2, 967:3
⁶⁹ AE 979:2, 976:2
⁷⁰ AE 979:2
⁷¹ AE 976:2
⁷² AE 976:2, 979:2
⁷³ AE 976:2
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⁷⁶ AE 976:2
⁷⁷ AE 976:2
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¹⁰⁰ AE 978:3
¹⁰¹ AE 973:2
¹⁰² AE 973:2
¹⁰³ AE 972:2
¹⁰⁴ AE 974:2 unless otherwise noted
¹⁰⁵ AE 971:5
¹⁰⁶ AE 978:3, cf. TC 319
¹⁰⁷ AE 978:3

¹⁰⁸ AE 978:3
¹⁰⁹ Life 80
¹¹⁰ Life 80
¹¹¹ Life 80
¹¹² Life 80, 82-85
¹¹³ Life 84
¹¹⁴ Life 83
¹¹⁵ Life 80
¹¹⁶ Life 80
¹¹⁷ TC 317
¹¹⁸ TC 317
¹¹⁹ TC 317
¹²⁰ TC 317
¹²¹ TC 317
¹²² TC 317
¹²³ TC 317
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¹³⁰ TC 318, 320
¹³¹ TC 318, 320
¹³² TC 318, 320
¹³³ TC 318
¹³⁴ TC 320
¹³⁵ TC 320
¹³⁶ TC 320
¹³⁷ TC 318
¹³⁸ TC 318
¹³⁹ TC 320
¹⁴⁰ TC 318, Jn. 10:1,10
¹⁴¹ TC 318, Jn. 10:1,10
¹⁴² TC 318, Hos. 7:1
¹⁴³ TC 320
¹⁴⁴ TC 320
¹⁴⁵ TC 320
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¹⁵⁷ TC 319