



Stealing

Adapted from “X-Factor” series by Scott Erickson.

Stealing is the most reported crime in America. In an average year in America, there are 12 million burglaries. Consider that God has placed principles in His Word that you and I can live by, and if we do, we will enjoy great success. Here is an example of the impact of stealing:

Thirty percent of all business failures each year are a direct result of internal theft, according to insurance statistics.

Fraud is a major factor in losses that led to the closing of 100 banks during a 20-year period.

Criminals from inside and outside of business stores are draining off \$40 billion annually in lost cash and goods. This is 17% of total business income before taxes. Many stores lost 50% of their profits to unaccountable “inventory shrinkage,” generally believed to be theft.

Security officials estimate that 9% of all employees steal on a regular basis and 75% of all employees in retail establishments steal to some degree, taking three times as much as shoplifters.¹

¹ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*, (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996).

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COURAGE

C1: Has someone ever stolen something from you? How did you feel after? Have you ever stolen something from someone? How did it make you feel?

C2: What does it mean to steal? Write down 15-20 synonyms for stealing and look over the list.

C3: Take a look at the following verses and answer the questions.

Proverbs 10:2 (ESV) Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.

Proverbs 3:27–28 (ESV) Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it”—when you have it with you.

Ephesians 4:28 (ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

- List 3 ways these scriptures indicate stealing

STRENGTH

S1: Jesus told 38 parables in the New Testament. In 16 of them, he talks about money. Read and answer the following.

Luke 16:1–3 (ESV)

- From these verses, what do you learn about the resources God has entrusted to you?

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being well and 4 being not well, rate yourself on how well you manage the resources God has given to you? Write a plan on how you can improve your management skills?

S2: We are called to manage what we have for God. Read and answer the following.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (ESV)

1 Timothy 6:17 (ESV)

- From these verses, what can you learn about the resources placed in our care?

- On a scale from 1-4, with 1 being well and 4 being not well, rate yourself on how well you care for the resources that been given to you?

S3: If we are managers of the resources God has given us, what is our job description?
Read and answer the following.

Luke 12:15–21 (ESV)

Romans 12:1 (ESV)

Ephesians 5:15–17 (ESV)

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)

- From these verses, write four expectations God has for managers.
- On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being very well and 4 being not well, rate yourself on how well you do in each of the four expectations.
- Write out a plan to improve in each expectation over the next 30 days.

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer the following.

Luke 16:3–7 (ESV)

- What are your thoughts to what this man did?
- Do you believe what he did was dishonest and wrong? Why?

E2: Worldly minded people promote their own welfare. Believers are to be kingdom minded. Read and answer the following.

Luke 16:8–9 (ESV)

- What do these verses teach us about our opportunities?
- On a scale from 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not well, rate yourself on how wise you are with the opportunities that come your way? Write a plan on how can you improve?

E3: It is an honor to worship and please the Lord with our resources. Read and answer the following.

Luke 16:10–12 (ESV)

- According to these verses, what happens to one's faith when you are obedient with what you already have in your possession?

- Why would God give you more if you have not been faithful in what you have already been given?

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not well, rate yourself on how faithful you have you been in managing your resources? Write out a plan on how can you improve?