

Sovereign Grace Church
“The Bible and Property” outline
February 26, 2017

Exodus 20: 15

This morning we will resume our monthly study of God's law as reflected in the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism. We will begin our study of the commandment not to steal by first considering what the Bible teaches about property as it is property of some sort that is the object of theft.

Does the Bible support the idea of “private property”? If it does are there any qualifications as to how it is used? Is there an ultimate owner of what we normally consider “ours”....or are we sovereign in how we use that which belongs to us? Is that ultimate owner the state? Or God? If there is no God or if He is unknowable....what happens to our concept of private property? Who or What is the ultimate source of our ownership of things? Or is there no ultimate source? This morning we will consider the Bible's teaching on the human ownership of property.

1. **The ultimate owner of all things is God.**
Psm 24:1; Ex 9; 29; I Cor. 6: 20; Ac 17: 26-28; Jn14:15; Jn 8: 32

2. **What is “private property”?**
Gen. 1: 28; Dan 4: 25; Matt 28: 19-20

3. What is the standard for its use?
Ac 2: 44-45; I Cor. 6: 19; Jn 8: 44; Deut 6: 4-9

4. Effects of the Fall
Gen. 3: 5; Hosea 2: 18; Matt 6: 33

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

1. How do you think modern American society regards the concept of private property? Does American law put any constraints on the use of private property by individuals, families or corporations? What is the source of those restraints? If private property is a “right” then what are the grounds for property taxes?
2. How do socialists usually regard private property? How do capitalists? Which understanding is more in line with Scripture? Given the biblical understanding of property....is it ever permissible to hold property in common? If so, under what conditions?
3. How much property do you own? Do you spend a lot of time thinking about how you should use it? Do you make an effort to use it as a tool to extend Christ's Kingdom? Or do you see your property as separate from the claims of Christ? What does it mean to use your property productively? What does it mean to use it compassionately? Is it possible to do both?
4. How do you view your children? Do you own them when they are under your care? Does the state own them? What is the significance of baptism for our children? What does it say about their ownership and our responsibility? What did it mean give your children to Molech? What are modern applications? [see Lev. 18:21; 20: 21; Jer. 32: 34-35]