

**Sovereign Grace Church**  
**“Stewarding Property” outline**  
April 30, 2017

**Exodus 20: 15**

*As we return to our monthly study of the biblical teaching reflected in the Heidelberg Catechism, we find ourselves considering the commandment not to steal. Last month we looked at the negative aspects of this commandment which are probably more obvious to folks because the commandment is put negatively in Exodus 20. However, what is negative always has a positive side & this is certainly the case when we reflect on the commandment not to steal.*

*The positive side of this commandment would indicate that when we find our neighbor's cow wandering down the road we seek to see it returned to him. This is pretty obvious...but what about when we hear our neighbor's character being publicly slandered? Our character is surely something we own & is one of our greatest treasures....or curses! In obeying the eighth commandment then we must do whatever is in our power to ensure that our neighbor's good reputation is not only maintained, but restored. This has tremendous implications for our personal relationships along with pretty much disallowing most modern day politician from running for office! This morning we will consider some the the positive aspects of God's commandment not to steal.*

**1. How do we honor our own property?**

**Prov. 27:23**

**2. How do we honor our neighbor's property?**

**Ex. 23: -5**

**3. Our responsibility to share our property.**

**Matt. 10:8; Lk 12: 8; Eph. 4:8**

#### **4. Welfare? Whose responsibility?**

- **Responsibility for Welfare I Tim. 5: 3-16**
  
- **Limitations of a Christian state**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Problem with statist Welfare  
Lev. 19:15; Isa 9: 17; II Thess. 3: 10**

#### **Questions for Conversation and Reflection**

- 1. How have you honored your own property? Do you keep your house and other possessions in good repair? How can we determine when our desire to keep our possessions in a good state transitions to idolatry? Why is it very difficult to judge whether our neighbors & friends are doing an adequate job of taking care of their things? What might be hidden circumstances that make it difficult to discern? In light of this difficulty, how might we respond in a charitable & gracious way?**
- 2. You have probably heard the old phrase, “Finders Keepers.” How does this phrase fit with biblical teaching? If you happened across a stack of hundred dollar bills lying in the street without any indications of ownership, how would you respond? What are your options?**
- 3. Do you believe the state has any legitimate role in providing financial assistance to its needy citizens? Given that there is no law stating that the state should NOT provide financial assistance, how would you make the case that it nonetheless should not do so? Was Joseph wrong in utilizing the power of the state to provide for Egypt's citizens during a time of famine? (Gen. 1) How does one live faithfully in a welfare state? Why should judgment concerning our fellows in their response to such a condition be reserved?**
- 4. Why is it that so many powerful states seem to think they have a right to tell less powerful states how to live, even to the point of direct interference? Is God relevant to a nations foreign policy? Is the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment relevant to how a nation relates to other nations? How is America's experiment in becoming a secular state turning out? Is America inviting God's judgment?**