

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## Eighth Commandment — Exodus 20:15

“**T**hou shalt not steal.”

The eighth Commandment, as in music, is the octave of the first. It strikes the same note on a higher level. It is a new beginning. With the eighth Commandment, lessons have a new character.

Let us for a moment recapitulate: The Commandments are milestones on the aspirant's path. The seventh Commandment outshines all others so far discussed. It is the sunshine Commandment. In it, everything we have learned reaches a point of superlative intensity: not just enjoyment, but thrill; not just love, but exhilaration; not just sweetness, but vivaciousness; not just “I will,” but irresistible enthusiasm. When eyes are moist with joy, when hearts are full to overflowing, when fervor and enthusiasm compel, that is the seventh Commandment: attainment, *the* requisite on the disciple's path.

Let these qualities be the mark of the aspirant: utter composure, peace and rest, but also instantaneous enthusiasm, fire, and intensity in purposeful labors. The measure of our fervor is the speedometer of our progress on the path. This marks the culmination of the seventh Commandment within ourselves: the union of the passive and the active, the electric and the magnetic, body and soul. Without this balance within there is restlessness and triviality, and without this balance we cannot reach the eighth Commandment.

The eighth Commandment was given to Moses for his people at a time when they had no personal possessions. At that time the Israelites were traveling; for years past and years to come no one could call a patch of land his own. Whatever of wealth they had brought out of Egypt belonged to all alike in a common treasury

that was used and supervised by their leaders. They had only the clothes on their backs, and there was nothing to steal. Why, then, this terse Commandment?

This Commandment challenges faculties in man which are above reason and thought; they belong to the world of Spirit. Christ Jesus summed up the interpretation of all the Commandments in the words: “My kingdom is not of this world.” The Sabbath we must keep holy is not of this world. The father and mother whom we must honor are not of this world. That which we must not kill is not of this world. That which we must not steal is not of this world.

In the eighth month of prenatal life, all the actual building of the physical body is finished; the potentialities of the superman, the potentialities of adeptship, are added in the body. There is an addition of points in the sacral vertebrae which are related to the creative powers in man. This is the particular field of labor of the Lords of Form, working through Scorpio. In this new world of Scorpio — a world of challenge to the powers of creativeness — we find ourselves acting like little children tempted by shiny things. We rush after the brilliant flame of creative power, only to hurt and burn ourselves. The fall of man consisted of this undue appropriating, this stealing of the sword and fire of creativeness before we knew how to handle its powers safely.

Man is never tested in the use of powers without being instructed in their control. The tools given us with which to handle the power of creativeness safely are humility and morality. From little strands of purity, unselfishness, and generosity, the wise aspirant weaves the

garment of morality, which is as a pair of asbestos gloves with which we can handle this brilliant fire safely. The number eight is called the little holy number and is associated with the spinal spirit fire.

The strong characteristics of Scorpio, the eighth sign, are great determination, lofty aspiration, strong love, and heroism. If we use these qualities, we can drive false conceptions, impurities, weaknesses, and bad habits out of our Temple. These ignoble qualities betray and steal the high purposes of the superman within us. Scorpio is the eagle of transmutation; it is the first sign of self-mastery.

How much power the world has arrogated to itself without the pass-key of holiness. Humanity is guilty of stealing power; the consequent suffering is everywhere.

Usurping power has given rise to one pathetically common human attribute, that of pride. Therefore Scorpio turns healer by virtue of humility. Pride sports many premature attainments. Humility, on the other hand, is the grateful acknowledgment of powers vastly higher than our own. Humility is a most necessary virtue.

Christ Jesus said: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." Similarly, we can say, "Give unto God what is God's." Thou shalt not steal means: Thou shalt not arrogate, usurp, take for your own use that which never belonged, nor ever will belong to you, that which in all eternity belongs to God — His power, His might, His holiness, His right, His order. If, as aspirants on the path, we sanctify God within our hearts and attribute all power to Him, we are then blessed with a measure of power and holiness commensurate with our humility. But if we consider ourselves sanctified and arrogate power to ourselves in order to shine among men and greedily rule over them, then we are thieves and robbers. Whosoever raises himself above his fellow beings in a hard and self-centered manner transgresses the eighth Commandment.

Power is safe only in the hands of the humble. The power of love is safe only in the heart of the self-controlled and the morally pure.

Do not steal, for all things come to him who waits, who watches, who prays.

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## Star Thoughts

J. Otho Gray

Who can behold the majesty of the heavens without his intuition telling him there is a God upon Whose power alone every man and constellation must utterly depend for preservation and safety? The evening sky with its pagentry of stars is a spectacle that invites the observer to contemplate himself and spell out somewhat of the hidden lore that reveals him as great and as enduring as all the legions of the milky way.

How commanding are the heavens studded with flaming suns — Vega, Capella, Aldebaran, and their myriad of fellows. How beautiful are the heavens blazing with speeding constellations — Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Corona Borealis, and their multitudinous kin. Yet pigmy man microcosmically is a counterpart of them, for he is a living universe as impressive as the physical universe in which he lives.

Human troubles lose some of their bulk when we spend a quiet hour in communion with the stars. About their cold aloofness is a gracious comfort and tranquil assurance that all will be well with us even as all is well with them. By all means read the literature of the heavens, for such inspiring study enriches our reverence for the Creator and increases our benevolence towards humanity.