I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The Eighth Commandment recognizes and protects the private ownership of goods.
   
   A. The Bible teaches private ownership of personal property.
      1. While we teach our children the importance of sharing it is also proper for them to know that their toys belong to them.
      2. With ownership comes responsibility. We must be grateful to God as the source of all things. We must be good stewards of what we own. You should be teaching your children to take care of their toys just as you properly care for and maintain your home as God’s steward.
   
   B. Some have improperly presumed that the early church functioned as a commune with no personal property.
      Acts 2:44-45 – “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”
      1. First, the family is the God ordained social unit, not the church.
      2. Second, they had full control over their possessions.
      We can see this clearly with the case of Ananias and Sapphira
      Acts 5:3-4 – “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

2. The Eighth Commandment establishes our duty to have a proper regard for the outward estate of ourselves or others.

   Spurgeon’s Catechism:
   Question 60: What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?
   Answer: The eighth commandment forbids whatsoever does or may unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour's wealth, or outward estate.”

3. Often the Commandments are interrelated. This commandment is broken as we break many others.

   A. For example, adultery is a failure to recognize the ownership of husbands and wives in marriage. Adultery is a form of thievery.
      1 Corinthians 7:4 – "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.”
   
   B. Murder is to rob a man of his life.
   
   C. The Eighth Commandment is the fruit of the failure to obey the Tenth Commandment against the sin of covetousness. It begins with a heart of discontentment. The cure against this sin is contentment with our estate.
D. Stealing, like all sin is a failure to obey the First Commandment – a failure to trust God – both the trusting of God's Providence for our estate as well as trusting in God's Providence in the lives of others.

4. As we look at this commandment I want us to examine three areas that it forbids: Robbery with regard to God, Robbery with regard to ourselves, Robbery with regard to others.

I. In its most basic sense, the Eighth Commandment forbids stealing from others
   A. When we take the possessions of others as own
      1. This includes all of the conventional types of stealing
         Robbery, burglary, shoplifting, embezzlement
      2. There are countless ways we can steal
         a. Inflated insurance claims
         b. Lawsuits seeking unjust settlements - In general a litigious mind is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.
            Matthew 5:40 – "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also."
         c. A student claiming someone else’s work as his own is stealing – it is called plagiarism.
         d. Begging when a man is able to work is stealing
   B. When we do not give proper care for the possessions of others
      1. If you reduce the value of someone’s possession you must make restitution. For example allowing your car door to hit another car.
      2. When we do not give proper respect for borrowed goods
         a. You are responsible for the thing borrowed. If you break it or reduce its value you must make restitution
            Exodus 22:14 – “And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good.”
            2 Kings 6:5 – “But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed."
         b. Also, if you borrow and don’t return it as soon as you are through with it you are stealing – you have taken wrongful possession of something that doesn’t belong to you. Some people take the position, “It is mine until they ask me to return it.”
      3. When we are unjust in business transactions
         a. Sellers should sell at a fair price. Many companies are guilty of price gouging, false advertising
         b. Buyers should not pretend to degrade an item in order to reduce the price.
         c. Credit must be honored. To renege on a debt is stealing. Using bankruptcy to avoid paying debts is stealing.
   4. Employers and employees must be honest in their dealings
      a. Employer’s should pay a fair wage. They should provide a safe workplace lest they rob their employees of their health.
b. Employees owe their employer their best effort – failing to put in a full day’s work, arriving late, leaving early, taking extended lunch breaks. Idling away time owed to the employer – poor productivity.
   (1) Employee theft accounts for over $200 billion each year.
   (2) It is estimated that 1/3 of the cost of products goes to cover theft on the way to the market place
5. You should pay your proper taxes
   Mark 12:17 – “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”
   Romans 13:1 – “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”
   a. To cheat on your taxes is stealing
   b. Honesty is always the best policy

II. The Eighth Commandment forbids stealing from ourselves
A. When we do not use our lives to the full extent possible
   1. You have only been given a finite amount of time – you must use it wisely
      Ephesians 5:15-16 – “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”
      Your days are placed in deposit. The clock is ticking - what are you doing with your time? Your days are draining away. You must seize each one as a gift from God or you are robbing yourself of precious time.
   2. We can rob ourselves through idleness - We need to give ourselves to hard work. The Bible teaches that laziness leads to poverty.
      Proverbs 10:4 - "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand."
      Proverbs 20:4 - "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."
      Proverbs 20:13 - "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty"
   3. God has given you certain gifts and abilities – you are robbing yourself if you do not use them to your benefit and God’s glory.
   4. One of the cures for stealing is to work hard for honest gain
      Ephesians 4:28 – “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”
B. When we squander our estate
   1. Many people are poor because they have spent everything they have
   2. It has been said, it isn’t how much you make, it’s how much you save.
   3. We are a country of debtors over our heads in debt. - We have robbed ourselves into bankruptcy
   4. We must be frugal and spend our money wisely. When we spend our money foolishly we are guilty of robbing ourselves and dishonoring God
      This is one of the reasons gambling is sinful
C. When we do not give proper care of what God has given us
   1. There are people who let their homes decay around them
      They do not maintain their cars
   2. We are stewards of all that God has given us – we must not be wasteful
D. When we do not give proper regard for our soul
   1. Are you robbing yourself of eternal life.
      Matthew 16:26 – “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
   2. Are you robbing yourself of drawing nearer to Christ? Are you being robbed of the richness of sweet fellowship with Christ?

III. The Eighth Commandment forbids stealing from God
   A. We steal from God when we rob Him of His worship
      1. We owe God true and proper worship – bowing before Him in reverence
      2. We owe God our full submission
   B. We steal from God when we rob Him of His glory
      1. When we receive the praise of men we are robbing God of His glory
      2. Herod was slain by God for this sin
         Acts 12:21-23 – “And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.”
   3. As fallen men we are full of pride. When we boast we are robbing God who gives life and breath and all things. What do you have that God didn’t give?
   C. We steal from God when we rob Him of the best of our time and talents – God deserves our best in every thing.
      Colossians 3:23 – “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” The word for “heartily” is ψυχή which is the word for our life. In other words we should do everything with all that is in us unto God’s glory. To do anything less is to rob God.
   D. We steal from God when we rob Him of His tithe
      Malachi 3:8 – ”Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”
   E. We steal from God when we rob Him of His day
      a. God has set apart one day in seven –
         Exodus 20:11 – “wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”
      b. When disregard the Sabbath we are robbing God of His day.
Conclusion:

1. 90% of Evangelical Christians claim they never break this commandment. It simply shows they don’t know what stealing is.
   
   A. If you have ever been guilty of any of these things I’ve set before you tonight you are guilty of breaking the Eighth Commandment. You are a thief. Do not pretend otherwise.
   
   B. One of the great values in studying the Ten Commandments is they confront us in our sin. All of us have broken this commandment many times. We need to repent.

2. We need to understand that possessions are important. We need to respect the possessions of others. We need to give to others their due – what we owe to them. We need to give unto God what we owe Him, and we need to be wise stewards of all that God has given us.

3. We need to have a proper view of our own possessions. The heart of a miser is sin. The heart of generosity is pleasing to God.
   
   a. Paul’s words:
      
      Acts 20:35 – “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
   
   b. Jerry Bridges
      
      • What is yours is mine, I'll take it – this is the heart of the thief
      • What is mine is mine; I'll keep it – this is attitude most people have most of the time
      • What is mine is God's; I'll share it – this is the godly attitude
   
   c. Generosity breaks moneys power over you.
      
      Kent Hughes said, “Every time I give, I declare that money does not control me. Perpetual generosity is a perpetual de-deification of money.”