

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS: THE 8TH COMMANDMENT – THOU SHALT NOT STEAL, part 4 (final) quotes

1) #5B - How can we rob God in offerings?

The most common way is by not giving them.

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes **and offerings**. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me”. Malachi 3:8-9.

If you are not giving to God offerings in addition to your tithes, then you are guilty of robbing God and breaking this 8th Commandment. But exactly what is an offering?

The Hebrew word used for offering is “teruwmah”, and it translates and means “a present offered in sacrifice, gift, offering” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, word #8641). So an offering is anything of value that you willingly sacrifice and donate to God in addition to the tithe. Offerings are most often in the form of money, but it can actually be anything of value.

How much should offerings be?

“...every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.” Ezra 3:5.

The Hebrew word for “freewill” is “nedabah”, and it translates and means “a spontaneous or abundant gift, freely, plentiful, voluntary, willing offering” (Strong’s, word #5071). Offerings are gifts that are voluntarily given to the Lord from a willing grateful heart, and therefore can be of any amount or percentage of our increase.

“...a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee...Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.” Deuteronomy 16:10, 17.

At times these voluntarily freewill offerings are given spontaneously and without much thinking beforehand about it. But other times these offerings are willingly fixed by the giver to be a certain percentage of their increase.

2) What can offerings be used for? Offerings can also be given to the true ministers and Ministries of God, but unlike the restrictions placed upon the tithe, offerings can also be used in many other areas.

Offerings can be used to support all other necessary areas connected with the Lord's work; such as canvassers or colporteurs or other workers in the Lord's cause who are not ministers. Offerings can also be used to cover the operating expenses of churches or meeting houses; or to help needy students; or to help in caring for the aged, poor and needy, or orphans and widows. Offerings can also be used to purchase Bibles; Spirit of Prophecy books and materials; tracts; booklets; as well as the postage to mail out these items. It can also be used to purchase tape or cd or dvd duplicators; copy machines, or any other areas that might come up in connection with the Lord's work; etc. Basically offerings can be used to cover any expense connected with the Lord's work, especially in connection with the spreading of the printed truth, but tithe is only to be used to support God's ministers and their ministry for Him.

"...Christ assigned to men the work of spreading the gospel. But while some go forth to preach, He calls upon others to answer His claims upon them for tithes and offerings with which to support the ministry and to spread the printed truth all over the land." Testimonies, vol 4, p 472.

Many misread and twist this testimony to say that tithes can also be retained by them to be used according to their own judgment and purposes in purchasing and spreading the printed truth far and wide. But this is not according to the weight of the evidence already seen regarding God's sacred tithe. God's tithe is solely devoted to the support of the ministers and their ministry for Him, while offerings can be used in all other necessary areas of God's work. No one, who wants to be one of God's faithful stewards, has the right to use God's sacred tithe according to their own judgment, or for their own purposes, independent of God's will — even if it is in the Lord's work!

"A steward identifies himself with his master. He accepts the responsibilities of a steward, **and he must act in his master's stead, doing as his master would do were he presiding. His master's interests become his.** The position of a steward is one of dignity because his master trusts him. If in any wise he acts selfishly and turns the advantages gained by trading with his lord's goods to his own advantage, he has perverted the trust reposed in him...

"God has given special direction as to the use of the tithe. He does not design that His work shall be crippled for want of means. That there may be no haphazard work and no error, He has made our duty on these points **very plain**. The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. **Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment.** They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, **nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work.**"

Testimonies, vol 9, p 246-247.

God's sacred tithe is not to be used according to the judgment of the one giving the tithe, but according to the judgment and direction of God. Tithes are to be used only in supporting God's ministers and their Ministry, but offerings can be used to purchase and spread the printed truth — which is exactly what inspiration stated in the testimony above. "Tithes...to support the ministry" "and offerings...to spread the printed truth all over the land."

3) Some will undoubtedly complain that they only have enough money for tithe and no extra money for offerings and gifts to God. They then reason that they need to use the tithe for these other necessary things in the Lord's work; such as for purchasing religious books, or tracts, or in covering the meeting house expenses, etc. — and if they cannot use their tithe to do so, then others will suffer for want of the truth. Still others believe that they do not need to give offerings and gifts to God in addition to their tithe. But does necessity override following the express and clearly revealed will of God?

“The Lord calls for His tithe...**Besides this, He calls for your gifts and offerings.** No one is compelled to present his tithe or his gifts and offerings to the Lord. But just as surely as God's word is given to us, just as surely will He require His own with usury at the hand of every human being. If men are unfaithful in rendering to God His own, if they disregard God's charge to His stewards, they will not long have the blessing of that which the Lord has entrusted to them.” Review and Herald, December 1, 1896 (vol 3, p 418 col 1-2).

It will require self-denial and sacrifice in order to comply with what God has specified His tithe to be sent to and used for. And it will also require self-denial and sacrifice in order to give offerings and gifts to God above and beyond the tithe. But what a blessing will be realized by your unselfish giving! You will also actually be involved in the spreading God's present truth far and wide — even though you were not literally passing out these truths. But can you really out give God?

Anciently, God's people devoted 1/4 (Patriarch and Prophets, p 527) to 1/3 (Testimonies, vol 3, 395, vol 4, p 467-468) of all their income to support God's ministers and His cause, and they were greatly blessed by doing so. God's people today would also experience a greater love for, rejoicing in, and sanctification through the truth if they would also do the same — placing God's will and His cause first above their own will and cause.

4) If you are guilty of robbing God by not giving offerings in addition to your tithe, then what are you to do?

“Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die...? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” Ezekiel 18:30-32.

“**To defraud God is the greatest crime of which man can be guilty;** and yet this sin is deep and widespread.” Review and Herald, October 13, 1896 (vol 3, p 401 col 2).

This offering issue is also extremely serious! And unless we repent and stop robbing God of freewill offerings in addition to the tithe, then we will lose salvation! So if you see that you are guilty of robbing the Lord in this area of offerings, then please begin now to deny and sacrifice self in order to give Him offerings. And after you have done so, then you can ask the Saviour to pardon you for this greatest of crimes against God, and you know assuredly that He will completely forgive you, will fully remove His curse from off of you, and will then open the windows of heaven and bless you abundantly.

“Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right...without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.” Ezekiel 33:14-16.

5) #5C - How can we rob God in service?

There are at least 3 main areas involved in stealing from God in service: 1 - Areas involving our mind, or 2 - Areas involving our energy and strength, or 3 - Areas involving our usefulness.

#C1 - How can we steal from God in areas involving our mind? By not devoting some of our time in prayerful study and contemplation of His word.

Stealing: By not spending some time in prayerful study and contemplation of God’s word, then you would not be able to grow into the full stature of a man or woman in Christ Jesus. Since you would not be spending as much time with Him as a Christian should, then you would not be growing closer to Him as a Christian needs to, and you would also not be increasing in spiritual and practical knowledge as a Christian must. This means that you would be guilty of stealing away from God, not only your time, but also robbing away from Him the close affection and bond of union He could have had with you, as well as your ability to more intelligently and effectively communicate with Him.

If you are guilty of stealing from God in the service of your mind, then what are you to do?

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Matthew 22:37.

“And thou...my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” 1 Chronicles 28:9.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Isaiah 26:3.

6) #C2 - How can we steal from God in areas involving our energy and strength?

By not devoting some of our time in service to God.

Stealing: By not spending some time in serving God, then you would be guilty of stealing away from Him the increase and benefit which His precious cause of truth could have obtained through your energetic and strong efforts. This means that because of your lack of help God's cause was further delayed from being able to accomplish its purpose of filling this earth with His glory!

If you are guilty of stealing from God in this area of not using your energy and strength in service to Him, then what are you to do?

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good..." Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

"Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." Psalms 100:2-5.

"Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed". 1 Samuel 12:24-25.

Please realize that as you serve the Lord with all your strength and energy, God will then strengthen you more and more with His divine power, so that marvelous things will be accomplished in righteousness!

"God is my strength and power: And he maketh my way perfect." 2 Samuel 22:33.

"...the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God." Psalms 68:35.

7) #C3 - How can we steal from God in areas involving our usefulness?

By not devoting some of our time in unselfish service and ministering to others in good works.

Stealing: By not spending some time in service and ministering to others, then you would not be a true co-worker with God, and neither would you be truly yoked together with Christ. This means that you would be guilty of stealing away from God His right to use you in reaching out to others in manifesting His love for them. You would also be guilty of robbing away from others the happiness, comfort and relief that your unselfish actions could have brought them.

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Titus 1:16.

The Bible has quite a lot to say regarding this particular issue of our usefulness. But if you are guilty of stealing from God in this area of service towards others, and thus through the lack of these good works you are denying God, then what are you to do?

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men....And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.” Titus 3:8, 14.

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

“Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” Titus 2:6-8.

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2.

8) For the purpose of maintaining good works is one reason why God has given us the Bible.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

9) If we are faithful to God in this areas of usefulness and we do indeed maintain good works, then what will happen?

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16.

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” James 2:12.

Maintaining good works allows God to be glorified, and thus more people are made aware of Him and the salvation He offers. Therefore through our ministering and serving others we lead people to find God!

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10.

In knowing these things:

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works”. Hebrews 10:23-24.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” James 1:22-25.

10) This entire section on serving God in all these areas greatly depends upon our health. If we are not keeping all 8 laws of health, but are disregarding some or perhaps all of these laws, then we will not be able to serve God to the best of our mental ability, or to the best of our energy and strength, or to the best of our usefulness and in kind deeds. By not being careful in what we eat, or in all that we do, then we are also guilty of robbing God, as well as others, of all that we could have accomplished for them but couldn't because we lacked the mental or physical health to do it! May God forgive us, and then grant us the extra determination and strength to deny self and follow all 8 laws of health.

If you will indeed do your best to maintain your health with the goal of being able to better serve God as well as others, then God will indeed bless all your efforts and will strengthen you to be able to do more for Him in righteousness, and He will also work to keep you in as healthy a condition as possible!

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.” Exodus 15:26.

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Isaiah 55:2.

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” Proverbs 3:7-8.

“And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.” Exodus 23:25-26.

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” Isaiah 58:6-11.

“For thou art the God of my strength:...who is the health of my countenance”.
Psalms 43:2, 5.

11) How can we deceive God and break this 8th commandment?

It is really not possible for anyone to deceive God. He is Omnipresent, and thus is everywhere at the same time. God is also Omniscient or all knowing, and thus nothing can be hid from Him.

“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.” Jeremiah 23:24.

“Thou God seest me”. Genesis 16:13.

It is impossible to deceive God in any way, and those who believe that they can hide their thoughts, or words or actions away from God’s notice, are in grave danger of being lost.

“Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?” Isaiah 29:15.

12) Let us all stop being commandment breakers! Let us all stop deceiving and robbing and stealing in any way or in any area from the world, or from one another, or from the messengers, workers, ministers and Ministries of God, or from ourselves, and especially from God! Let us instead do all that we possibly can to live by every word of God and keep this 8th commandment perfectly through the grace and strength He gives us. That way we will be found hid in Christ, covered by His precious robe of righteousness, and thus we just may be able to make up one of the 144,000 — who follow the Lamb perfectly.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”. 1 Peter 2:21-22.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:1-5.

The Greek word for “guile” is “dolos”, and it translates and means “a trick, deceit, guile, subtilty” (Strong’s, word #1388). The 144,000 have nothing to do with guile or subtly tricking people through deception and thus stealing away the truth from them and breaking this 8th commandment, but they are without fault before God. They have learned how to avoid all theft and deception in any form or area by following the perfect example of Jesus Christ, and thus they will continue following Him whithersoever He goeth throughout eternity.