

8th Grade Homestudy Lesson #8

The Seventh Commandment

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is for you to understand the seventh commandment, particularly the way it shows us how to properly acquire material goods and how to use them for our own good and the good of others.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
- 7. You shall not steal.**
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

MAIN IDEAS

- Everyone has the right to own personal property, but the seventh commandment warns us to use what we have for good and not to steal other people's belongings.
- We are called to use what we own, first and foremost, for the good of human beings, most especially the poor, and for the betterment of society.
- Learning how to be generous and respect the property of others will help us grow in virtue and serve our neighbor as Christ asks us to.

TEACHING

OWNERSHIP

As a middle schooler, you may not have many things you personally own since you still live under the care of others and they provide most things for you. (CCC 2401-2403) But, even still, you are called to use what you have for the good of others. This means not being selfish or ungrateful with your possessions and using them in a way that helps other people. (CCC 2404-2406) By doing this, you are showing respect toward the other people in your life and are following the seventh commandment. Stealing — taking something that someone else owns without their permission or rightfully buying it — goes directly against the seventh commandment. It also hurts your relationship with the person or breaks down, even in small things, the society in which you live. (CCC 2408-2409, 2412)

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

We are a part of something that is bigger than ourselves. We live in families and communities, and are a part of society. Our actions can hurt others and affect the communities we are a part of in a big way, even if they seem small or insignificant in the moment. Our actions can also hurt ourselves. Although you may not get caught stealing gum from the grocery store, it reflects on your character and creates habits of sinful behavior that harm you spiritually, whether you think it does or not. The seventh commandment — thou shall not steal — helps us learn how to respect others and their possessions, as well as how to use what we own to help one another.

While it may seem like what we do on a small scale will not affect society at large, it does and as such, it is important to learn how to have the right attitude toward material possessions. (CCC 2419-2425) We should, first and foremost, be concerned about other people, not solely about ourselves and the things we want. (CCC 2426) As you aspire and dream of what you will one day do, it is important to remember that it is your duty to make use of your talents in a way that betters society. You should not pursue a career simply because you will earn a lot of money and have cool things. (CCC 2427-2436)

FOR YOU/FROM YOU

It is not bad to have possessions, nor is it bad to have money. What is most important is how we use what has been given to us — big or small — and the type of person we are. We should want for each other to be taken care of, to have enough, and to know that someone cares. Whichever side you find yourself on — whether your family is well-off or struggling — there should be no division among you and rather, unity as you all help each other. As the human race, we are all responsible for each other. God asks us to care for one another, most especially the poor. (CCC 2443) This care for the poor is not only for those who are materially poor, but also for those who are spiritually poor. (CCC 2444-2449) Jesus cares for those who were both physically poor and those who were spiritually poor. He called many to give what they had to the poor, but He also cared for those who were rich but spiritually poor. (Luke 18:22, 19:1-10) Learning how to be generous and respect other people's property will help you grow in virtue and serve your neighbor as Christ asks you to. The seventh commandment — you shall not steal — is about so much more than simply not stealing. It is about truly taking care of each other and all of our needs.

SEND

The Quest to Understand

The Christian life is not always easy to understand. Jesus often asks of us things that may not make sense at first. One of the best ways we can come to better understand what it looks like to follow Jesus is to meditate on Scripture. When we meditate, we can put ourselves into the story or listen for words that stand out to us. The Word of God is powerful; God will use it to talk to you and help you better understand what He is asking of you. (CCC 2705-2708) Today, you will

