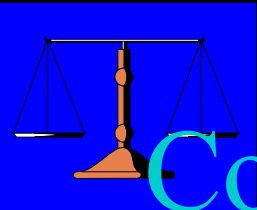


You Shall Not Steal

Vern S. Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.
for Lansdale Presbyterian Church
Nov. 20, 2005



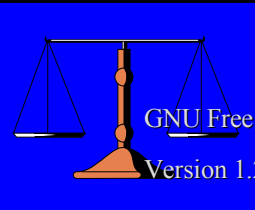
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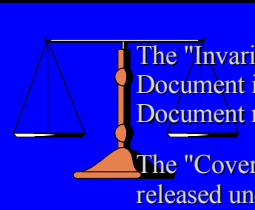
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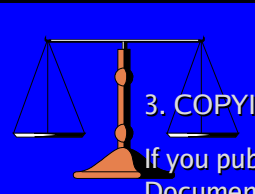
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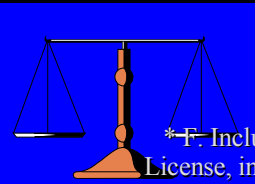
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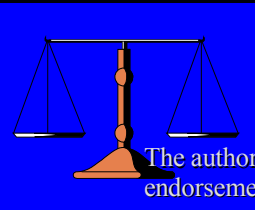
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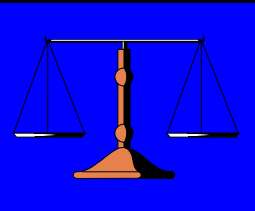
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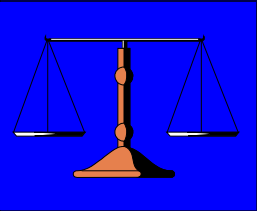
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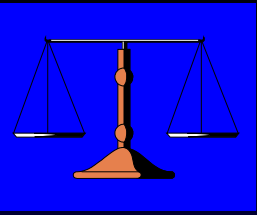
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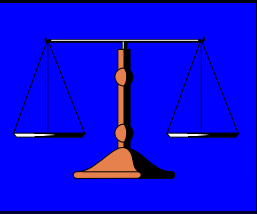
A. The Principle of Right



What is Stealing?

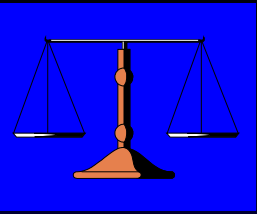
If a man gives to his neighbor money or goods to keep safe, and it is stolen from the man's house, then, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. (Exodus 22:7)

Stealing =
taking away what belongs to someone else.



Responsibility to God

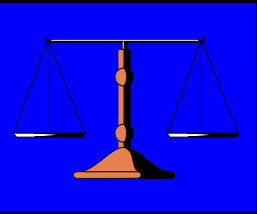
- "All the earth is mine" (Exodus 19:5)
- "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine."
(Leviticus 25:23)
- "Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature."
(Genesis 2:7)



Responsibility to God

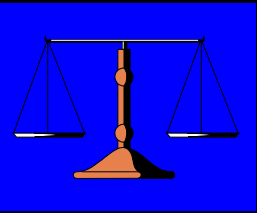
- We are responsible for proper use of what is his. That includes use of our own bodies!

"You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 5:19-20)



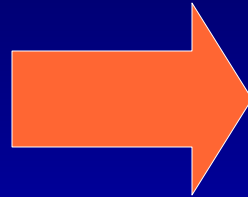
Universal Theft

- All sin steals honor from God
- and misuses God's property.
- Every sin is a kind of theft!

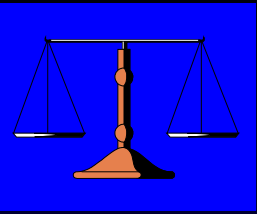


Love Implies Care

Love

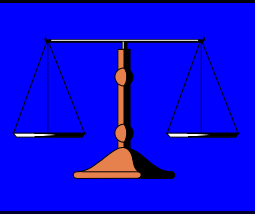


Care for and protect
another's property
as if it were your own.



The Principle of Love

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet, and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)



Metaphorical Property

Areas of Application

Illustrations

For God

➤ Reputation

➤ Time

➤ Honor

➤ Love,
devotion

➤ Gossip

➤ From family,
employer

➤ Taking credit

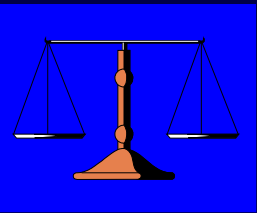
➤ Minimal

➤ God's name

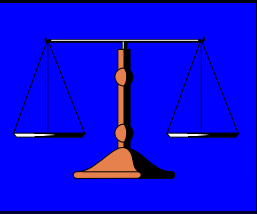
➤ Sabbath, means
of grace

➤ Thanks.

➤ Heartily.

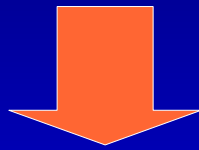


B. Principles for Property

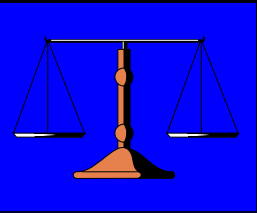


Justice and Protection

"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him." (Exodus 23:4)

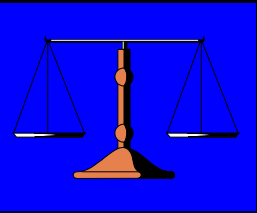


Care for and protect
another's property.



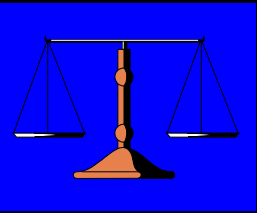
Working

- "and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may live properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one." (1 Thess. 4:11-12)
- "For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies." (2 Thess. 3:10-11)



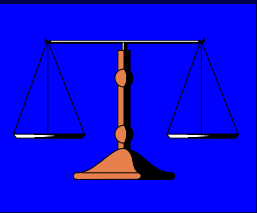
Generosity

- "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." (Ephesians 4:28)
- "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, not to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

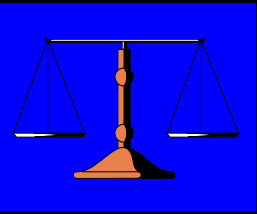


Supreme Justice and Generosity

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

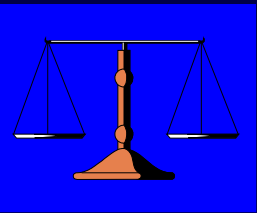


C. Controversies over Law

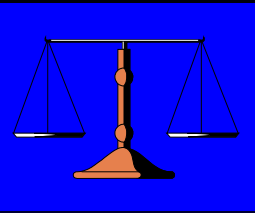


Principles for Government

- The Bible gives God's principles.
- We need wisdom to apply.
- Governments will fail.
- You have responsibility in your own sphere: work, leisure, school, family, home.
- Only Christ brings a lasting solution
 - to individuals
 - to the world



D. Penalty for Stealing

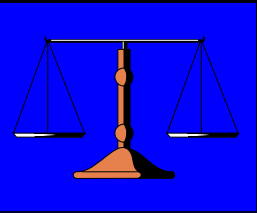


Punishment Matching Crime

- “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, ...” (Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:18-20; Deut. 19:21).
- “As you have done, it will be done to you ...” (Obad. 15; Matt. 7:2; Rev. 18:6).
- Caught in one’s own trap (Ps. 7:15-16; 35:7-8; Dan. 6:24; Esth. 7:9-10).

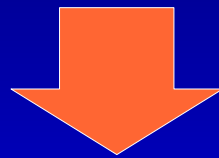
He deserves it!



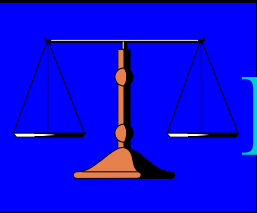


Accidental Destruction

If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over, or lets his beast loose and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best in his own field and in his own vineyard. (Exod. 22:5)

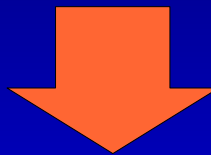


Restore damage.

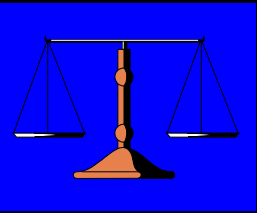


Borrowing

If a man borrows anything of his neighbor, and it is injured or dies, the owner not being with it, he shall make full restitution. (Exod. 22:14)



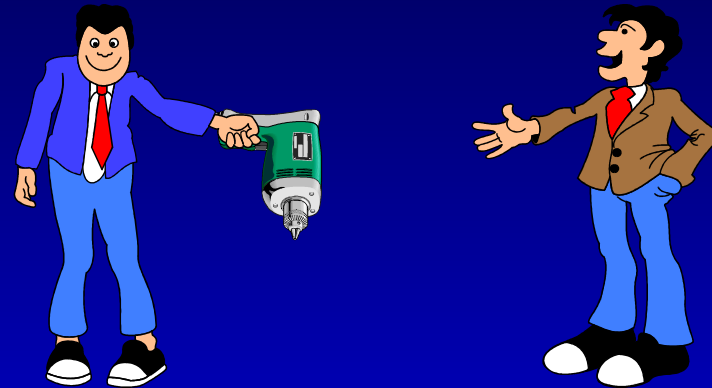
Restore damage.



Borrowing

► Exod. 22:14

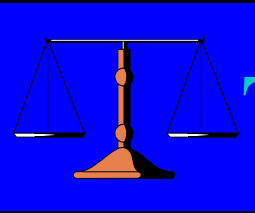
borrow



restore

or

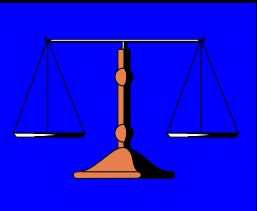
restore an
equivalent



Theft in Exodus 22:4, 7

If the stolen beast is found alive in his possession, whether it is an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double. (Exodus 22:4)

If a man gives to his neighbor money or goods to keep safe, and it is stolen from the man's house, then, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. (Exodus 22:7)

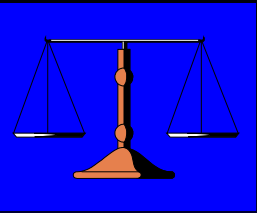


Theft

► Exod. 22:4



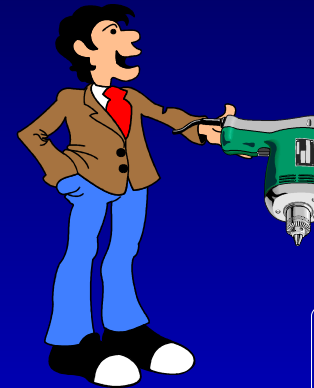
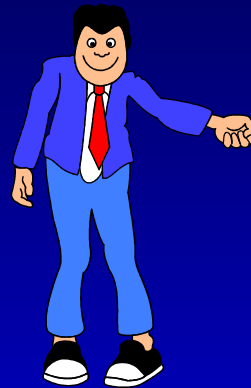
double
payment



Theft

► Exod. 22:4 ??

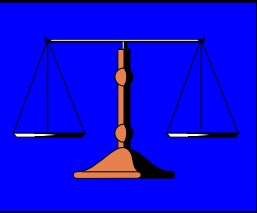
He takes it



Tit for tat.



God takes it
from him
(punishment)



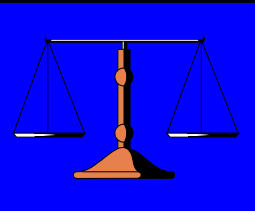
Modern Response to Theft

Lock him up!

- How long?
- How about the victim?
- How does the thief rectify?
- What does the thief learn?

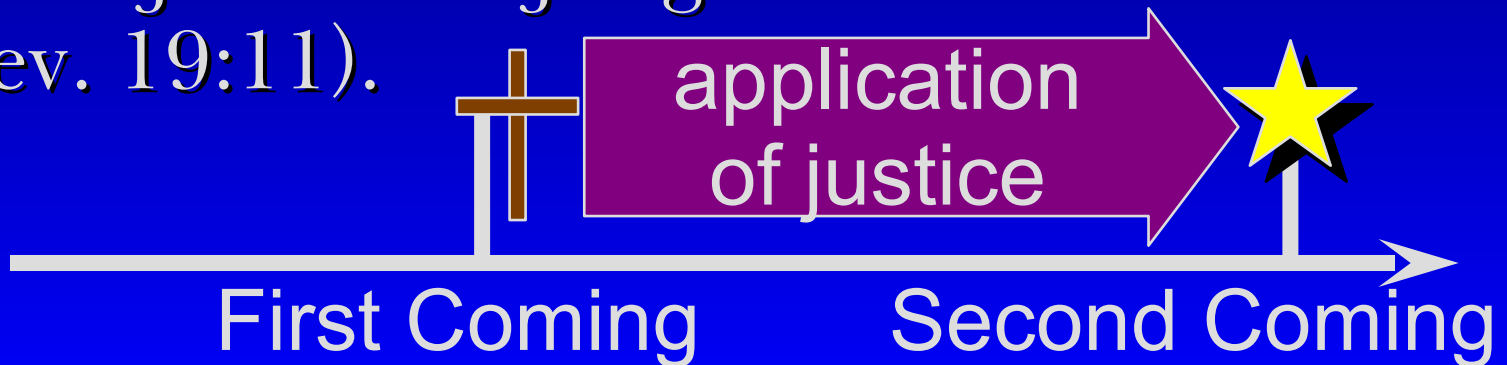
Work to repay.

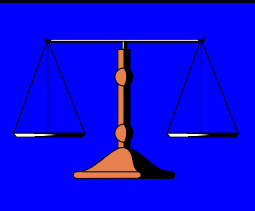
- The same amount!
- Restore property.
- Pay double.
- Work for good.



God's Pledge in Christ

- “As surely as I live forever, ... I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me” (Deut. 32:40-43).
- “He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity” (Ps. 98:9).
- “With justice he judges and makes war” (Rev. 19:11).

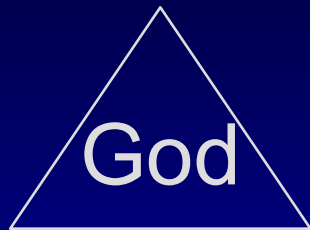




Sin and its Punishment

➤ Gen. 3:5

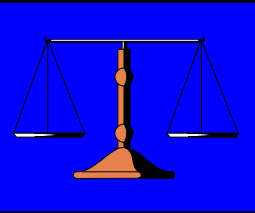
Sin:



you would destroy
honor and life

Consequences:

God destroys your
honor and life



Justice in the Cross

► 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24

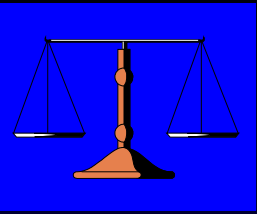
YOU

sin,
guilt,
punishment

Christ takes
your sin;
you take his
righteousness

CHRIST

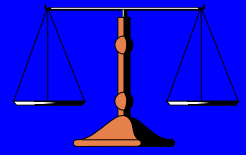
holiness,
innocence,
reward



E. Subsidies

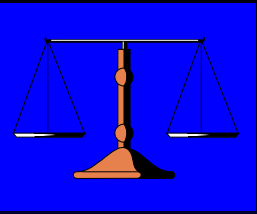
- Give extra incentive for sugar-beet farming by government payment.

"You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor." (Leviticus 19:15)



Partiality

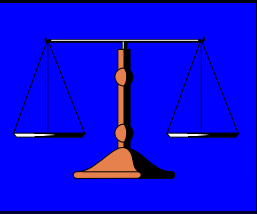
You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 16:18-20)



F. Zoning Ordinances

- Cities restrict the type of use for particular plots of land (commercial, residential, industrial).

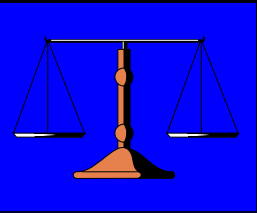
"You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, ..." (Exodus 23:2)



G. Eminent Domain

- Government compels the sale of private property in order to turn it for public (or sometimes for private) use.

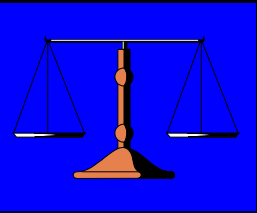
"You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, ..." (Exodus 23:2)



H. Pollution

"If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over, or lets his beast loose and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best in his own field and in his own vineyard.

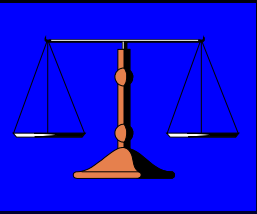
"If fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that the stacked grain or the standing grain or the field is consumed, he who started the fire shall make restitution." (Exodus 22:5-6)



I. Welfare

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God." (Leviticus 19:9-10)

generosity, not government compulsion

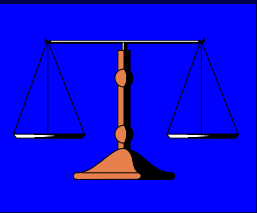


J. Social Security

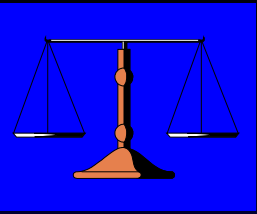
"Honor your father and your mother." (Exodus 20:12)

personal obligation, not government compulsion

"If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are really widows." (1 Timothy 5:16)

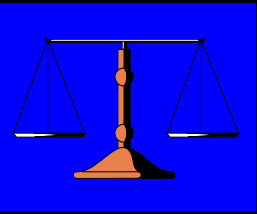


K. Damage Cases



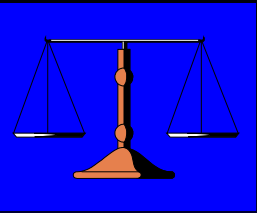
1. Emotional Suffering

"When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and the man does not die but takes to his bed, then if the man rises again and walks outdoors with his staff, he who struck him shall be clear; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed." (Exodus 21:18-19; see also Exodus 22:16-17)



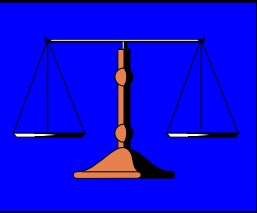
2. Neighborliness

- The rear-ending offender refuses to pay
- The broken hammock
- The cat bite



L. Copyright

- A subsidy for intellectual work?



Resources

- Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed).
- http://www.frame-poythress.org/poythress_articles/2005Copyrights.htm