**HEIDELBERG CATECHISM LORD'S DAY 42 - THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT**

**Scripture** Ex. 22:1-8; Mat. 6:19-24. **Psalters**: 18:3,5 - 305:1,3,5,6 - 59:1,2,3 - 95:1,2,3. **BCoF** 21.

1. **We must not steal**

* Various things can be stolen: inanimate things (1 Ki. 21); animals (Ex. 22), humans (Gen. 37).
* Small things and on large scale.
* Some people are robbing God (Mal. 3:8-10).
* Consider the many possibilities when we are thieves.

1. **We must not cheat others**

* Theft includes all wicked tricks whereby we aim to appropriate our neighbour's goods.
* This commandment is often transgressed in trading (cf. Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 20:10).
* Other forms of cheating.
* God will punish this sin (Amos 8:4-7; Zech. 5:1-4).
* God will bless the ones who trust in Him.

1. **We must not waste God's gifts**

* Spend money for sinful or useless things, or to show off.
* We must use what we have:
  + to the glory of God.
  + for the well-being of our fellowman.

1. **We must help our neighbours**

* Promote their profit wherever we can or may (Phil. 2:4,5).
* Deal with them as we would have others deal with us. (Mat. 7:12).
* Labour faithfully so that we may be able to relieve the needy (2 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:28).

**Appl.**

* We have stolen from God and man! (Gen. 3:6).
* Jesus had to pay back to God what He had not stolen (Ps. 69:4).
* The Holy Spirit makes God's people honest. (Lk. 19:8; Prov. 19:7-9).

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. The 8th commandment forbids stealing. You could also formulate this positively as “You must be content with what you have.” How is this in your life?
2. In the sermon some examples were mentioned of people who stole. Can you think of other Biblical examples? What were the consequences?
3. Is having possessions actually Biblical? After all, the Bible says that all things belong to the Lord. How must we see this?
4. From the answer to question 110 you can see that the HC dates back to many centuries ago. Can you think of modern examples of what the HC means with these things?
5. The last two examples of answer 110 are surprising and highly relevant to our times. Meditate upon both:
   1. What is covetousness? Do you recognize that in yourself?
   2. How can you abuse and waste God’s gifts? Are you at risk of doing so? Why or why not?
6. Q/A 111 beautifully shows us the positive side of the 8th commandment. The *purpose* of our daily work is that we are able to help others. Compare this with your own life. How is this, or can this become, reality in your life?