

GOD'S CHARACTER REFLECTED

Sunday, June 14, 2026

DEUTERONOMY 5:19-21 TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

TEAM ONE: Read Deuteronomy 5:19 and "Respect the Property of Others." Answer the questions and discuss why stealing does not reflect trust in God's provision for us.

Respect the Property of Others

People often steal out of greed and selfishness. They want more—money, property, or anything else they can take. Sinful human nature says, "I will take what I do not have. It is not fair for someone else to have so much, so I will even the balance." There are only two legitimate ways to receive money or possessions: earn them through work or receive them as a gift. Any other way falls outside God's will. When people think of theft, they may imagine a bank or store robbery, but taking small items from work or a friend's home also breaks this commandment. The size of the theft does not matter; the act itself makes it wrong. Stealing violates the right to private property, which is closely tied to basic human dignity. Proverbs 11:1 says, "Dishonest scales are detestable to the Lord, but an accurate weight is His delight." In biblical times, some merchants cheated customers with false scales. Today, fraud is often more sophisticated and can include internet fraud, credit card fraud, telemarketing fraud, money laundering, tax evasion, and insider trading. Whether it involves cheating, falsifying an expense report, or overcharging customers, it is still fraud and a violation of the eighth commandment.

Where do you see this commandment being abused in our culture today? What can we do to protect ourselves from the temptation to acquire possessions outside the will of God? What does this commandment teach us about God's character?

TEAM TWO: Read Deuteronomy 5:20 and "Honesty Is the Only Policy." Explain how lying fails to reflect God's truthfulness.

Honesty is the Only Policy

God hates deceptive words. Proverbs says, "The Lord hates six things; in fact, seven are detestable to Him," including "a lying tongue" and "a lying witness who gives false testimony" (Prov. 6:16-19). Two of the seven offenses listed relate directly to the ninth commandment. Because God's character is truth, every lie and every form of deception dishonors Him. At some point, all of us have lied, deceived, exaggerated, or embellished. But even one lie makes a person a liar, and every lie offends God because it violates His truthfulness. In the story of Pinocchio, his nose grew each time he lied. Embarrassing as that was, it made the lie obvious. We may wish for that kind of warning, but believers already have one: the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom Jesus called "the Spirit of truth" (John 15:26). When you speak falsely or live deceptively, the Holy Spirit convicts you. If you are a Christian, every lie requires resisting or suppressing the Spirit of truth.

What are some harmful consequences of lying to others? How can we guard against the temptation to exaggerate, embellish, or lie to others? How does speaking the truth reflect God's character?

TEAM THREE: Read Deuteronomy 5:21 and "Learn to Live with Contentment." Answer the questions and discuss how covetousness fails to reflect contentment in God, and how it shows dissatisfaction with what He provides.

Learn to Live with Contentment

The word "covet" is the Hebrew word *chamad*, which means to "have an intense desire" for something. There's nothing wrong with coveting—if you covet the proper thing. I might say to you, "I covet your prayers." There's certainly nothing wrong with that. It is the *object* of our covetousness that makes certain desires a sin. It seems as if we're all trying to "keep up with the Joneses." When we see our neighbor with more "stuff" than we have, it makes us want to have at least as much as they have. If they get a new car, we feel we need a new car, too and we start scheming how we can get one. Covetousness (greed) makes a person a victim of a vicious cycle of dissatisfaction. If your goal in life is to get more things and to accumulate possessions, you will never be satisfied. You buy a new home and think it is so wonderful, but you'll soon start noticing that there is always another house that is bigger and better than yours. If "having the best" becomes the primary source of satisfaction in your life, you are cursed because you never will be satisfied. The cure for covetousness is contentment in Christ. Contentment means being satisfied with what you have. The Bible says, "Your life should be free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5).

What is your definition of personal "contentment"? What does it mean to be content in Christ? How does our contentment reflect God's character?