

God and others and may by precept and example affect others positively. But we must remember that no matter what others do...our charge is to honor God.

The Eighth Command: Application

In this regard there are some important applications to the command. One of these is expressed in Malachi 3:8. The prophet argues that when Israel failed to honor God with its tithes, it had robbed God of what was rightfully His. The people did not like to think of it that way but that is how it was. The tithe, a tenth of one's possessions, was given by God for the support of the Levites and the ministry of the tabernacle/temple. But the nation often forgot this portion and kept what was God's for themselves. This practice was robbing God. Anytime we do not give the Lord what is His we are in effect stealing from Him.

The Pharisees of Jesus day understood this. They tithed even the smallest of things as we are told in Matthew 23:23. But they overlooked, (whether intentional or unintentional) the weightier matters of the law: Judgment, mercy, and faith. In so doing they had dishonored God and kept from Him what He was most entitled to: honor and glory. Poor behavior on the part of the Lord's people is simply stealing...taking from God what is His and ruining it by ourselves. You will discover that none of us likes to think of it this way. But holding back the Lord's honor is as much an act of theft as is the picking of one's pocket.

If we carry this analogy a bit farther, we will see that it is possible to steal from others in terms of taking from them items other than mere physical things. By causing others undue worry or concern we might take from them peace of mind. By being negligent in duties we might steal from others precious time. If we are not properly attentive to families and loved