

Do You Trust Me?

10 Ways to a Better Life series

by Bill Aumack

Good morning.

Before we get started today, I kind of wanted to check in and see how everybody's doing on their Bible reading. Don't raise your hands. I hope you're all doing okay. If you're new or you're a guest here today, we have kind of a different Bible reading plan this year. We don't have one. So remember that the goal was everybody just to read. Whether it was five minutes, ten minutes, half an hour, an hour, a chapter, three chapters—whatever it is for you that's the right amount to read—just read. And if you miss a day, you're not behind. Isn't that great?

So hopefully that takes some of the pressure off, some of the guilt we put on ourselves. There's some sheets out there for you to check and keep track of what you've read and haven't read, if you want to use those. But I hope that you're reading the Bible and staying with the plan. We got to come up with a name for it, like the unplanned of Bible reading or something, I don't know. But you know, like I started reading gospels, I wanted to read all four gospels back to back. Pastor started in Genesis. You may have started somewhere else. It's okay—just read, just read.

You may have read, you know, started out in January. It was great. Like resolutions sometimes go, now you're not. But it's okay—you can pick up and start reading, and you're not behind. Amen. All right, so hopefully we're all doing pretty good on that. All right.

You know, if you've lived in California for the past 12 years or so, you, you lived through this. I'm not going to tell you anything you don't know, but let's review. In 2014, we passed resolution or proposition 47. Proposition 47 reduced the criminal penalties for non-violent theft. Remember this? And so anything that was stolen less than \$950, they just weren't going to deal with. Right? The

police weren't going to arrest you, you weren't going to go to jail—you just weren't going to do anything about it.

And the people that proposed this kind of had some good reasons. They said, number one, the courts are full. Number two, the jails are full. Number three, going to jail isn't really a good way to learn to stop being a thief. And those things are true to some degree or another. But to kind of not do anything just didn't seem right to me. Right? We should do something. Like, if you get a speeding ticket, at least you have to go to traffic school and supposedly learn to be a better driver, right? I mean, it's something.

But this resolution got passed. And for those of us that were a little concerned about that and wondered what was going to happen, like myself, it didn't take long to find out. People just started going into the stores and picking up armloads of stuff and walking out. And the stores told their employees, don't stop them. We don't want anybody getting hurt. You know, the police weren't going to arrest them, and so they just kept taking more and more stuff, right?

And the stores started crying for help. They said, you know, we can't survive with this. And some stores closed or moved out of certain neighborhoods where the problem was worse. And just when you thought it couldn't get worse, it did, because then groups of kids started showing up and running into the store, and 30 of them would all grab an armload of stuff and run out. And so no one of them stole more than \$950, but when you got 30 of them, that added up.

And then we started seeing a little shift in the tide. You start seeing the customers fighting back, and you'd see videos on the Internet. And I remember one—I don't know why this one sticks with me—but this was taken from the ceiling security camera that's pointed at the front door. And you can see this gentleman running out of the store, and he's got one of those baskets you carry, you know, the little baskets. He's got some stuff in it. And there's an employee following him, trying to get him to stop, but he's not allowed to interrupt or bother him or anything. But he's trying to get him to stop, and he's not stopping.

But there's a guy walking into the store, and as this guy's jogging out, the guy walking in just sticks out his arm and clothes-lined him. Just—I don't know, the guy didn't see it coming or what—but he goes sprawling. The guy never breaks stride, picks up the basket, takes two more steps, hands it to the employee, and disappears into the store. Never stopped.

And the tide started to turn. Ten years after 2014 and Proposition 47, we passed Proposition 36 in 2024. Ten years later, that again made it illegal to steal. Surprise, surprise. But this came with some teeth. If you get two strikes, a third strike—it's a felony with mandatory jail time. So things changed.

But I was surprised at the people that thought that they could steal stuff because they weren't going to go to jail. Now, if I had broke into their house and stolen something, would they have been happy? I could have said, it's less than \$950, it's just mine, it's okay to take it. But it was okay to take it from somebody else. And somehow, even though we knew stealing is wrong—and you know the golden rule, do unto others—we can't follow that, but we think it's okay for us. It was really weird. It was really weird.

And today we're talking about the Eighth Commandments. We don't really need to look it up, but it's there in Exodus 20:15. You shall not steal. If you're a King James person, thou shalt not steal. I'll leave it up to you whether you're a you or a thou, but it kind of works out the same.

And sometimes when we look at that, we kind of think, I got it right—check. Don't steal. I don't steal. I don't go to stores and steal stuff. I'm pretty good. I've got it, right.

When Linda and I first got married, we had a couple fish tanks, and I needed a new water heater for one of my fish tanks. Anybody here have fish tanks? Like four of us, maybe? Okay, so you need to buy one of those little water heaters. It's in a little glass tube, it's got a little heating element. The things are super cheap—at least they used to be. It was like a \$3 item, right?

So where did we go? The mall. Yeah, I'm a billion years old—we used to go to the mall. It was the 80s, right? There was no Petco or Petsmart or Amazon. We

had to go to the mall, okay? We liked to go to Cerritos Mall. And if you've been there, you know it's kind of got two wings, and a little piece that connects them.

We liked this bottom wing where Sears used to be, because you would go in through Sears, look around there, and then go into the mall. And they just had the stores that we liked. The food court is in that end. Mervyn's was in that end. Remember Mervyn's? You can tell who's the old folks. Coming down the other way, there was a record store. We used to go to the store and buy music. Would you believe that? Crazy. But one of our favorite spots was the pet store. We always stopped at the pet store to look at the animals—the cats and the dogs and whatever.

Of course, I needed to get my water heater, so I was doing that. Linda was over looking at the animals. I went over, we looked at the cats and dogs, and started to leave—back out through the rest of the mall, through Sears, out to the parking lot. I go to put my hand in my pocket to get my car keys, and I can't, because in my hand is a water heater with no bag and no receipt. Oh.

And I tell Linda, “Oh no.” She goes, “What?” She starts laughing at me. “You forgot to pay.”

Now, I have just gotten a security clearance, right? They kind of frown on you stealing when you have a security clearance, right? So I'm imagining that mall security and 25 cops in riot gear are getting ready to jump me for this \$3 water heater I've stolen, right? We got to go back and pay for it. So back across the parking lot, back into Sears, back down the hallway into the store. I think everybody in the mall is looking at you, right? You feel so self-conscious because you are carrying this contraband—this \$3 item.

I get to the clerk. I told him the story. I said, “Man, I walked—I forgot to pay for this.” And he goes, “Why'd you come back? You got away with it, man. Who cares?” But I had to pay for it, right? I had to. It was wrong not to, right?

And a lot of times we assume that stealing is limited to physical things. It's something we can take—it's money, it's a thing off the shelf, it's jewelry at the

jewelry store, it's something like that. But there's more that we can steal besides that, and we could come up with a whole list of them. But I want to talk about two particular things today.

First one is—we steal time. **We steal time.**

I think one of the biggest ways that we steal time is at work, right? You got hours you're supposed to be at work. Maybe if you're on salary, you're supposed to be there from 8 to 5. But, you know, 8:15 is pretty close. Supposed to leave at 5—4:45 is almost 5. Lunch is supposed to be an hour, but they were slow today, so, you know, it was an hour and 20. Well, that wasn't my fault—the place was slow.

Or we spend too much time talking to our workmates, taking breaks. Or maybe we just sloughed off all day and played solitaire on the computer. I don't know—we steal time.

Some of you saw here recently, New York City had a big snowstorm. They didn't know what to do with all the snow, so somebody had the brilliant idea: we'll get New Yorkers to shovel it. So you could go down to these different offices, show your ID, they'd give you a shovel and hire you at \$30 an hour to shovel snow.

I'm shoveling snow for 30 bucks an hour—I can tell you that right now.

And you know what the New Yorkers did? Took their shovels home, leaned them against the wall, and sat down and watched TV, and turned in all their hours. So not only did they steal the shovel, but they stole all the time. It took New York a month before they figured out nobody was shoveling the snow. Seems like you would have noticed—hey, the snow's not going anywhere. But I don't know where they expected them to shovel it to. If you're standing on a sidewalk and it's full of snow, you can pick it up and put it where? We'll put it back there, right? You've just moved it from here to there.

But we steal time, and it's not just work. Sometimes we steal time from our families, because we should be spending some quality time with our spouse

or our kids. But I'm busy—and there are days that we're busy—but don't let that be every day.

Sometimes we steal time from God. It's Sabbath, and we should be spending some time with God—meditating, thinking about Him, working on His will. We're doing our own thing. We're stealing time from God. Now, we've talked a lot about Sabbath recently, so I'm not going to talk too much about that. If you missed those, they're on our website, on our YouTube, they're on iTunes, they're on Spotify—we're like everywhere, okay? So you can find it and listen to that. There's a whole series late last year called Rest Without Rigidity, if you want to check those out.

Okay. And most of the time, when we do these things, we don't feel like we're stealing. It doesn't register to us that we're stealing. But we are, right? We are. So we need to be careful about that.

The other thing that we can steal is—**we steal reputations.**

We can do this several different ways, right? One is when we talk about somebody. “I saw him out with a woman for dinner—it wasn't his wife. I wonder what's going on.” Well, you don't know what's going on. That may be his favorite cousin from North Carolina that just flew in. Who knows? That may be his wife's best friend, and they're planning a surprise birthday party for his wife next weekend. You don't know what's going on, but you steal some of his reputation.

“I saw a pastor walking into the bar up here—bold as can be. Walked right in the front door.” What you don't know is somebody called from the bar, was thinking about ending it all, wanted somebody to talk to. And pastor may not be able to defend himself, because he may not want to throw whoever under the bus—said, “Well, if Gustavo hadn't called me from the bar, I wouldn't have gone there.” Just teasing Gustavo. Just teasing.

Okay, so you might be telling the truth—you saw a pastor walk into the bar—but you don't know the situation. Don't steal some of that reputation.

Remember dot matrix printers? They were horrible, right? Make all that noise—slow, loud. But the paper was kind of cool, because it was all perforated together, and you could get these big long sheets of paper, right? Well, at work we had a dot matrix printer, except instead of printing one character at a time, it printed the whole line—bonk, bonk, bonk—so it was pretty fast. And we used to print a lot of paper. People would look at stuff and then put it in the recycle bin, and it just went away, you know—the recyclers. And it dawned on me at one point in time that the kids in Linda's class would love this stuff, because you draw on the back of it—make a big sheet of paper, draw big things. Sometimes they'd lay them on the floor and lay on them and trace themselves and do projects and stuff. So I got permission to take, occasionally, a box of the paper that they were just throwing away into the recycler anyway.

So I went to work one day—I usually went early. Work started at 8:30, it's probably like 6 in the morning—I'm there. I go down to get a box of paper. Linda needs a new one. And they always kept the box for me, because they knew I'd come get them occasionally.

So there was my box there, but the box that they were currently filling up was 99% full. So I took that box too. So I had two boxes of paper in the elevator, down to the parking structure. As I'm coming out, somebody's coming into work. And he looks at me and goes, “What are you doing?” And before I can answer, he goes, “Why are you stealing paper? I can see taking one box, but two boxes is too much.” And I'm just like, “This is used paper.” “Oh, I don't care—then go ahead and take it, I don't care,” right?

And a couple things about that: one, it was okay to steal one box, but not okay to steal two boxes—must have been less than \$950. But what if he hadn't seen me? What if he had seen me from across the way, and then they talked about it and said, “I saw Bill stealing paper”? Now, I think my boss would have believed me that it was used paper, because I got permission to take used paper. But still, we can steal reputations, right? We can steal reputations.

And I don't know if you've noticed this, but all of a sudden some of our Ten Commandments start getting interlinked. We're talking about stealing, but it leads back to anger and the murder the pastor talked about last week, or it leads back to Sabbath we talked about a couple weeks ago, or it leads to lying and coveting that are coming up in the next couple of weeks. So we see a lot of intertwining on these things.

Get out your Bibles. So the real question is: what does this tell us about us?

Let's look at 1 Timothy 6:10. What does this commandment to not steal tell us about us? First Timothy 6:10—give me an amen when you're there.

It says—so why do we steal? Sorry, that's not what it says—that's what I said. It says, *“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

This may be the most misquoted text in the Bible. If it's not the most misquoted, it's up there, right? What is the root of all evil? We don't know. What is the root of all kinds of evil? This says the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil—not every evil, not all evils, but a lot of evil, okay? Money is an inanimate object. It is neither holy nor evil—it's money. It's a thing. It's like this remote. It's not good, it's not bad—it's a thing, okay? But the love of money is the root of all kinds of problems. All kinds of problems.

What does that tell us about us? **We are SELFISH**—uppercase characters. When you write that in your notes—uppercase—we are selfish.

There's an old VeggieTales where two guys are collecting stuff that normally go together—I can't remember what the two things were, you know, like peanut butter and chocolate or something—but they won't share. And eventually one of them goes, “You're so selfish.” That became the calling cry around our house for a while when we wanted somebody to share. “You're so selfish—you won't share your fries with me.”

And we are selfish. And it's a little bit like the original sin. When Lucifer was in heaven, he was a lead angel. I don't know if he was the highest angel of all, but he was up there—and he wanted more. He wanted more. It wasn't enough.

And that's why we steal—because we want more. We think we deserve more.

I'm going to tell you a story here—we're going to go a little bit long today, sorry, I got a lot of stories. You young folks are going to think I'm lying, but I swear every word of this is true. You can Google it later or talk to some people with white hair—they'll tell you that I'm telling the truth here.

I don't know if you guys remember this, but they used to break into your car and steal your car stereo. Do you remember this? This was the worst thing ever.

Because you would go and buy a car, and sometimes they didn't even have a radio in them—like, who sells a car without a radio? Or if it did have a radio, it was like AM—it was junk, right?

And so they had stores that sold nothing but car stereos, right? And you'd go in and they'd have all these stereos mounted and buttons so you could pick which one, and there was all these speakers, and you could pick which one. “Okay, I want to listen to that stereo with these speakers—that doesn't sound good, let's try this one with those speakers,” you know? And you'd find the ones that sounded good. Some of you are looking at me like, “No”—yeah, we used to do this. And not only that, then you had to buy all the parts, you had to take it home, and you had to install it yourself later. They had install places, but you install it yourself.

I remember one time I was looking at a stereo—I was a college student, I was poor, I was driving an old beat-up Honda Civic, and it had a black plastic dash. And I was looking at the stereo I wanted, and there were two of them that were the same, and one was black and one was silver. I wanted the silver one—I thought that would look good with the black dash—but it was \$20 more than the black one. So forget that—we're buying the black one, right?

Get home—the faceplate was reversible. It was black on one side and silver on the other. I was so glad I didn't pay 20 bucks just so I could turn the faceplate over.

But people would then see your stereo and want to go in and steal it out of your car. So they put it in their car, and not only did they steal your stereo, but they stole your music, because you had your cassettes and your CDs in there. And so they took your radio and they took your music—it was the worst, right?

Then manufacturers started coming up with theft deterrents where you have to enter a code. You ever wonder why when you change the battery in your car you got to enter a code? So they won't steal your stereo.

And now, you know, stereos are all shaped weird and they only fit in that one car anyway, so nobody steals car stereos anymore. And there's no store you can go to, to get car stereos now—they steal your catalytic converter instead, right? Because we're selfish. We see something, we want it, and we just take it, right?

But Jesus shows us a different way. Let's go to John chapter 10, verse 10. John 10:10—give me an amen when you're there.

All right. *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”*

It's like stealing is the opposite of what Jesus does. Jesus says, if you're stealing, you're killing and stealing and destroying. You're going that way—I'm going this way. I've come to bring life.

Now, I don't know about you, but I don't want to do anything that puts me at polar opposites with Jesus. Amen? Okay. I don't want to do anything that puts me at polar opposites with Jesus.

So the Bible tells us—it gives us kind of an antidote to stealing—what we should be doing. Go to Ephesians chapter 4, verse 28. We're jumping around a little bit today. Ephesians 4:28—this tells us what we should be doing instead.

“Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer.” Okay. “But work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.”

Wait a minute—I thought it was going to say, you know, you should work to support yourself, quit stealing. No—we should be working to do what? So we have something to share with somebody else. When you're stealing, are you stealing to share with somebody else? No. You're taking that home, right? And this says we're supposed to be working so that we can share with somebody else.

One more—I want to look at Acts chapter 20. Paul kind of doubles down on this a little bit. Acts 20:34–36—give me an amen when you're there.

All right. “You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you by this kind of hard work that we must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than receive.’”

That's the problem with stealing—you're worried about receiving. And Jesus said you should be worried about giving. You're facing the wrong way, right? It's not that you might go to jail—it's that you're not doing what the Lord has asked you to do.

So what does this commandment tell us about God? I love this question, because this has really changed how I think about these commandments. What does this tell us about God?

And sometimes when you think about this, you have to be like that little kid that keeps asking “why?” You know—you tell him something, you give him an answer—“why?” “Well, because”—“well, why?” You got to be that annoying little kid and keep asking why, because there's layers. And sometimes you get the Christianese answer—why shouldn't you steal? “Well, Jesus wants you to be nice, and it's not nice to steal.” “Why does Jesus want me to be nice?” Right—ask those hard questions.

And when I sat around and asked those questions for a while, I came to this: **God is our provider—our Jehovah Jireh.** Remember when we studied the names of God? Jehovah Jireh means provider. This comes from Genesis 22, when Abraham is asked to sacrifice his one and only son that he's waited 100 years for—God will provide. Now, is God necessarily going to provide a mansion and a Ferrari and whatever? Maybe, maybe not. But God will provide. God will provide.

And I put some texts there on your notes—here we go. We're not going to look at all these, but you can check my work this afternoon, okay?

Philippians 4:19 says, *“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in the glory of Christ Jesus.”*

Of course, we know Psalms 23: *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”* Why don't you want? Because the shepherd's providing, right?

Matthew 14—Jesus feeds 5,000 men, plus women and children, with a Happy Meal, right? He's got a little kid's Happy Meal. Jesus can provide.

And we know this, but sometimes we just can't help ourselves.

Real quick—some Bible characters that got themselves into trouble with stealing: Jacob and Esau—Jacob steals the birthright when it's already been promised to him, but it seems like God's not acting fast enough. He has to go live with his family, finds a wife that he likes, is tricked into marrying the wrong wife, and has to work seven more years, right? What goes around comes around.

David tries to steal a wife from Uriah—well, he does. Causes all kinds of grief.

Ananias and Sapphira attempt to steal a good name for themselves. “We're going to sell some land and donate the money to church.” Oh, we got more money than we expected—well, let's keep some of it, and we'll tell everybody that's all of the money. They're stealing and lying, and they're trying to make themselves look holy and mighty. They didn't have to give all the money—there's no requirement to give all the money. They could have said, “We're

going to sell this land, we're going to give some of it to the church"—perfectly within their right. But they're trying to make themselves look more holy and then lie about it. Didn't end well for them.

One last text—let's turn to this one. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11. Last one for this morning. First Corinthians 6:9–11—give me an amen when you're there.

All right. *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?”* Does three nots equal a positive? I'm not sure, but yeah, I think it does.

“Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

There is hope.

And some of us may look at that list of stuff and say, “I didn't do any of those.” You did something else, because none of us are perfect, right? None of us are perfect. So you may not have done something on that list, but you've done something. But there's hope—because you are sanctified, you are washed, you are justified. By what you do? No. What are you sanctified by? By the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

There's hope. There's hope.

So this week I want you to reflect: **am I being honest in all aspects of my life?** Not just, am I stealing office supplies, but am I honest about everything?

The challenge this week is to **put your trust in God to provide. Ask Jehovah Jireh for the things that you need—not necessarily the things that you want.**

You know, I would love to have Jay Leno's collection of cars, but I don't need it, right? If you don't know, Jay Leno has one of the most impressive collections of cars on the planet—and they all drive. You can see him driving around town in his steamer. He fires it up and drives around town in his steam car. It's cool. It'd be great—but I don't need it.

Ask for what you need. Ask for what you need.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for this commandment that we gloss over sometimes—say, “Don't steal, got it.” Lord, help us to take this to heart and to really be working on this for all aspects of our lives, Lord—not just this little piece, but everything.

Lord, thank you so much for what you show us, and for the grace that you give us, and that if we've messed this up in the past, it's okay, because you have come and paid the price, and you've washed us and sanctified us and justified us. Thank you so much for that, Lord.

Be with us now. In Jesus' name, amen