

Connect

What do you think about Robin Hood who "stole from the rich to give to the poor?" How might the Apostle Paul have evaluated and counseled him?

Verses - Ephesians 4:28-29 (CSB)

CONTEXT: *From the beginning of Chapter 4, Paul has been teaching that each Christian can and should reject his old way of life and embrace a new way of Godly living, like Christ. And as each Christian changes in this way, all are united to form one body, with each member serving and supporting the others. Paul then proceeds to examine some specific Christian behaviors: First, we should each be truthful with*
one another (4:25) and careful not to remain angry with one another, least we give the devil an opportunity to use our anger to tempt us into sin (4:26,27). In today's reading, Paul continues …

[28] Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. [29] No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.

Study

1. Why would someone steal? Why should Christians not steal?
    a. How does the second sentence in v.28 potentially remedy the first?

2. To do honest work suggests that “dishonest work” is a form of stealing. To work with one’s own hands, suggests that to pretend that someone's work is his own, is dishonest.
    a. Why do people work? What is a reason Christians should work? (v.28c)
    b. Would dishonest work to help others in need please God? Why not?

3. It is suggested here that only language for building up those in need and blessing those who hear, should be used. It follows that there is no place for foul language to be spoken by Christians.
    a. When we find ourselves speaking evil, corrupt, or unwholesome words, what does this show us about ourselves? How might we rectify the situation?!

APPLY

We should each examine ourselves and our work to see if we are meeting the Bible’s standard. Let us repent of any dishonesty in the discussion below.

DISCUSS

Many things which people do arguably amount to stealing: plagiarism; tax evasion; inaccurate time cards, false insurance claims, and embellished resumes; failure to pay employees in full, failure of a good work ethic, taking credit for the work of others, etc. How can we each do better? How can we help one another?

Share

Ever had the experience of knowing that you were: guilty of stealing (dishonest work) or not properly sharing with those who are in need? If so, how did you make it right? How did that feel before and after? What did you discover about how to manage your work, and charitable giving that might benefit others in your group.

Grow

Minister to one another through sharing praise and specific prayer requests.

- Pray that God will grant us each the wisdom to discern his will for our work and charitable giving. And that He will give us his heart to desire to work and to give in the way most pleasing to God.
- Pray that God will help us see how we, as his people, can help one another with these things by sharing our wisdom and supporting one another in prayer and in other ways.