

Be Real Put On Hard Work

Followers of Jesus are called to no longer steal but to work hard for God's glory (Ephesians 4:28). If we have given our lives to Jesus, we are engaged in a spiritual battle to *put off the old self* and to *put on the new self*, to think and act differently from the world around us. Part of putting off the old self means we should no longer steal. We should no longer take things that do not belong to us, falsify expense reports, not pay our bills, cut financial corners, oppress our employees financially, live in idleness or laziness, etc. Instead, we should put on the new self that works hard to build, create, and cultivate for the glory of God, seeking to steward all that God has given us so that we can be a blessing to others.

GET THINGS STARTED

A 2022 report reveals that approximately 75% of employees admit to stealing from their employer at least once, costing companies fifty billion dollars annually. Beyond petty theft from stores or from others without paying or without permission, in what other ways do people steal or have financial dishonesty, especially at work? What is time theft in the workplace? What might it look like to steal at home, or at church?

GO DEEPER

1. From 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12, how might idleness or laziness be a form of theft, and what should an idle or lazy person do instead? What is the difference between working diligently and being a busybody?
2. According to Ephesians 4:28, what is the overarching goal of hard work and doing something useful with our hands? In 1 John 3:17-18, what is the connection between work and love?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What is God revealing or speaking to you about *putting off the old self* (prone to steal) and *putting on the new self* (designed to work diligently and to bless others)? How have you potentially crossed a line in financial or time theft, and what possible steps should you take to make that right?
2. How might you be stealing from your family, or from God? What does God want you to leave behind, and what does He want you to step into?
3. Who is God putting on your heart to possibly bless because of your hard work and financial favor?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Take time as a group, in an attitude of prayer, to ask God to empower you to *put off the old self* and to *put on the new self*, especially when it comes to stealing and working hard for the glory of God. Ask Him to bring the conviction of the Holy Spirit to those places where conviction is needed and to give you the courage to make the necessary changes to live and act as He intends. Ask God to give you a greater heart to bless those around you, because you have been blessed. Pray for Him to show you who to specifically bless this week.