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NOVEMBER 25, 2008

## Steal Now, Pay Later With a Shriveled Soul

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The Ten Commandments are a large part of my value system. They are boundaries assisting my conscience.



The conscience develops from our environment – what we see, and also what we are taught by the adults in our lives. If those parents have healthy biblical values, the healthier their children have the opportunity to become.

It's just the opposite with parents whose values are, "Do your own thing. Anything goes." The eighth commandment God gives us is clear and concise: "You shall not steal" – (Exodus 20:15, Mark 10:19).

We are not born with a value-coded conscience, we need rules – laws to guide us and to build our conscience and value system. Our conscience is on the level of the soul, the psyche – it is a mixture of good and evil.

The more we live the right way, the healthier our conscience becomes. The more we ignore our conscience, the duller and deader it becomes.

Some of the dishonest people who bother me today are those who call on my phone with an anxiety-producing electronic message: "I'm calling to warn you that your credit card is overdrawn. Contact company X immediately or you will be in serious trouble!"

Since I pay my bills on time, I can with assurance hang up the phone immediately.

Calling on the phone in this fashion is not what a legitimate business would do. You would first be notified in the mail, not by a recorded phone call or an email.

Lying usually accompanies stealing. These people are out to make you fearful, so you will tell them about your finances. Then they can steal from you.

Have you ever gone to the grocery store and found that you weren't charged for an item? Have you gone to a restaurant and found that you were undercharged? Have you ever found lost money in a store?

What did you do? Was it the right thing? Did you feel good about it? Or did you take what wasn't yours and harden your heart?

It is said of Abraham Lincoln that he was very honest from his youth. As a young clerk in a store, he accidentally overcharged a customer by a few cents. He walked several miles to the person's house to return the pennies.

Becoming known then as "Honest Abe," he is an example to us and became a great 16th president.

There are so many things that can be stolen, such as: your reputation, identity, job, mate, family, place in politics, credit card, exam information, computer information, child by x-mate, mail, your innocence.

Today, with the falling economy, we seem to be paying the price for having had an over-abundance

of prosperity. We've gotten greedy in wanting more and more money for more and more possessions.

We taxpayers will soon be losing money to help the government bail out big businesses. There isn't even an agreed upon cap, on how much can be spent to attain the highest office in America. We seem to be saying "help the poor," but are really helping ourselves.

When will God say, "It is enough!" Maybe He will give us time to repent from greed, stealing, pride and immorality, and give America – and us individually – a chance to make a new start.

We cannot, however, spend our time blaming others. We have to start with No. 1. This change for America starts with me and with you. Then we can truly have thankful hearts for all we do possess and share our gifts with others.

Hebrew Lesson: Let's learn the eighth Hebrew letter. *Chet* numerically is No. 8 and means fence. It looks like the top of a fence. A fence keeps people from stealing.

To draw this Hebrew letter, draw a lower case "n" in English. Enlarge the "n" and place others beside it to make a fence.

Remember the meaning of this important letter.

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