**Shoplifting A Bible**

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 It came to my attention a while back that the most shoplifted book in the world is the Bible! Whether this is true or an “urban myth,” just think of the irony of a Bible being stolen!

 It is ironic because there are many Bible passages which tell us not to steal (Ex. 20:15; Lev. 19:11, 13; Deut. 5:19; Eph. 4:28). Imagine someone stealing something that plainly states, “don’t steal.” Too, we are told in this same book that someone who is guilty of stealing will be lost in Hell (I Cor. 6:10)!

 How ironic that a book saying, “don’t steal, and if you do, you endanger your eternal soul,” is stolen so frequently! Yet, this got me to thinking about human nature in general. Is it not true that often, the very things we are told not to do are the things we do?

 From the beginning, man has been tempted by Satan to contradict the will of God (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:1-6). Sadly, man contradicts God’s will more than he obeys it (Rom. 3:23; Ecc. 7:29). Yet, this is not because he has no choice. In fact, it is the opposite (Jas. 1:14-15)! Due to man’s free moral agency, he has often chosen to turn from God’s will and walk in his own selfish way.

 In addition to not stealing, we are also told throughout Scripture:

 Do not murder (Ex. 20:13; Rom. 13:9; I Jn. 3:15; Rev. 21:8)

 Do not lie (Ex. 20:16; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; Rev. 21:8)

 Do not lust after others (Matt. 5:28; Job 31:1; II Pet. 2:14-15)

 Do not be lazy (II Thess. 3:10; Prov. 24:30-34)

 Worship God only (Matt. 4:10; Jn. 4:24)

 Be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 8:35-38, 10:48)

 Live faithfully (II Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10; I Cor. 15:58)

 Treat others kindly (Eph. 4:32; I Cor. 13:4; Matt. 7:12; II Pet. 1:17)

 Love God (Matt. 22:37; I Jn. 5:2-3)

 Love our neighbors (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Jas. 2:8; Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:9)

 This is just a partial list! In observing the items on our list, can we not also think of folks (perhaps us) who blatantly contradict these commands, too? Why are we surprised, then, when we read of someone (or many people) shoplifting a Bible?

 Some might reason, “If a person stole a Bible, it might turn out good because he might then read that Bible and learn the truth.” The response that comes to my mind is the apostle Paul’s statement where he denied the doctrine of: *“Let us do evil, that good may come”* (Rom. 3:8). He said it was “slanderously reported” that they taught a doctrine that has come to be known as “situation ethics”. So also today, we do not justify a wicked act by trying to find some supposed “good” that can come from it.

 More can be said about this, but the point is that we as God’s creatures have to decide to do what is right, and then continue daily to decide to do what is right (Jas. 1:27; Matt. 7:13-14; Lk. 9:23; Rev. 2:10; etc.). When we decide that we will not do what the Lord says, in spite of His clear statements in the Bible, then we are setting ourselves up for spiritual ruin and an eternity in a devil’s Hell. Should the Bible be the most shoplifted book, then let man repent of this sin (as well as all others) and live for the Lord while we still have the time and opportunity to do so (II Cor. 6:2).

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*