

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-0974

The Kingdom of Our Lord #14.

March 26, 2009

Restitution – Other Examples

This is the last issue, at least for now, on the subject of restitution. As stated in the previous issues, this needs to be read in conjunction with #03-0934, March 16, 2009, *Justice and Fairness – Making All Right*; #03-0971, March 17, 2009, #11. *The Law of Restitution*; #03-0972, March 18, 2009, #12. *Restitution – Theft of Property*; and #03-0973, March 19, 2009, #13. *Restitution – Loss of Property*.

Again, we need to be reminded that restitution is required when someone causes a loss to another person. The loss could result from an act that is intentional (willful), unintentional (accidental), or negligent. It could involve a person's well-being (body), property, or livelihood. Restitution covers both criminal and civil matters, and applies to all inhabitants in a kingdom nation, all living in the land (citizens and aliens).

Now, this issue addresses some loose ends, so to speak.

(30) Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he is hungry; (31) but when he is found, he must repay sevenfold; he must give all the substance of his house. (Proverbs 6:30-31 NASB)

If a man is hungry, it is not a bad thing to desire food to satisfy his hunger. Consequently, if one is caught stealing food, then do not disrespect him, which is what *despise* means. In other words, respect him. However, stealing is still a crime, no matter what has been stolen. God's eighth commandment does not put qualifiers on theft. The man who steals food must repay. But the interesting thing is that the restitution payment is sevenfold, including all in his house, which is higher than stealing another man's ox. In fact, it is the highest required restitution payment of all thefts. Why do you suppose such a high payment is required? I have two theories. The first is that when one steals food from another, it is a very selfish act, for it implies the hungry one would rather his neighbor starve than himself. This attitude breaks God's highest law, which is the law of love. We should be willing to starve rather than cause another to starve due to our selfishness. Second, in a kingdom nation, the law of love ensures that no citizen is without the basic necessities of life. This does not mean that a kingdom nation embraces socialism, for every citizen is required to provide for himself and his family. What it means is that if someone falls on hard times and is lacking food to eat, then the law of love demands that the person be helped by others. All one has to do is let his need be known and others will help. In other words, there is no reason for anyone to go without food in a kingdom nation. So, why would one not ask for help in a kingdom nation? Pride! It is pride that prevents someone from admitting a need and asking for help. Consequently, if the person is unable to provide the proper restitution, it is assumed that his labor will be sold as a debt note.

Solomon gives another possible explanation to the seriousness of stealing food.

(8) Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, (9) that I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God. (Proverbs 30:8-9 NASB)

It is a denial of the Lord Himself, for such a one is saying that the Lord is unable and unwilling to give him his portion. Stealing food profanes the name of God. This seems to support my second theory.

(1) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (2) “When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, (3) or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; (4) then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, (5) or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering.” (Leviticus 6:1-5 NASB)

(5) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (6) “Speak to the sons of Israel, ‘When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the LORD, and that person is guilty, (7) then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged.’” (Numbers 5:5-7 NASB)

These verses deal with ones who sin but repent of their sins without being caught in the act and are brought to court for judicial action. Consequently, there are no witnesses to testify for or against such ones, and without witnesses, the court cannot determine guilt or innocence. In other words, the person sees the error of his ways and confesses his sin. These sins include fraud, extortion, receiving lost or stolen property, and false testimony. However, the point is that the one who confesses and repents of his sin pays less in restitution than one who is caught in the act and forced to confess his sin. The lesson is this: All residing in a kingdom nation are encouraged to confess and repent.

A present-day example would be one who finds a \$100 bill in his neighbor’s yard and does not inquire if it is his neighbor’s but instead spends it as if it were his, even showing what he bought to his neighbor. If at some point, his neighbor informs him he had lost a \$100 bill in his yard, the man has two choices: continue in the lie, or confess his sin and pay restitution. If he confesses, his restitution payment is not double but full payment plus one-fifth or 20%.

Further, the fact that 20% or one-fifth, not double, is required of those who repent speaks of the price of redemption. The number 20 is often considered the number of redemption. Notice how redemption is in view in the following verses.

“But if he should ever wish to redeem it, then he shall add one-fifth of it to your valuation.” (Leviticus 27:13 NASB)

“If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it.” (Leviticus 27:31 NASB)

Finally, to add to the above example of the lost \$100 bill, the following verses highlight another important kingdom principle: Finding something that is lost does not give one the right to claim ownership. Again, the law of love demands that we respect the property of others and return all lost property to its rightful owner.

(1) “You shall not see your countryman’s ox or his sheep straying away, and pay no attention to them; you shall certainly bring them back to your countryman. (2) If your countryman is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall remain with you until your countryman looks for it; then you shall restore it to him. (3) Thus you shall do with his donkey, and you shall do the same with his garment, and you shall do likewise with anything lost by your countryman, which he has lost and you have found. You are not allowed to neglect them.” (Deuteronomy 22:1-3 NASB)