

KNOW

STEALING

“If you are wondering where we have gone wrong as a country, then read this book. Shane Coley does a great job of getting to the very core of the problem. The media and talking heads we hear every day are so fixated on the symptoms that we forget to search for the root cause. This book peels the onion back layer by layer and explains in detail where the problem is. This book is a MUST read for anyone interested in restoring individual liberty in America!”

~ **Clay Ortiz**

“Rarely does a book not only challenge, but revolutionize the manner in which you view the world. Upon finishing such works, it’s as if you’ve been given a lens to better identify the functions of society that are right in front of you, but have been too small to see. Frederic Bastiat’s classic, *The Law*, comes to mind. *Know Stealing* is one such book. Shane Coley takes on the daunting task of explaining some of the most complex issues facing our world today and succeeds with concise and astute brilliance. His solution, rooted in historical, economical, and Biblical foundations is a single rule: No Stealing. His insights on the significance and protection of life, liberty, and property are desperately needed and a pleasure to read.”

~ **Drew Martin**, Columnist, RevoluTimes.com

“Shane Coley has succeeded in methodically correcting the most dangerous errors modern American society has in understanding economics, politics, government & Christian theology. A 15-year project with more to show for it than most entire lives. Transformational!”

~ **Jimmy Norman**, Executive Director,
Georgians For Constitutional Government

“I am forced to say that in all my years of formal education, I had never learned of the Austrian School of Economics. All of those good 1970 era dollars spent in vain sitting in micro and macro economic classes, principles and theory of banking, all culminating in a degree in accounting, and I never heard of Ludwig Von Mises until I met Shane. [...] Complete with charts and illustrations, readers are led on a journey to rediscover the elementary fact that words have meaning, or, more specifically, accurate meanings! I was pleasantly surprised that even an old goat like me could still discover some words with a nuanced meaning a little different than what I had thought. Who knew? Once the foundational understandings of the key words are in place, topics are

explored to weave together the knowledge that will allow you to Know Stealing.”

~ **Rick McQueen**

“Armed with wisdom, knowledge and an aptitude for teaching, Shane Coley skillfully disperses the fog of economic, political and moral complexities which tend to make our nation’s problems seem insurmountable. Shane brings to light long ignored principles, which must be understood if we are to have any chance of restoring the liberty, peace, and prosperity, which our country enjoyed in former times. Information contained in this excellent work is invaluable.”

~ **Linda Morrow**

“If Know Stealing were written in the 1840s philosopher, economist, and author Frederic Bastiat would be the perfect person to write the foreword. This book is excellent reading for anyone from the high school student to the would-be-politician. If this book were required reading in high schools, we could restore our Nation in a matter of a generation or less.”

~ **Walt Holton**

“I’d buy a copy for all my friends if they had Kindles... Lots of ideas in this book that I have had in my head for a while but don’t have the skill to convey to others the way Mr. Coley does (and there’s plenty here I hadn’t thought of or didn’t really understand too.) As a previous reviewer stated, this book does an excellent job of getting to the core of our problems, and leaves me hopeful they can be solved.”

~ **Luke Albers**

In response to Luke Albers statement *“I’d buy a copy for all my friends if they had Kindles,”* Valerie James wrote: “I was just thinking the same thing after reading Know Stealing this morning. Previously, I was familiar with sound money principles, but have had a difficult time ‘translating’ these concepts to my friends and family. Thank you for writing in a simple manner, with straightforward analogies that can be more easily passed on.

“Know Stealing” should be passed along to every library, school, neighbor, pastor, family member, and friend—this book may open their eyes, give them hope, and save our children. ‘Bastiat’s “The Law” has been my #1 book to gift, but not everybody “gets it” who gets it—Shane Coley’s book will now be #1 to gift, and is much simpler to understand.”

~ **Valerie James**

“Rarely is the written work able to methodically unravel centuries of deceit and to lay the thieving emperor bare for all to see. Know Stealing accomplishes this and more, offering a necessary corrective to the theft at the root of modern society. Such is the power of truth simply stated. Arm yourself with the ideas herein to become a true defender of liberty.”

~ **Christopher David**

Candidate for Congress [CA-33]

“Shane Coley’s Know Stealing is a breakthrough, must-read work which uncovers hidden causes of America’s “boom and bust” economic cycles, as well as generational economic and societal decay. Know Stealing provides keys to how “We the People” will be able to save America from the brink, while creating a solid, stable foundation of both individual behavior and just government, resulting in economic and individual prosperity. Shane clearly, factually, and meticulously demonstrates how our costless fiat money system, along with other systems of state control, like energy policy, media, regulation, and taxation, are designed to pillage America’s citizens and the broader economy, leading to certain tyranny and destruction. Know Stealing reminds us that stealing violates the 8th Commandment, and that, as a nation founded upon Judeo-Christian principles, we must confront stealing head on and return our financial and governmental systems to an honorable, Constitutional, truth-based foundation before we will ever be able to avoid financial catastrophes, let alone ensure America’s liberties, freedoms, and prosperity are maintained into the future. I highly recommend Know Stealing as a foundational work for those involved in economic, industrial, and public policy, as well as for all who desire to restore America to her foundational roots and greatness.”

~ **David M Chaney**

CEO, Role1

CEO/CxO, Solutions

President and Founder, CEOs for Liberty

Know Stealing should be in everyone’s library and should be discussed and taught regularly in our homes, churches, schools, and businesses.”

~ **Cody Murray**

Read other reviews at <http://www.knowstealing.com>

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STEALING

M. Shane Coley

YAV PUBLICATIONS

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

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To all who live thankful and productive lives

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Foreword

Since our first meeting in 2005, I have enjoyed conversations with Shane regarding many of the ideas presented in *Know Stealing*. It has been exciting to watch him shape and refine them. Reading this book has given me the opportunity to consider again, in an integrated and comprehensive way, many of the ideas we explored in conversation.

The author's productive work presented here is scholarly and of the highest quality. More importantly, the ideas presented here have been refined in the crucible of passion. The author's passion for discovering, understanding, and sharing the truth about money sets this book apart from many others which deal with the same subject. Truth seekers who read and study the ideas and arguments captured in these pages will not be disappointed.

Money is one of the most pervasive ingredients in modern life. At the same time, money is one of the most misunderstood concepts of modern life. Definitions and discussions of macroeconomics and "money and banking" are common in academic textbooks. These are also common topics of discussion among businesses and individuals. The media always has coverage that is somehow linked to money. Yet these definitions and discussions rarely explore the reality of what is commonly called money. Without precise definitions and an objective study of 'true money,' those who control the definition and exchange of money will exploit those who do not. Theft is the inevitable result. The facts and rigorous analysis of the concept of money presented herein can inform and undergird policy alternatives aimed at preventing such theft.

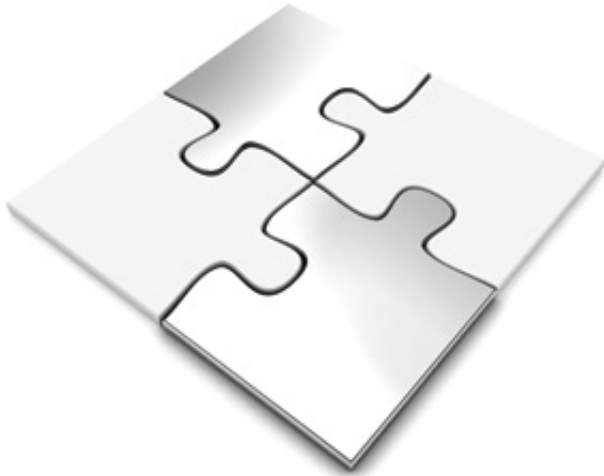
One may find passionate, thorough, and carefully reasoned discussions on a number of critical ideas in *Know Stealing*. Beginning with the important idea of money, Shane then considers the essential ideas of power, authority, production and more, as pieces of a grand puzzle. These concepts are grounded in Biblical truth and an honest study of history, rather than the all-to-common intellectual fabrication of those formally trained in the study of economics or politics. At a minimum, this book will challenge the reader to clarify his or her understanding of these important concepts. At a maximum, this book will spark a passion, which will motivate the reader to seek out, and support policy alternatives aimed at preventing the current broad-scale theft arising from what is loosely called 'money' today. I strongly encourage you to - **Know Stealing**.

~ **John Feezell, PhD.**

Professor of Economics

School of Business at LeTourneau University

1. Getting Started



1.1 Introduction

A people or nation that does not understand liberty cannot defend it.

I work late and rise early thinking about liberty, production and the nature of things. The stakes are high. Your time is valuable. Please permit me to be direct. We have been deceived, and I know *how* it was done.

The reader with an open mind, who actively questions everything including the ideas recorded here, will get the most out of *Know Stealing*. When you reach the last page, it is my hope that you will have demanded, and that I will have delivered, solid arguments capable of standing under scrutiny and pressure.

Consider the following brief statements:

We have problems that do not have to exist. They can be resolved.

Western civilization is crumbling financially at the level of the individual, the family, the business and the government. This is no small issue. Why is there a uniform worldwide collapse of economies?

We all know of some bad ideas that the other guy accepts. But it turns out that there are a few simple, important, highly destructive ideas, which have been commonly accepted by most people for several hundred years. This confusion and error is causing us serious problems.

Certain commonly accepted ideas are measurably and objectively wrong. These ideas encourage destructive actions, which lead to *bad outcomes*.

Just like in a garden, we are reaping what we sow. It is time for us to clear away centuries of brush and debris, and it is definitely time to stop planting more bad seeds.

Consider these *outcomes*:

Job loss

Home foreclosure

Business bankruptcy

People have debt not savings

Retirements grow and disappear *on paper*

Big government

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Government bankruptcy
Worldwide economic meltdown

The list goes on.

Ideas guide *actions*, which have *outcomes*. Therefore, if society as a whole has common problems, then whatever ideas are commonly accepted about the world are suspect. There are several institutions that people claim are essential to modern civilization because of the good they do. It is true that there are institutions that do good work and have significant influence. However, if an institution is considered to be genuinely influential in society, then it must also be open to scrutiny and critical review.

In other words, how can a person say that institution A is all that is holding things together, and then suggest that the problems that exist are not the fault of the institution? Either the institution is weak and really not very influential, or the institution is influential and has a share in the blame for the global economic, moral and social decay in which we find ourselves.

There was a time when I would have argued against certain negative claims about my religion, my country, our marketplace and our government. But I knew something wasn't right, so I went on a journey of sorts to discover the truth about things.

Please accept the following short story as an allegory.



I once went on a journey seeking answers. After many years I found an old chest in a forgotten place that was overflowing with good things, including lost knowledge. I studied the contents carefully.

Once I understood the reality, cause and nature of the problems we face, I looked back to tell my friends what I had learned. But they were far away and there was a great wasteland between us. No matter how hard I tried, people could not understand, unless they were able to go back with me over rugged terrain to see what I had found.

What a strange predicament to be in. I loved my friends and people in general and I was sitting before a treasure that would benefit us all. In fact, the value to each individual is much greater if this treasure is shared.

But I couldn't tell people about it, I was too far away. I couldn't show them because the trip over the wasteland was too long and

difficult. I had learned enough to understand what was happening in the world, but that is an altogether different thing from showing others. So I set my next goal.

I determined to learn how to effectively share a more complete understanding of the world with others. I set about building trails, roads and bridges. I started drawing maps for the journey. I labored until a dangerous, expensive, painful, fifteen-year journey was turned into a few days of safe travel. That travel guide is in your hand.

Come with me. You will never see the world the same again.



So how does this trip begin? We need to look for common ground.

By training, our thinking is dangerously twisted so that we learn to perceive friends as enemies and enemies as friends. Our first step is to genuinely put all persons into one big category. Propaganda shouts about differences between people everyday. Is there anything that all people have in common?

Attributing Creation to God, the Bible states the obvious.

“for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matthew 5:45b, NASB95)

We are all subject to a common enemy. For fifteen years I have studied to understand why American families and businesses are being pushed from *savings* and *prosperity* toward *debt* and *loss*. Besides the sun and rain, it turns out people have much more in common than many of us realize.

The course we are on as a nation is unsustainable. No great civilization expects to collapse, yet they all have. There are specific reasons for their collapse, which are discussed in these pages. The good news is that the powerful tools for restoring our individual wealth and prosperity are recorded here. The bad news is that the powerful tools for restoring our individual wealth and prosperity are not automatically clear and correct in the hearts and minds of people. In order to establish and maintain a free and prosperous society, each person must understand how the world actually works, and then teach others. Businessmen, pastors, politicians, professors, blue-collar, white-collar, young, old, wealthy, poor... We are all together deceived. I will prove this.

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Understanding the simple idea that *people depend on production* is required to restore our liberty and personal wealth. When that idea settles in alongside a few others, a new and valuable framework of understanding comes into view.

The Bible verse above observes a simple fact about the world. The sun rises and the rain falls on every perspective, attitude and religion.

What if there is a small bit of common ground between all people, regardless of worldview?

For instance, I may not know you, but I still know the sun rises and the rain falls on you.

People have different religions, but religion should not be a test for public office, except from the voting booth where it should always be a test. Even though Romans 13 is often poorly translated and wrongly applied, it does state that a Christian must be subject to higher authorities, regardless of religion, political affiliation or worldview. At the same time, the power and actions of authority must be limited based on just law. Getting this basic relationship right in our thinking is essential.¹

Perhaps there are other similar basics that can help restore our freedom. In fact, I am pleased to report that there are. I found these treasures by rejecting the false teaching commonly dressed in peer review, conventional wisdom and “it’s always been that way.” For example, we all *eat food and use things*. Since food and things must be produced, we all have at least that in common. Oppressive power comes primarily from control of production. Power structures cannot exist without the labor and property of producers. A clear understanding of these and a few other essential ideas may forever change the way you perceive the world.

I hope those who already understand these ideas will find this a useful teaching tool. I am thankful for the centuries of great thinkers, writers and teachers who have produced more detailed work on liberty, production and wealth than any one person will ever exhaust. Even so, there may be important ideas here that are genuinely new to most people, regardless of education or worldview.

I labored to make this very basic writing as short as possible, while still being careful to cover essential ideas, so that these ideas can travel quickly. Restoring our liberty and prosperity depends on the speed with

1 Romans 13:1-7 is quoted and discussed in significant detail in the section on Authority.

which these misplaced old ideas become commonplace again in our society. Every chapter has a purpose and role supporting that end.

One of the great challenges is engaging the audience. I want to engage the economist, scientist and pastor. I also want to engage the cattleman, mechanic and truck driver. I want to draw in the grandfather and his grandchildren. I am hopeful that these ideas will become the buzz in middle school, high school and college. I want mothers and daughters to be informed and encouraged.

In order to genuinely engage such a diverse audience, there must be a common denominator. One would think that an interesting common denominator that speaks to the educated man and the working man, as well as the young and the old would not exist. But it does.

In some ways I am uniquely qualified to present these ideas. You will see from my biography that I am at home with young and old, formally educated or not, grease and dirt or suit and tie, chewing the fat or presenting formal testimony. At every opportunity, I gladly advance the ideas of liberty and openly debate those who hold a different view, whether around the campfire or in the classroom, boardroom or in some public venue.

One of my challenges is to explain where we are wrong in our thinking without unnecessarily offending people. At the same time, I would debate any citizen, businessman, pastor, professor, teacher, leader, political activist, elected official or journalist on these ideas at any time, in any place. The bottom line is that our thinking is extremely mixed up and, in many important areas, just flat out wrong. The errors in our thinking and understanding are costing us our liberty, our homes, our jobs, our retirements and our children's future.

Liberty and prosperity are always at stake in every nation for every generation. Eventually bad decisions in the past force a generation to come to terms with the truth about what is necessary to sustain a free society. We are one of those generations. In our case, we can no longer naively depend on past production, new land, old-style immigration, industrialization, available cheap energy and paper wealth to maintain our standard of living.

We must learn how the world actually works.

We must learn to identify root causes.

We must learn how to defend our individual rights and property.

We must understand how power is developed and aggregated.

We must understand how nations are built and how they fall.

We must understand liberty, production, and the nature of things.

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These pages contain *keys* to understanding that will enable a person to see through the errors that surround us daily. We have the power to overcome destructive ideas that exist in business, politics and religion.

My single objective is to share the very best of what I've learned with those who are willing to open their minds and think, in order to understand how to restore and preserve our great nation as a land of liberty and production. I welcome all challenges with regard to these ideas.

Of course the reader will find in these pages opinion, preference, analogy, anecdote, hyperbole, allegory and other literary devices, which aid in conveying ideas and communicating meaning. When I claim that something is objectively true, it will be clearly stated as such.

The Bible is referenced as a guiding document for those to whom the book is Holy and as literature for others. Since Christian beliefs significantly impact the culture for both Christians and non-Christians, understanding how the Bible influences society is useful for all. While there are significant sections which deal with typically misinterpreted Bible passages, the main case can be made using math, reason, logic, and history. The Bible passages and teaching are necessary to help resolve certain problematic conflict in Christian teaching and thought.

The material in this book is powerful. It will teach a bold middle school student all that is necessary to debate and defeat a formally educated economist or an experienced politician. Imagine a magnificent skyscraper that is built on a lie. If a person, even a child, can show that the foundation is a lie, then the whole building has to be an illusion. Many things we believe are true are no more than illusions. Children who study the ideas presented in this book will have a better understanding of the world we live in than most successful and formally educated adults.

Sadly, we will discover that for the past 1600 years the Christian community has maintained at least one specific error in Christian thought which makes Christians largely responsible for the disaster we currently face as a nation. Amazingly I've been unable to find any person or literature that makes the specific case that you will read here. Neither have I met anyone who would even make the effort to present a reasoned argument against these claims. I'll be most appreciative if a reader can connect me with literature on any of these uncommon topics.²

2 My argument here is multifaceted. First, these concepts are critical and basic which

The goal of this book is to restore sound thinking about liberty, production, and the nature of things so that a growing number of people may experience the blessings of liberty. In order to do that we have to cover a lot of ground without getting bogged down on any one point. This is a slow starting, then faster-moving book of ideas which will point the interested reader to a wealth of literature which goes deeper into related theory and detail.

Liberty and prosperity are the prizes. So let's get started.

1.2 The Puzzle

“Educate and inform the whole mass of the people... They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.” —Thomas Jefferson

I am only asking you to fundamentally change how you see the world... How hard could that be?

Just kidding!!

I hope you will smile while you read. I find that when tackling something like this a little humor is often a helpful ingredient. Please understand that for most of my life I have been pouring out thoughts and questions on anyone who would slow down long enough to listen. As I learned more, the conversations became more interesting for me and more challenging for the unsuspecting leaders I questioned on various topics. Because I speak to people from various walks of life having all sorts of different worldviews, I have an idea about how people respond to new ideas in general and these ideas specifically.

My goal is for the reader to start here, learn, finish, keep learning and get others on the same track. That is a tall order for challenging material. Somehow I want for you as the reader to understand that this material is highly valuable to you personally. I want to convey that if you

means they should be common knowledge. No search should be necessary. Second, I have physically and electronically searched many resources where these ideas should be present, and they are either not present, or at least not obvious enough for me to find. Third, I have asked many well educated people from various disciplines and have met no one who has been previously aware of these facts and ideas. Fourth, the commentaries and writing I have found include error which the information presented here illuminates as error.

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wait a few months or years to read this, you will be unhappy about the decision. If I am correct, there should be strong word-of-mouth referrals confirming this claim.

Part of my experience in sharing these ideas one-on-one is finding that people are more or less beside themselves as these ideas sink in. People start talking about how this affects their own ideas, ranging from the most basic to the most in depth. Better yet, one day they realize their worldview and understanding has been radically changed, in a valuable way that the honest man or the saint would approve.

I don't know how to tailor an appeal to you personally, but if I did, I would. Different people have different experience, knowledge and preferences. Early chapters are basic and a little redundant. There is a reason for that.

Imagine that the information in *Know Stealing* is located at the peak of a mountain. Those who are skilled and well trained climbers can head straight for the peak. Those who are great at other things, but not skilled and trained in mountain climbing have to take an easier and longer route.

Because of the importance of these ideas, my goal is to produce a common document that skilled and unskilled alike can use to begin conversations that are capable of leading to restoration. People have no reason to work toward common solutions until they can see common problems. The goal is to get everyone up to the peak so that from a common vantage point we can begin working together toward restoring liberty, prosperity and individual rights.

In a challenging attempt to balance the document for a wide audience, the book is organized as follows:

Parts and Pieces Make a Picture

The chapters are written to convey ideas as though the ideas are pieces of a puzzle. We all know that puzzles are solved by assembling pieces. This book contains the pieces of a puzzle that explain what is necessary to sustain a free and prosperous society.

Thinking of a real puzzle, most puzzle pieces are little *mysteries* until they are fit together with other pieces. Parts of the scene become clearer as each small mystery is solved. The pieces eventually combine to form an easily understood scene. Along the way, it is often difficult to determine where a particular piece goes and it is often difficult to locate the next piece for a particular spot. This is especially true if the scene is unknown or, even worse, if the wrong scene is envisioned.

It is worth noting that in the real puzzle business the clear picture began as a scene that someone cut into little pieces to make a profit. When talking about real puzzles, that is a good thing. However, there are many *unjust* forces in society that are intentionally used to turn clear pictures into scattered pieces of a puzzle, also in order to make a profit.

The real puzzle business is about producing wealth by producing a product and challenging people to think. The social puzzle business is about transferring wealth and teaching people not to think.

In the real puzzle business, the goal is to tell people about the product and invite them to assemble the pieces. In the social puzzle business, the goal is to hide the pieces and tell people there is no puzzle.

Like a puzzle, these chapters fit together to present a clear picture that has been lost to us for at least several hundred years. The reader may think this statement is a bit extreme, but among these ideas are genuine treasures, which can change the general balance of power in the world.

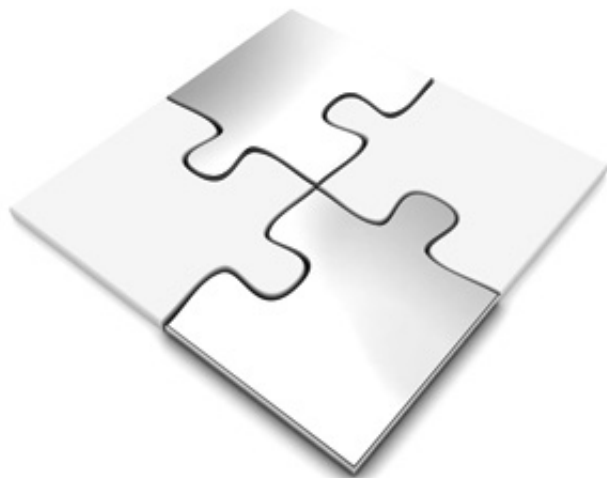
Please understand that this is a book of practical, profitable knowledge, not a book of secrets. However, it is also essential to understand that some people profit when the knowledge and ideas written about here are confused or unknown.

Please remember, as with a physical puzzle, some pieces may seem unimportant until they become part of the whole. Some pieces serve as simple connections to fill in the background. Other pieces are rich in detail and information. Sometimes it takes several pieces to bring an important part of the scene into clear view. But along the way and in the end, understanding increases and the world we live in becomes clearer. Solutions become possible in our thinking.

I wish these ideas could be organized as a real puzzle. If you were to put such a puzzle together, I think you would immediately call your best friends and say “Come as soon as you can. This you have to see.”

2. Removing Obstacles

Sometimes old ideas interfere with new ones.
Sometimes a false belief takes the place of true reality.



2.1 A Ship Story

We have so many problems. Which problem is most important?

Someone says: Well clearly, my problem is the one we need to fix first... Otherwise I would be working on something else...

May I encourage you to think with me on this?

What if there actually is a way to solve ninety-five percent of our problems by working together to solve a certain root cause of all our problems? I know this can be done.

Join me in recognizing that problems should be prioritized. Let's see if there is such a thing as a highest priority problem.

Let's use a ship analogy

Suppose there is a large, sophisticated, 4,000-passenger ship designed to sail from one continent to another over the course of three months. Suppose this ship has several problems, including a rude captain, four thieves, a murderer, a pirate, a lazy crew, poorly prepared food, severely damaged dishes, crumbling paint and lumpy mattresses.

Which problem would you address first? And when would this happen?

Suppose there are three groups who each identify the problems they consider most important.

Suppose they divide their energies and go to work. Let's say that they all succeed or that some succeed or that none succeed. You choose the outcome you prefer.

One Other Problem

Let's also suppose that there is one other problem. The ship has a large hole that takes on water at a rate of 500 gallons per minute. Using every available resource, only 250 gallons per minute can be pumped out of the ship. At this rate, the ship will sink somewhere over the deep ocean about halfway to its destination.

While all the issues are important, only the hole in the ship unavoidably and seriously affects every person on the ship. Only one problem absolutely must be solved or all is lost for the passengers.

But Some Gain

The same problem will provide gain for the pirate and his associates.

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They like the hole.

The pirate who drilled the hole will have a vessel waiting to collect the loot and carry him on to the next adventure. He knows that the mathematical reality of water flow guarantees the ship will sink.

Functional Root Cause

The only hope for the passengers is for them to know about the hole in the ship and plug it.

While they cannot remove the water fast enough, there will be no need to remove any water if they simply plug the hole before they leave. If the hole is plugged along the way, then once the hole is plugged, they have time, resources and opportunity to save themselves and the ship.

If they have knowledge of the hole and understand its effect, they will plug the hole and the remaining problems will matter again. If for any reason they do not plug the hole, nothing else matters because good food and soft mattresses are not needed by people who have been looted and left to die.

Ideological Root Cause

Now let's see if there is such thing as an ideological root cause.

Suppose the pirate offered safe passage and part of the loot to the captain, part of the crew, the murderer, thieves and the ship owner.

Now we see clearly that the passenger's loss is their gain. We also see that the danger we face, this group does not face.

We can also see that the reason this group of people has gathered on the ship is to steal, kill and destroy.

Stop Thief!

If the passengers were aware of what was coming, they would patch the hole and deal with the pirate. However, thieves don't advertise their plans. They operate in secret.

Applied Principle – Know Leaking

But let's just suppose that the passengers know to look for holes in ships and they know holes are bad, so they patch the hole without realizing that this plan was in motion. The pirate can say nothing because he has no power over the passengers and their associates while the ship is in port. His relative power increases only after taking away the resources necessary for the passengers to resist. Between the port

and the middle of the ocean, the balance of power changes in favor of the pirate, because of the hole. With the hole repaired in port, the situation changes.

With hope of success gone, the pirate, murderer, thieves, captain and lousy crew would leave.

Since now there will be no insurance settlement, the ship owner would again need to provide a valuable product and service to stay in business. To prevent loss, he would ensure that the food and other comforts were at least adequate and he would hire a dependable captain and crew.

Now we see that the hole in the ship was part of a plan to capture wealth. When the hope of gain through theft was gone, the criminals disbanded, the owner protected his property and employed his capital to gain a return. The passengers were safe and recipients of good service.

The Lesson

Some problems, like the hole, make all other problems meaningless and unimportant. Some problems are a higher priority.

Some problems, like the hole and the plan to steal, are the hidden cause of other problems, like lumpy mattresses, lousy service and insurance fraud. The secondary problems that we see divert our attention and keep us busy while our ship is sinking. Solving the Functional Root Cause is an efficient, uncontroversial, cost effective way to deter thieves and resolve secondary problems.

If the passengers know as a matter of principle that the ship must not have a hole, their attention to the ship's hull and its condition would take away the tools the thieves depend on for success.

Likewise, if we understand that stealing transfers power from the many to the few, we know that we must stop the thief by taking away the tools and systems of theft the thieves depend on for success. It is certain that stolen resources will always be used in ways that are destructive to individual life, liberty and property. It is certain that some people will steal, given the opportunity. They must not have the opportunity.

The United States is like this ship. We are nearing the deep waters. We must plug the hole. If we plug the hole, the problem you are most concerned about will probably disappear.

We must all know and understand the hole.

2.2 American Apathy?

The destructive bipartisan consensus to ignore principle has suffocated American political life for many years. Anyone who tries to ask fundamental questions instead of cosmetic ones is ridiculed or ignored.

It is common to hear that the problems we face in the United States are caused by “*the apathy of the American people.*” I disagree with this assessment. I have more confidence in Americans than that.

Government at every level is large, intrusive, wasteful and corrupt. Government intervention is destroying wealth, jobs, manufacturing, agriculture, savings, retirement, education and the basic moral fiber of our society. These are the kinds of problems that we say people are apathetic about. But are they really?

We pit defenseless, uncoordinated individual action against a massive integrated system with relatively unlimited resources which have been pillaged from the American people. We teach people to focus on the effects that they see and feel while ignoring hidden root causes. We should not be surprised when our problems are not solved and people feel defeated.

In common language today, if we hear that a person is apathetic, we understand that they just don't care. But more than that, we are conveying the idea that they don't care about something that they *should* care about. So before we can call the American people apathetic, we need to identify what it is that the individual American citizen should care about.

In simplest terms, it is the right and responsibility of each individual to defend his life, liberty and property. Furthermore *just* government is established to assist the individual in defending his life, liberty and property. In such a system, stealing in all its forms would be illegal and would be punished, preferably by restitution whenever possible. Every individual would either be the recipient of charity, or would exercise his liberty to be productive. He would care for his property and produce that which first sustains his own life and then leads to abundance and prosperity, so that he has enough to share with others if he so chooses.

The one who produces would learn to cooperate with others and would become a good steward and an efficient user of resources. The one who receives charity would learn to do what he or she could in exchange for the help that they would gratefully receive.

For a person to be disinterested in certain things is called

preference, not apathy, and is completely acceptable. We accuse people of being apathetic about things they should not even have to think about, much less care deeply about.

This may seem trivial at first, but the only thing that we need the individual American citizen to care about is that life, liberty and property will be defended and stealing will not be tolerated, including when government and favored business are the thieves.

Whether wealthy or poor, a person's self interest, beginning with hunger, will drive him to action.³ If stealing is not an option, then the individual will become a productive and responsible member of society or be the recipient of private charity.

All government depends on resources confiscated from producers for its very existence. Therefore, in a system where life, liberty and property are defended, government would necessarily be small and limited.

Our large, intrusive, destructive government does not exist because the American people are apathetic. Our large, intrusive, destructive government exists because the people have been deceived and robbed. It exists because we have unwittingly permitted legal plunder.

I am one of many people who are rationally disinterested in our national three-ring circus called politics. I don't know anyone who is apathetic about knowingly being robbed.

The American people are in many ways deceived and may be resigned to defeat, but I refuse to believe they are apathetic.

2.3 People Eat Food and Use Things

Production and Liberty cannot be separated for long. Those who give up industry and agriculture plant seeds of poverty and oppression.

The idea that *people eat food and use things* may seem like a simple, pointless concept, but it is a critical element in understanding how wealth is transferred, how the middle class is wiped out and how nations fall. In fact, starting here in thought will often quickly illuminate and

3 “For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.” (2 Thessalonians 3:10, NASB95) and “A worker's appetite works for him, For his hunger urges him on.” (Proverbs 16:26, NASB95)

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clarify otherwise confusing issues. Please test this idea to see if it can be profitable for you in your thoughts and conversations.

Our culture and daily life is filled with categories and labels that are designed to explain how people are different from one another. We are taught to think about all of our problems in terms of divisions between groups. “Woe is me! Those people are *different!* I lost my job and it’s all their fault!”

It is true that there are differences between people, but diversity is good not bad. In a free society diverse people will associate based on coordination and preference.

Imagine a blacksmith who dislikes farming and a farmer who doesn’t like to do the work of a blacksmith. Even though they would not trade jobs, the blacksmith eats corn and the farmer’s horse needs to be shod. When they have spare time they both like to fish. In the market they coordinate their diverse interest, skills, labor and property. In recreation they enjoy their profits and common interests by exercising their liberty and freedom of association, based on preference.

Today we are conditioned to divide people into categories based on race, sex, age, religion, occupation, income, and of course the various political categories. Once divided, we are taught that the other group is the cause of some problem we have. Of course much could be written about the error of lumping people together in groups, but the purpose of this chapter is much less ambitious. The objective of *Know Stealing* is to correctly identify the functional causes of the problems we face today so that we can find real solutions. One critical piece of the puzzle is to set aside differences and look for things people have in common.

The subtitle of *Know Stealing* is “*solutions for people who eat food and use things.*” Regardless of any and all other categories, if you are a living person, I know for certain that you eat food and use things.

We all eat food and use things; food and things must be produced.

Production is the fruit of labor and property; labor and property belong to individuals.

Individuals have rights according to justice; property rights must be respected so that people have the opportunity to be productive.

Under those conditions we can prosper together. During a recent political campaign I often made the following observation:

“Many of us notice that people depend on production. People eat food and use things. Food and things must be produced. Government produces nothing and unlawful government wastes much. Since people depend on production and unlawful government interferes with production, there is

no way that such government has any solutions for us. We must remember that every promise made today by a government official has to be kept by a producer. There is no other way.”

To be clear, just and limited government is healthy and valuable. However just and limited government still doesn't produce anything, doesn't participate in the market, and doesn't steal from citizens or otherwise transfer wealth. Just government is a partner in defending life, liberty and property.

You may have noticed that some form of the word production occurs six times in the preceding quote. Production is the just or righteous mixture of life, liberty and property combined in a way that the output is more valuable than the input.

There is no way that we can even understand our problems, much less find meaningful solutions, unless we understand the massive degree to which people depend on production, every minute of every day. In fact, everything we do or use depends on production. Those who believe there is a Creator would consider creation itself to be the result of production. However, setting aside the notion of a Creator and observing things as they are, it is clear, for example, that there is a productive exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen between plants and animals. Even our thoughts depend on production. Please consider the following logical progression:

If a person doesn't *eat*, he *dies*.

If a person is *dead*, he doesn't *think*.⁴

Therefore *thought* relies on *food*.

Food must be produced.

Restated, *thought* relies on *food*, which must be *produced*.

Therefore *thought* relies on *production*.

Since thought relies on production, then clearly everything we do or use relies on production.

Not only is it certain that people depend on production, but we will observe that power comes from production. We will also discover that authority is power which is primarily distributed through labor, property and production. Authority is the power to act, not the right to

4 That is, temporally speaking, a dead person doesn't think.

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act. The importance of understanding the source, nature and limits of authority cannot be overstated. A clear and correct view of authority is essential to understanding life and liberty.

Once again, the subtitle of *Know Stealing* is “*solutions for people who eat food and use things.*” Eating food and using things is something that every living person has in common. People depend on production for everything from their basic needs to their most extravagant wants. In the chapter titled *Production and the Prodigal Son* we observe the firm relationship between physical and spiritual wants and needs.

Consider Matthew 6. Jesus tells us not to worry about food and things, but He closes by noting that God knows we need them. People eat food and use things because God organized creation that way.

“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (Matthew 6:25, NASB95)

“For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” (Matthew 6:32, NASB95)

We are not to worry about these things, but we are to work. Based on Scripture, according to Jesus, God the Son and God the Father are workers.

“But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” (John 5:17, NASB95)

“For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.” (2 Thessalonians 3:10, NASB95)

Since our most pressing needs, our most distant dreams and the force of authority all depend on production, we will think in terms of production while considering the problems we face as a society. This is a powerful key to understanding. *In fact, as we continue developing our framework for analyzing our problems and looking for real solutions, you will see that every problem can be significantly answered in terms of production.*

Much more could be said about eating food and using things, but after all this is just one piece of the puzzle.

2.4 Turning Dreams into Stories

Those who value leisure above liberty will lose both.

Sometimes it helps to think about what we are giving up. We have already established that people eat food and use things. It turns out these very same people also have hopes, dreams and desires.

A person who has been cold and hungry all of his life is likely to dream of things like a meal every day or a pair of shoes. On the other hand, a person who has plenty of food, clothes and shelter may dream about cars, houses, vacations and exciting things to do.

But all people dream of something.

Some are very creative thinkers, having imaginations illuminated with goals and desires far beyond their present conditions. But most people dream of something that is just a little better than today. Their vision ends in the shadows bordering their present circumstances. Their hope is small.

We fail to dream of better things because we are so busy, so debt burdened, so burned out, so stressed and confused about what is happening to us that better dreams don't have a chance to enter our minds.

The practical and essential knowledge in this book has the power to restore our hope and help us turn dreams into stories. When dreams become stories, new and better dreams take their place. Hope increases and new opportunities in life are discovered, cherished and pursued.

When people are able to live free, their *liberty under justice leads to production, which leads to abundance, which leads to prosperity*. Prosperity means that most needs are met and our opportunities abound. When people have abundance and prosperity, they begin to dream, not just the kinds of dreams that we dream today, but better dreams of better things.

The hungry man would count it progress and blessing to have the opportunity to produce food for himself and his family. After they are fed, perhaps the new dream is of a home.

I suspect our society is currently filled with dreams of a stable home and family that is whole, close, supportive and prospering. Families are prospering when they have savings and no debt. Imagine that stable, prosperous families were not dreams but instead were the typical result for hardworking people. With essential knowledge added to hard work, this can be the case again.

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Imagine a secure retirement being a measurable reality based on real property, rather than a precarious or lost dream based on paper promises from Social Security, a stock portfolio or increasingly worthless dollars.

Think for a moment. What are your dreams?

Some of us dream of fishing. If you save enough to go fishing, but the purchasing power of your savings are taken away, then your fishing trip is stolen. If you have to sell your boat to pay taxes, your boat and labor are stolen. If your dream is a quiet vacation, but your profit is confiscated, your vacation is stolen.

Suppose your dream is to spend peaceful time with family. A society that mocks respect and hard work will cause relationships to be damaged. Because our labor is taxed and wasted, we have to work more so that we lose time with our spouse, children, parents and friends. We lose downtime for ourselves. We are robbed of the beautiful things we dream of and work for in life.

Given the opportunity, our hard work and sacrifice would have already turned many of our dreams into stories of things already done. When dreams of the past are realized, new dreams and new plans fill our imagination, and guide our labor, thoughts and time. This book explains exactly why many of our dreams and plans are not yet stories, and what each of us can do about it.

Remember that stolen dreams are stolen labor, profits, wealth. The thief is enjoying your savings, your retirement and he is fishing in your boat. He is enjoying your dream.

Let's pull our dreams off the shelf and learn to dream boldly again. It is time that we armed ourselves with knowledge and once again dream the American Dream. The opportunity to prosper is our heritage and our right and we are duty bound to defend it.

2.5 Stealing Defined

The title of this book is intended to convey two important ideas. The first idea is *no stealing* because stealing will utterly destroy the liberty and prosperity of any society. The second idea is *know stealing*, which is to say we must have a clear understanding of stealing and the forms it takes in order to recognize and stop it.

Most people would agree that stealing is wrong and should not be

allowed. However sometimes what one person would call theft another person would call acceptable, or perhaps even say the action is smart and sophisticated. For this reason we need to define the term. Once we have a clear definition of stealing, we will need to look for places where theft is occurring, often without being noticed. This search for hidden theft will be developed throughout the book.

Our working definition for Steal: To take away or withhold without right or permission.

Two Boys and a Ball

Let's analyze our definition by considering an example beginning with two eight year old boys. Suppose Joe and Steve are playing with Joe's ball.

Clearly, if Steve takes Joe's ball, then that would be stealing.

If Steve throws Joe's ball into a fire so that it burns up, that would also be stealing. This is important because stealing occurs whenever a person is deprived of something that is rightfully his, including the *opportunity* to produce things of value. Even though Steve does not have the ball, it was still stolen from Joe and Steve did the stealing. Some might incorrectly say that Steve is not a thief since he did not get any benefit from the ball.

But maybe there were indirect benefits for Steve. Steve may have a closet full of balls such that his gain was simply the satisfaction of depriving Joe of also having a ball. This would be theft from something like pride or envy.

Or maybe Steve rents his ball to the boys in the community and he did not want Joe as a competitor. This would be theft based on something like greed.

If Steve did not intend for Joe to be deprived of his ball, then Steve would have taken responsibility for Joe's loss and replaced Joe's ball. This would be an accident followed by restitution, which is good.

Finally, it could have been burned up by Steve just out of meanness. This is theft based on something like bitterness, envy and disrespect.

Permission

Consider the idea of permission. Suppose Joe gives Steve permission to take his ball.

If Joe gave Steve the ball willingly with no threat of force involved, then it would be a gift from Joe to Steve. However, if Joe was placed

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under any form of unjust pressure that would only be relieved if he gave Steve his ball, then it is theft. In other words, if Joe gave Steve the ball to keep Steve from beating him up or burning the only ball on the playground, then that is not permission. It is coercion and theft.

Property Rights and Authority

Now we need to think about Joe's right to own the ball. Suppose Joe worked raking leaves to earn the money tokens to purchase the ball. Clearly he has the right of ownership of the ball. But what if we bring Dad into the picture?

We will look at this in terms of authority, property and production. In this relationship Dad is the producer and provider. For this reason, as a boy who eats food and uses things, Joe is perpetually in his Dad's debt. This means that while Joe is a dependent child, Dad can always call in a payment against Joe's account. Therefore, as producer and provider, Dad has an economic right to take young Joe's ball at any time, for any reason. Dad also has the authority or power to take Joe's ball. According to Scripture, children are to honor their father and mother, which is a law of God. Violating just law is a basis for the use of force in response, which could then be a basis for taking Joe's ball. Since the father is responsible to nurture and teach his son good lessons, taking Joe's ball without a good cause will be a counterproductive lesson and will damage their relationship.

Now, suppose Joe maliciously threw his ball through the window of the house. In this case, Joe has put his ownership of the ball in jeopardy. His dad is the authority who could remove the ball from his possession and should cause him to be accountable for the broken window. Joe has in effect stolen the window, which is a violation of just law. Joe should have to pay for and help replace the window, after which his ownership of the ball would be secure again. Only if he made a habit of breaking windows would he permanently lose his ball under the power of Dad's authority according to the standard of just law, based on theft and failing to honor his parents. Repeated offenses would indicate willingness to steal and to dishonor (withhold honor from) his parents.

If it was an accident and Joe had a good attitude about his responsibility in this, his Dad might graciously decide to pay the price for Joe. Notice that ownership of the ball is not necessarily forfeit by the accident, but property equal to at least the value of the replacement of the window is forfeit by either Joe, or perhaps his Dad. He may have cost himself the value of fifty balls. In any case, someone has to pay the full

price for the window. Therefore we can easily see why exacting the price of Joe's ball would be more than just, since he will remain a debtor with regard to the window. More can be said and the ideas will be further communicated as the chapters unfold.

Recap

So far we have determined that stealing is when something is taken away or withheld from its rightful owner, regardless of whether the theft was accidental or the thief is benefited. In addition we see that sometimes a thief is benefited in ways that are indirect and difficult to see. We also see that a dependent is subject to his provider as a simple matter of accounting and we begin to see that authority should exercise power according to the standard of just law. Finally we see that we can forfeit our own property rights by certain actions we take, as a matter of accounting under just law.

Government as Parent

Some people believe that government has the authority and the right to take property from its citizens. Some people would even look at government as being like the parent and citizens like the child. Let's begin by considering the parent/child analogy, but instead of thinking of the government as being like the dad, let's think of the dad being like government. Let's talk about dad as though he were government.

First of all, since people create government, the dad would be created by the son and his fellows. The son would be creating the dad in order to defend each and every person's individual right to life, liberty and property. Of course it's absurd to think of the son creating the father... *Our analogy has already failed, but, with a hat tip to irrational thought, we press on!*

Secondly, since government produces nothing, the dad would not be the provider and teacher. Dad would be completely dependent on the labor, property and production of the son for everything.

Because the son has to actually produce in order to survive, the son is the one who understands how things actually work and therefore he is the one who is the teacher.

We know the real dad should love his son and desire to see his son succeed. The real dad should sacrifice himself for the benefit of his son. *However, if dad were like government, then he would consume his son to benefit himself and his associates.*

Now some might still say that government has a right and authority

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to take the property of its citizens in order to benefit its citizens. This argument falls apart for any action performed by government that goes beyond its proper role, which is to be a partner in defending the life, liberty and property of the individual. This is true for two reasons.

First, since people depend on production and government produces nothing and wastes much, then when government does anything that is in conflict with natural law or inappropriately depends on human nature, it can only be causing loss and harm to its citizens. This is a logical reality.

Secondly, the reality of government intervention is that some men in the society are benefited, by theft, at the expense of other men. In other words, to think in terms of the absurd parent analogy, a government that loves its citizens like a father loves his children, would not forcefully benefit some citizens (children) at the expense of other citizens (children). But this is what unlawful (unjust) government always does. Since recognizing unlawful government is essential, one of the goals of *Know Stealing* is to help clearly identify unlawful government.

The Role of Government

Lawful government is measured by how well it abides by its prime directive. The prime directive of government in the United States of America is expressed as follows: Defense of individual Life, Liberty and Property.

Life and liberty cannot be separated. Without life, liberty has no meaning. Our first property is our own person, therefore liberty and property cannot be separated. All additional property is acquired and maintained through the exercise of life and liberty. Just law will always be opposed to theft, which prevents property from being stolen. Therefore, *liberty encompasses life, liberty and property.*

Consider the following paraphrase from the Declaration of Independence:

“[people are] endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights... among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. ... To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed... [and government’s] foundation [must be laid] on such principles and [have its powers organized] in such form, as to [the People] shall seem most likely to effect their [Individual] Safety and Happiness.”

The Declaration of Independence is about individual liberty and the role of government as a partner or agent organized to assist in defending individual liberty. Why would the people of a nation form a government for any other reason?

Consider the US Constitution:

From the Preamble: *“secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity”*

From Amendment 5: *“nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”*

**Consider the CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF
GEORGIA:**

From the Preamble: *“promote the interest and happiness of the citizen and of the family, and transmit to posterity the enjoyment of liberty,”*

ARTICLE 1, BILL OF RIGHTS, SECTION 1, RIGHTS OF PERSONS

Paragraph 1: Life, liberty, and property. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property except by due process of law.

The Declaration of Independence, the preamble to the US Constitution, the Fifth Amendment, the preamble to the Georgia Constitution and Article One, Section One of the Georgia Constitution are all about defending the life, liberty and property of the individual.

Not so clearly seen is the reality that those who were forming these guiding documents wanted far greater powers for government, far fewer rights for people, and more wealth transfers for those favored by government. The sad fact is that these kinds of powers have been seized for most of human history, even during the settlement of this continent beginning in at least 1607. The manipulators skilled in transferring wealth have been very successful, but their success does not have to continue.

Knowledge Is Required

Our founders knew defending Life, Liberty and Property is dangerous and difficult work.

“Government is not reason. It is not eloquence. It is force. Like fire, government is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.” — George Washington

“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” — Thomas Jefferson

“All the perplexities, confusion and distress in America arise, not from defects in their Constitution or Confederation, not from want of honor or virtue, so much as from the downright ignorance of the nature of coin, credit and circulation.” — John Adams

John Adams made a point that indirectly explains the problem. When we don't understand how stealing is done, we don't know how to defend against it. When we don't understand the nature of production, authority, power, justice, law and money, we are deceived into supporting the institutions, which crush good things in society.

We must always remember that people depend on production. People eat food and use things. Food and things must be produced. Government produces nothing and wastes much. Every promise made by a government official has to be kept by a producer.

Government is charged with the prime directive of defending the life, liberty and property of all citizens. This cannot be accomplished by taking positive actions to “make things happen,” because positive actions by government consume resources which can only be confiscated from individuals. Confiscation of life, liberty and property by force to fuel positive government action violates the prime directive of our government and is therefore unjust and unlawful. Only by defending property rights can government fulfill the prime directive. Instead our government defends wealth transfers and “entitlement rights.” This must end.

To test the idea that power comes from the control of production, try to identify and explain any other source of temporal power in this world. The only way for government to have the power to act is by confiscating production from individuals. Production is the fruit of life (in the form of labor), liberty and property. *Therefore our government steals individual life, liberty and property.*

For those who may wonder if the government really steals from productive citizens, the proof is easy.

Inflation takes away purchasing power that has been saved over a lifetime of work. Inflation eventually destroys the purchasing power of financial instruments, like stocks or insurance policies, which are denominated in an inflated currency.

The Central Banking System forces individuals and small business into debt, so that today few people really own any property. The banks hold title to nearly everything. In 1910, 70% of all business expansion was self-funded because people had savings. The Federal Reserve System was established in 1913 and now nearly everyone has debt. This is not a coincidence.

Home foreclosures are caused by government intervention and the process is making favored business wealthy through bailouts. The debt based system forces people to pay interest on their own purchasing power⁵, but few people recognize this is the case, as noted by the John Adams quote above.

Farms and factories are bankrupt, yet the entire economy depends on these essential wealth-producing properties. Only by being robbed can an entire class of producers that are the foundation of an economy fail, while dependent sectors become wealthy. Until people stop eating food and using things, farms and factories are essential to wealth production. The product of our banks is deceptive wealth transfer. Until banks start producing something of value, they can only plunder producers. Banks having the legal privilege to create money tokens from thin air contribute nothing to wealth production.

And these examples are before getting into anything controversial like which actions of government are just and lawful.

Finally, remember that if we pay for a product and the seller doesn't deliver, we are entitled to get our money tokens back. Otherwise the seller is guilty of theft by taking. We have paid a high price for government to defend our life, liberty and property. But someone has stolen a large part of our life, liberty and property. Regardless of who is the thief, government has not done its job. The thieves should pay restitution under law, whoever they are. We need a refund.

Ten Commandments

We are defining stealing in this chapter. Our working definition for Steal is to *take away or withhold without right or permission*.

5 Purchasing power, money, money tokens

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This will be further developed in the following chapter titled *One Law*, but to close out our definition chapter I want to make two observations about the Ten Commandments from the Bible.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
10. Thou shalt not covet

At least the eighth and tenth commandments would make no sense unless people have a right to own private property.

A violation of any of the last six commandments involves withholding or taking something away from another person. In addition to withholding honor, dishonoring parents may lead to loss of property in any number of ways. The loss could be from something like lost production or fines and fees paid by parents on behalf of an unruly child. The last five commandments clearly involve theft or attitudes and thoughts which lead to theft.

Steal: To take away or withhold without right or permission.

Defining stealing is one more piece of the puzzle.

2.6 One Law

I will not waste time with statistics about how many laws there are in the United States or any of the other super-states around the world. We all know we have too many laws, regulations and rules. Instead I want us to think about the nature and purpose of law.

As you read this chapter, please remember that the goal is to identify one law that will satisfy everyone and provide a foundation for a healthy society. If the Bible and the common experience of many people are correct, then a person's conscience should support or reject the conclusion.

Law is a standard, not a force

One of the observations that we begin with is that authority is a force, not a standard. Next we observe that law is a standard, not a force.

We often incorrectly think of authority as a standard and law as a force. These are subtle ideas, which are developed later, but are worth mentioning here. For example we sometimes refer to the “force of law,” but law is not capable of exerting any force. Law never takes an action. Instead, law is the standard that determines which actions are acceptable and often which actions are taken in response to lawless behavior.

In order for a body of law to be just it must be based on a consistent standard. Law must be applied in the same way to every person. Since our state and federal constitutions are obviously organized to defend the life, liberty and property of the individual, the boundaries of law are easy for us to set.

No person or entity may infringe on the life, liberty or property of another person.

When the standard of law is to defend the life, liberty and property of the individual, then a lawbreaker is one who violates another person’s rights. Therefore the lawbreaker forfeits his rights to a degree relative to his violation of another person’s rights. The lawbreaker has used force or deception to violate the rights of another person. Therefore the power of authority is able to satisfy justice by using force in response.

The penalty for violating another person’s rights should be restitution whenever possible. Restitution may be to return the property that was taken, or it may be to return the property along with a penalty. In some cases, like murder or some forms of abuse, the thing that was taken, cannot be replaced. In certain of these cases the lawbreaker forfeits his life.

Before we get into the idea of the origin and definition of law, since our federal, state and local laws originate from definite places with specific jurisdictions, at the very minimum there must be a single guiding standard for any laws from a common source. In other words, there should never be conflict between any two laws from the same source, like a federal, state or local government.

It turns out that what we call law, which is then the basis for rules and regulations, often is unjust, treats people differently and is in conflict with itself. Since law is supposed to be just, impartial and based on a single standard, what we call law in modern society is an utter disaster and disgrace. In fact, much of the writing in the legal books is

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lies, not laws. We accept these disastrous standard-violating lies in part because we wrongly believe that authority is a standard.

Law and Scripture

The Bible tells us that if we love God and people then we will not be in violation of God's Law. It also states that the wicked are lawless and those who keep the law strive with the wicked. This information is helpful because it leads us toward a method of testing all law.

Consider the following Bible verses:

"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12, NASB95)

The Law is intended to remind people how to treat each other right. We know what is right by thinking of what we would want for ourselves. In addition, we are told that the Law of God is made known in the heart and conscience of people. In fact, it is God's nature that is the standard for law. A law is an expression of a particular assessment and application of actions that are consistent with God's nature. This includes assessing the violation and applying punishment.



"And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40, NASB95)

If we love God and love people, our thoughts and actions will not violate God's law.



"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there

is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans 13:8–10, NASB95)

Because love does no wrong to another person, love is the fulfillment of the law.



“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14, NASB95)

Again love fulfills the Law.



“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23, NASB95)

If there is something called law that is against any of these things, then it is unlawful in itself. For example, arresting people for flying kites, selling lemonade, or directing traffic when a light is out is wrong⁶. Since the Bible teaches that God’s law is known in our conscience, this passage suggests that law will not be contrary to our conscience. Something that claims to be law, yet is contrary to the human sense of justice, is actually unlawful.



“If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” (James 2:8–9, NASB95)

This makes it clear that there is to be no partiality in anything, especially law. It also indicates that, when showing partiality, law is transgressed and the transgressors are convicted, but the conviction happens with no human official or court involved. This is likely a good example of the concepts in Galatians 6:7 or Romans 2:5.

6 These things have actually happened...



“Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But those who keep the law strive with them. Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the Lord understand all things.” (Proverbs 28:4–5, NASB95)

Lawless people praise other lawless people. **People who want to keep the law will strive with those who do not.** This also states that evil men do not understand justice.

This passage is particularly important. It indicates that a simple and clear test which will identify those who really desire to abide by the standard of law, and expose those who do not. The Bible clearly states that love is the fulfillment of the Law of God. The Law of God is recorded in detail in the Bible and also recorded in the conscience of each person.

But is there a way to identify a standard that will consistently expose lawless behavior for those who reject the Law of God as a standard?

Rejecting Bad Law

There are so many more things to say about law, but for the present purpose a focused and limited commentary will be more valuable.

The only way for the king or government to issue an unlawful decree and call it law is for the people to be confused about the nature of authority and the nature of law. When the people misunderstand authority and law, those who possess authority and make the laws will plunder the people.

Logically, since by definition those who abide by the law of God will do no harm to their neighbor, if people forget or violate the law of God then they are necessarily doing harm to their neighbor. People are either blessed or harmed based on sowing and reaping. Therefore if we sow ignorance we will reap destruction. If we sow lawlessness we will store up wrath for ourselves and will not reap blessings for ourselves or our children.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” (Hosea 4:6, NASB95)

On the other hand, if people have a clear understanding of the nature of authority and the nature of law, then they will recognize

unlawful decrees and reject them. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that with knowledge, the society would be organized in such a way that no wise ruler would dare to issue an unlawful decree. If a ruler behaved oppressively in a well-balanced society, the people would simply reject his decrees and replace him as ruler.

One Law for All

In the previous chapter we observed that at least the last six of the Ten Commandments involve stealing. We also know that people depend on production and production is the fruit of labor and property. When the Bible says that love does no wrong to a neighbor, this has to include honoring property rights. We cannot steal from a neighbor and claim to be loving. Of course the Eighth Commandment is “You shall not steal.”

Suppose on the next July 4th in the United States we wiped the books clean of all laws, rules, regulations, executive orders or any other thing that might be called law, except the US Constitution. Once that was done, imagine that we have a ceremony where we write our first and only additional law on a parchment: No Stealing.

After that, we would amend the Constitution in every place that violated this law.

Would this serve us well, or fail the test? Let’s think about that.

Can One Law Do The Job?

If someone murders, he steals a life.

If someone sexually assaults, he steals physically, emotionally and he steals time and health during the healing process. He also steals from relationship. Many books have been written which describe various aspects of the theft involved in such an act.

Adultery implies a violation of trust, which involves at least stealing things like love, joy and peace, and likely including theft of productivity and property.

If a property owner dumps chemicals in a stream or on the ground, he steals from the quality and health of the property he affects, especially that of his neighbor.

If a manufacturer is dumping waste when he should be cleaning up, he steals profits from the responsible producer who is a good steward of his manufacturing process.

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If an unruly child disrupts a classroom, he is stealing from the teacher and other students. If his behavior is bad enough that his parents have to come and deal with the behavior, he is stealing their honor and their time and resources by wasting them.

Libel or slander is bearing false witness and steals a person's honor and good name.

Physical assault would steal a person's time, thoughts, sense of security, ability to work to some degree, cost of medical care, and general health for some period of time.

Of course stealing property would be stealing.

False advertising of a product would be stealing. In fact, false advertising would be a case of employing differing weights and/or differing measures in order to steal. If a quantity or value of a product is represented at a value higher than it actually is, then something of too great a value would be exchanged for the product.

Selling company stock worth \$10 at a price of \$100 would be fraud and therefore stealing. Of course a person could choose to exchange \$100 for the stock because he believes that the company stock will be worth more than that in the future. However, when we study the nature of production we realize that no physical asset will produce beyond a certain margin of profit in a given year. This means that the only way for the stock with an underlying physical value of \$10 to eventually sell for greater than the \$100 purchase price is to once again misrepresent the value of the company stock. The purchaser is hoping for another opportunity to employ differing weights or differing measures in marketing his stock to the next purchaser. He is hoping to steal.

Alexander Hamilton employed differing weights and differing measures in order to confuse the people and corrupt legislature. Alexander Hamilton was permitted to violate our law against No Stealing.

Inflation of the money supply steals purchasing power. Therefore bills of credit, paper money, token money, debased currency or diluted commodities are all deceptive forms of stealing.

Unpaid debts are also stealing, provided the debts are based on genuine exchanges of value that remain out of balance.

When government regulation prevents a farmer from producing whatever he chooses on his property, his freedom of choice is taken away. If he is forced to leave land fallow, his opportunity to produce this year's crop is taken away. If the government pays the farmer to not grow food, other producers bear the cost of the payments directly and in terms of higher prices for food. Notice the phrase "other producers bear the cost." If a person consumes more than he produces, he will eventually run out of stuff, unless producers give gifts or are robbed to replenish the food and things used by Mr. Consume-more-than-I-produce.

Since people depend on production, the bills can only be paid by people who are net productive. Everything else is wealth transfer.

Tariffs

One of the important ideas to get settled in our minds is that in an honest system of exchange, producers exchange with producers. Which producer will give up what he has worked hard to produce in exchange for empty promises? None that I know. Producers value their life, liberty and property.

However, when a producer is trained to believe *there is no puzzle* or that certain harmful actions are actually to his benefit, then he will trade for an intermediary like paper money or subsidies. Paper money, subsidies and the system that enables them will always eventually crush producers and then overall production.

Before I explain the next point, remember that I am for strong and prosperous American citizens. I am for genuine wealth producing jobs here in the USA. I stand for all of the kinds of honest actions and choices that will cause Americans to prosper. With that in mind, another form of theft is the tariff.

When a tariff is imposed, inefficient local businesses are able to charge local buyers higher prices. That is a case of government enabled stealing. We are taught to think that the tariff protects local jobs, but that is only the case in a false economy driven by paper based wealth transfer and market manipulation. In an honest system of exchange, no matter how cheap an imported good is, unless the local people produce something of value to exchange for the cheap goods, there will be no local market for the cheap goods. The market will coordinate to produce things of value that can be exchanged in complex ways. With tariffs, favored business prospers at the expense of other people. With free trade in an honest system of exchange, the hardworking people prosper, and

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along with them even the poorest in the society are better off. *I, Pencil* written in 1958 by Leonard E. Read is a great short essay explaining the wonders of market coordination.

Implications of One Law

If our one law was ***No Stealing*** and the members of a society were able to ***Know Stealing*** when they saw it, then there would be no room for partiality and the society would prosper.

In the following chapters we will discover that because of the natural order of things, having one law against stealing would lead to ***a healthy balance of power*** in society.