

# The Guide



## SECRETS

Young and old, men and women like to have secrets in their lives, as well as telling secrets to each other. In this picture you see two little girls telling each other matters which they think nobody else knows. A secret is an affair which few people know and ought to be kept private. We may have secrets from men but from God we cannot hide anything. He knows the deepest thoughts of our hearts. There is no secret that can be hidden from God.

Moses said: "You place our sins before you, our secret sins where you can see them" *Ps 90:8*. "God is going to judge everything we do, whether good or bad, even things done in secret" *Eccl 12:14*. "God through Jesus Christ will judge the secret thoughts of all" *Rom 2:16*. God will not only judge the outward actions of men, but their most hidden sins and secret deeds, their inner motives and aims. "Whatever is hidden away will be brought out into the open, and whatever is cov-

ered up will be uncovered" *Mk 4:22*. "God's curse on anyone who makes an idol of stone, wood, or metal and secretly worships it" *Deut 27:15*. "The adulterer waits for twilight to come; he covers his face so that no one can see him" *Joh 24:15*. We may succeed in hiding our evil deeds before men all our lifetime and die without our secret sins having come to the light. But we cannot escape God. The day is surely coming when the dead, small and great, stand before God. "I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, then another book was opened, the book of the living. The dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. Whoever did not have his name written in the book of the living was thrown into the lake of fire" *Rev 20:12-15*.

It is therefore essential to confess our secret sins to God, and where needed to men as well. If we do so, God will forgive us; for the precious

blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin *1 John 1:7*. David asked God to deliver him from all hidden faults *Ps 19:12*.

God alone has knowledge of all secrets. "Who knows the mind of the Lord?" "There are some things that the Lord our God has kept secret" *Deut 29:29*. In His love he has revealed many of His secrets to men, first of all through His prophets and then through His Son Jesus Christ, who came to reveal His Father, and His Father's will to us. In *Amos 3:7* we read "The sovereign Lord never does anything without revealing His plan to His servants, the prophets". "He takes righteous men into His confidence" *Prov 3:32*.

Through Jesus Christ, God has revealed all the secrets of His love to us. It is no secret today that "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life" *Joh 3:16*. **It is no secret** that "everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God" *Hebr 9:27*. **It is no secret** that "all of us must appear before Christ, to be judged by Him. Each one will receive what he deserves, according to everything he has done, good or bad, in his bodily life" *2 Cor 5:10*. **It is no secret** that "He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins" *2 Pet 3:9*. He therefore commanded us to "go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples" *Matt 28:19*. **It is no secret** that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" and made "Christ to be our wisdom. By Him we are put right with God's holy people and are set free" *Heb 13:8, 1 Cor 1:30*. Millions today testify of His saving grace, of His power to forgive all our sins and heal all our diseases. We know for sure that Jesus "endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. Because of our sins He was wounded. We are healed by the punishment He suffered" *Isa 53*. We also know that "if we confess our sins to God, . . . He will forgive us our sins and purify us from all wrongdoing". "The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin" *1 John 1:9,7*. **It is no secret** that Jesus the Lamb of God not only came to take away our sins, but also to baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire *Matt 3:11*. **It is no secret** that Jesus the Son of God died on the cross for our sins, that He rose again from the grave and went up to Heaven where He is "able, now and always, to save those who come to God through Him, because He lives forever to plead with God for them" *Heb 7:25*. He is preparing a place for His followers in heaven, so that we will be where He is through all eternity *John 14:1-3*. **It is no secret** that if we "continue to endure, we shall also rule with Him" *1 Tim 2:12*. We also know for sure that

Jesus is coming back again. "There will be the shout of command, the archangel's voice, the sound of God's trumpet, and the Lord Himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first; then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord" *1 Thes 4:16-17*.

**It is no secret** that when the figtree (Jewish nations) has begun to blossom and all the trees (Gentile nations); the Coming of Christ to set up His kingdom of peace on earth will be near. Everybody knows that this is happening ever since the Jewish State of Israel has been established while intensive nationalism has made many small and bigger nations independent in government. We therefore expect the Coming of Christ for His people at any time.

**It is no secret** to us that men will become worse and worse in these last days. "Many will give up their faith at that time; they will betray one another and hate one another... Such will be the spread of evil that many people's love will grow cold, "in preparation for the revealing of the anti-Christ, the god of this world, who is deceiving the nations with empty promises making them believe a lie" *Matt 24:10-13*. But we also know that the dragon, that ancient serpent, which is the Devil or Satan will soon be chained and thrown into the bottomless pit, so that he cannot deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are over" *Rev 20:2-3*.

**It is no secret** that Jesus is the only way, the truth and the life; and that no one can go to the Father except by Him *John 14:6*. We also know that there is no salvation beyond the grave, that today is the day of salvation and that the day is coming where nobody can be saved. **It is no secret** that Satan is a liar, a deceiver and a murderer, trying to pull you down into an eternal hell prepared for him and his angels *John 8:44*. We therefore beg you to be reconciled to God. Tell Him all your troubles and confess your sins. He will purify you from all sin, create a pure heart in you and accept you as His son and daughter, making you an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. Come now. Pray where you are, before it is too late.

If you want to know more of God's unrevealed secrets get hold of God's inspired book the Bible. It will tell you all you need to know now and for eternity. **It is no secret** what God can do. What He has done for others He will do for you.

**I TELL YOU A SECRET**

# DO NOT STEAL

The first sin which God convicted me of was the sin of stealing by taking that which did not belong to me. It was during the first world war when I was taken prisoner and threatened to be shot. While crying to God for help, he first convicted me of my sins. One day the whole prison cell was filled with the glorious light of God. In that wonderful light I was shown all my sins right back into childhood. God reminded me of the time, when as a small boy of about six years, I had taken a small coin of money that did not belong to me. Another boy, a playmate of mine had lost 2 1/2 cents (tickey) while we were playing. I knew where the "tickey" had rolled to, but did not tell him. Afterwards I went and picked the money up and bought myself some sweets. In the eyes of God I had stolen, and stealing is sin. I had long forgotten about it, but God did not forget and reminded me and showed me how ugly stealing is in God's sight, Who said "Do not steal" *Ex 20:15*. He showed me all my other sins which were many, but the first sin of which I was found guilty before God was the sin of stealing. Although it was a small sum of money, but to my playmate it was a lot, all that he had, and God wrote it down in His book where all our sins are entered in, to be read openly at the day of judgement. Together with all my other sins I confessed this sin and asked for forgiveness. I knew that this sin together with all the others would take me to hell. As I could expect to be shot any day, it was terrible to think I had to go to an eternal hell where the fire is never put out and the worms never die *Mark 9:48*. For hours I cried aloud to God for forgiveness. Suddenly Jesus appeared to me, hanging on the cross. I could see the many ugly wounds, the crown of thorns on His head, and cruel nails in His hands and feet. His face was all twisted and disfigured owing to all the pain and sorrow that came over Him. Blood was flowing from His wounds. While looking at His blood in amazement I suddenly was made to realise that all my sins were washed away by His precious blood. I knew that all my sins were forgiven through the Blood of Jesus. "The Blood of Jesus, His son, purifies us from every sin" *1 John 1:7*. The peace and joy of God came into my heart. God also set me free from my sins and from prison, to serve Him, the living God. He helped me not to steal any more.

## THE FIRST SIN

THE FIRST SIN COMMITTED BY MAN WAS AN ACT OF STEALING. Adam and Eve had plenty of the best fruits to eat in Paradise. Hundreds of fruit-laden trees surrounded them, besides the wonderful tree of life, from which they could eat freely. God had only **one tree** reserved for Himself, the tree "that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad"

*Gen 2:9,17*. Satan, who is a thief and a murderer, persuaded Eve to steal that which did not belong to her. This was the first theft ever committed by man. It brought separation from God, untold misery and death to humanity up to this day. The originator of the sin of stealing is Satan himself. Stealing, therefore, in whatever form it may be, is partnership with the devil whom Jesus called a thief and a murderer and a liar *John 10:10*.

God says "DO NOT STEAL" *Exodus 20:15*. He also told His people that "If a man steals a cow or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he must pay five cows for one cow and four sheep for one sheep" *Ex 22:1*. You may never have stolen a cow or a sheep, but you have stolen many other things, perhaps clothing, soap, sugar, food, money, jewellery, tools, fowls, fruit, potatoes, pumpkins, mealies, instruments, bicycles, cars or anything that does not belong to you. Perhaps you have just borrowed it from the owner with no intention at all of ever returning it again. This too is just like stealing. You may have bought furniture, clothing or anything else on credit without ever intending to pay for it all. This too is another way of stealing. Maybe you see somebody possessing a lot of things, which you are in need of, and you think that he or she will not miss it if you take it. Before God this too is stealing and sinful. Perhaps, as a heathen, you were in a circumcision school (lebollo) and stole the pumpkins, mealies or even a sheep, not looking at it to be wrong. However, God calls it stealing. Perhaps you call yourself a Christian and yet you continually take the things that do not belong to you, maybe from your master or mistress, from your very friends or from your own relations or from strange people. Selling things beyond their actual value is just another way of stealing the money out of people's pockets.

It would take too long to describe here the many ways of stealing. It is enough to know that God said "DO NOT STEAL". Let me conclude by quoting some more scriptures to show what God has to say about stealing.

"Do not steal or cheat or lie. Do not take advantage of anyone to rob him. Do not hold back the wages of someone you have hired, not even for one night" *Lev 19:11,13*. (Masters failing to pay the wages of their servants are guilty of stealing). "Whoever kidnaps a man, either to sell him or to keep him, as a slave, is to be put to death" *Exodus 21:16, Deut 24:7*.

Achan, an Israelite, stole a beautiful cloak, silver and gold, from the things that God said were to be destroyed while Jericho was being attacked. God blamed the whole tribe of Israel for his sin and blamed them for stealing. They lost the battle against

Ai. Thirty six men were killed because of the sin of stealing of Achan. Achan's sin of stealing was found out and all Israel stoned him and his sons and daughters, his donkeys and sheep and all he had. "Then the Lord was no longer furious" *Joshua 7*.

Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel and with that the kingdom from his godly father David. But he was killed. To steal the hearts of people by flattery or bribery is sin and does not pay *2 Sam 15:6*.

Immoral woman steal the hearts of men by telling them that "stolen waters are sweeter". They lead them to the depths of hell. There are likewise immoral men who steal other men's wives, breaking up homes and bringing misery and judgement on themselves *Proverbs 9:13-18*.

Stealing very often leads to murder and death *Jeremiah 7:9*. If a thief was caught breaking into a house and killed, those that killed him were not guilty of murder *Exodus 22:2*. "The Lord has an accusation to bring against the people who live in this land. "There is no faithfulness or love in the land, and the people do not acknowledge me as their God. They make promises and break them; they lie, murder, steal and commit adultery" *Hosea 4:1,2*. "Every thief will be removed from the land" *Zech 5:3,4*. "For sin (stealing ) pays its wage – death" *Romans 6:23*. Just last week a man stole a sheep, killed it and put the carcass into a bag which he fastened on the back of his bicycle. As he was riding along, one of the feet of the sheep got through the bag into the wheel of the bicycle. The thief fell and was killed on the spot.

Hundreds and thousands have lost their lives while in the act of stealing, or have become murderers without intending to do so. Maybe you have been stealing for years without being found out, but be sure your sin will find you out. Jesus said "Whatever is hidden away will be brought out into the open, and whatever is covered up will be uncovered" *Mark 4:22*.

## GREED

Greed leads to stealing, unless we desire the gifts and blessing of God. Greed is called idolatory because it makes a God out of the things of this world *Col 3:5*. God said: "Do not desire another man's house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns" *Exodus 20:17*. Jesus said that greed and stealing come out of the heart together with murders, adultery, pride and deceit *Mark 7:21-23*. If you want to be set free from the desire and habit of stealing, give your heart

to God and He will give you a new and clean heart filled with His love and His Holy Spirit. He will set you free from the habit of stealing.

## IS IT RIGHT FOR A PERSON TO CHEAT GOD?

God blames the Israelites for cheating Him by not paying the tenth part of their income to Him. He said: "A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me. Bring the full amount of your tithes to the temple, . . . I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things. Please read *Malachi 3:7-12*. The tenth part of our income does not belong to us, but to God. Let us also be careful that we are not found guilty of stealing God's honour by boasting of what we have done *Acts 12:21-23*. In *Romans 13:8-10* we read "Be under obligation to no one – the only obligation you have is to love one another . . . Do not commit adultery; do not commit murder; do not steal; do not desire what belongs to someone else . . . Love your neighbour as you love yourself. If you love someone, you will never do him wrong". Jesus said: "Ask and you will receive; seek, and you find; knock, and the door will be opened to you" *Matt 7:7*. Be concerned with His Kingdom, and He will provide you with these things (food and clothes)" *Luke 12:22-31*.

Many men and women (tsotsies) that have never worked but lived by stealing whatever they could, are today honest well-to-do Christians. They have confessed their sins to God and man. Where they could they repaid the things they had stolen. God forgave them and gave them new hearts and a new spirit, the Holy Spirit of truth.

Therefore, the Apostle Paul says: "Don't give the Devil a chance. **THE MAN WHO USED TO STEAL MUST STOP STEALING** and start working, in order to earn an honest living for himself and to be able to help the poor" *Ephesians 4:27,28*.

Let Jesus come into your heart and home and you will not have to steal any more. When Jesus came into the house of Zacchaeus, a tax collector, who stole the people's money by overtaxing them, Zacchaeus said: "Listen sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much". Jesus said to him: "Salvation has come to this house today" *Luke 19:1-10*.

Greed and stealing (theft) come out of the heart of man. If you want to be free from the sin and habit of stealing, give your heart to Jesus. He will give you a new heart filled with His love, and He will set you free.

J.R. GSCHWEND

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