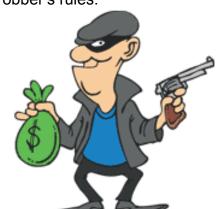# A Thief With Scruples

The Words We Live By, a book by Brian Burrell, is a comprehensive, fascinating treasure trove of American common sense and whimsy. In it, Burrell tells of an armed robber named Dennis Lee Curtis who was arrested in 1992 in Rapid City, S.D.

Curtis apparently had scruples about his thievery. In his wallet, the police found a sheet of paper on which was written the following code, sort of a robber's rules:

1. I will not kill anyone unless I have to.
2. I will take cash and food stamps – no checks.
3. I will rob only at night.
4. I will not wear a mask.
5. I will not rob mini-marts or 7-Eleven stores.
6. If I get chased by cops on foot, I will get away. If chased by a vehicle, I will not put the lives of innocent civilians on the line.
7. I will rob only seven months out of the year.
8. I will enjoy robbing from the rich to give to the poor.

This thief had a sense of morality, but it was flawed. When he stood before the court, he was not judged by the standards he had set for himself but by the higher law of the state.

Are we not prone to do the same thing as Dennis Lee Curtis? Do we make up our own rules based on our preferences or what is convenient, given the circumstances? Not surprisingly, our rules often get us into trouble. And they are often in conflict with those God has provided.

Like Curtis, when we stand before God, we will not be judged by the code of morality we have written for ourselves, but by God's perfect law. And although we can never reach perfection on our own, God has provided a way for us to meet His standard. Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins; He became the perfect sacrificial lamb offering atonement for us. He has become our advocate with the Father.

All we need to do is exercise our faith in Christ and allow Him to be the Lord of our lives.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24).

– Beecher Hunter