

### LEAVE THEM POTTED PLANTS!

I've sometimes wondered how often people steal things from store front displays. It must happen rather frequently, though, since shoe stores display just one of a pair and I've seen other merchandise chained to immovable objects. Today, while waiting for a friend outside a local grocery mart, the thought crossed my mind that displays of flowers and vegetable plants are especially vulnerable. Whether or not I actually observed a theft remains a mystery...but here's the story.

Part of the renovations of the grocery outlet in question included an eating area on the sidewalk. As I sat under the welcome shade of a patio umbrella, a gentleman rode up to a nearby bicycle stand. Parking his vehicle beside a shelf of robust looking tomato plants, he proceeded to fill the front basket. His actions were slow and deliberate as he carefully filled the receptacle with a number of the potted vegetables. Once he couldn't get any more into the basket he carefully placed his bike helmet back on his head, fastened it securely and drove off with the tomatoes.

I admit I was somewhat dumbstruck both at his apparent brazenness and with my total inaction in the situation. I, who am too often given to impulsiveness, remained physically immobile while questions raced through my head: "Did he just steal \_\_\_\_'s plants?" Should I yell 'Thief!' in hopes that he will experience a change of heart?" "Should I make a citizen's arrest?" I'll never know the answers but to my great relief, I actually did nothing. Known for my outstanding ability to put foot in mouth, I patted myself on the back with the assurance that he'd probably paid for them and was just picking them up.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry",  
James 1:19

No proof? No accusations!