

# Honesty



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## Honesty Is a Principle of Salvation

The thirteenth article of faith says, “We believe in being honest.” It is important to learn what honesty is, how we are tempted to be dishonest, and how we can overcome this temptation.

Complete honesty is necessary for our salvation. Our Heavenly Father is perfectly honest and fulfills all His promises (see Alma 7:20, page 225). The devil is a liar—the “father of lies” (2 Nephi 9:9, page 73).

Honest people love truth and justice and are true in their words and actions. They do not lie, steal, or cheat. The Lord has given all of us the opportunity to repent of any dishonest actions in the past so that we can become clean and honest at all times.

## We Must Not Lie, Steal, or Cheat

Lying is intentionally deceiving others. When we speak untruths, we are lying. We can also intentionally deceive others by a gesture or a look, by silence, or by telling only part of the truth. Whenever we lead people to believe something that is not true, we are not being honest.

The Lord is not pleased with such dishonesty, and we will have to account for our lies. Satan encourages us to justify our lies. Honest people will recognize Satan’s temptations and will choose to speak the whole truth.

Jesus also taught, “Thou shalt not steal” (Matthew 19:18, page 1220).

Stealing is taking something that does not belong to us. Taking merchandise or supplies from an employer is stealing. Copying music, movies, pictures, or written text without permission is dishonest. Taking more than our share of anything is stealing.

We cheat when we give less than we owe, or when we get something we do not deserve. Some employees cheat their employers by not working their full time while accepting full pay. Some employers are not fair to their employees and pay them less than they should. Taking unfair advantage is a form of dishonesty.





## No Excuse for Dishonesty

People use many excuses for being dishonest. People lie to protect themselves and to have others think well of them. Some excuse themselves for stealing, thinking they deserve what they took, intend to return it, or need it more than the owner.

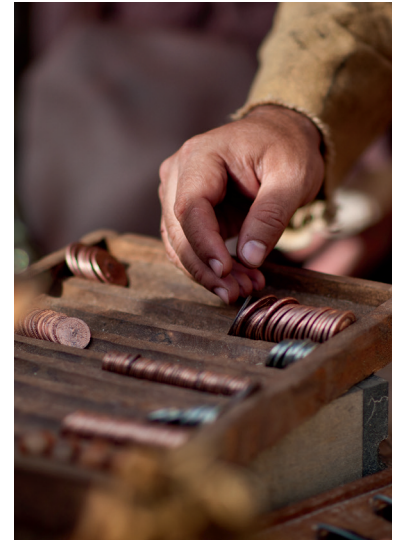
To the Lord, there are no acceptable reasons. When we excuse ourselves, we refuse to repent and the Spirit of God is no longer with us. We become more and more unrighteous.

Heavenly Father wants us to continually work at being honest in all of our actions, statements, and thoughts. He will give us strength to do this.

## We Can Be Completely Honest

To become completely honest, we must look carefully at our lives and repent of dishonest actions immediately.

When we are completely honest, we cannot be corrupted. We are true in everything we say and do and in our agreements, even if being honest costs us money or friends. When we are honest, we can face the Lord, ourselves, and others without shame. President Joseph F. Smith counseled, "Let every man's life be so that his character will bear the closest inspection, and that it may be seen as an open book, so that he will have nothing to shrink from or be ashamed of" (*Gospel Doctrine* [1919], 316).



"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8, page 1492

LOOK  
THEM  
UP

### Additional Scriptures

- **D&C 42:27, page 71** (do not speak evil of neighbors)
- **D&C 10:25–28, page 18** (Satan deceives)



# Personal Experience

The study courses presented in prison by Church volunteers have helped me see myself more honestly and taught me that honesty is an integral part of God's character. He is honest and truthful. He has commanded me to be honest, and I have chosen to rid myself of dishonesty. Covering up my sins and errors is not possible, because God knows me completely already. By honestly acknowledging the falsehoods in my life, I can appeal to my Savior for help in overcoming dishonesty. I can rid my life, my behavior, my thoughts, and my deeds of my rebellions.

I desire so much to be healed by the Savior's infinite Atonement. Through prayer I can repent of my dishonest behavior. As I have turned to the Lord for help, His grace has come upon me and helped me defeat those bad behaviors.

Learning to be honest with myself was not easy. I had told so many lies to others and to myself and had become defensive about my deceitful habits. When I took the LDS addiction recovery program, I strengthened my resolve to be honest.

I desire with all my heart to be an honorable son of my Heavenly Father. I am so thankful that He loves me and surrounds me with His aid as I am learning again how to be honest. I'm still working to be honest in all things. It's a lifelong pursuit. But I'm happy that I'm now traveling along the correct road to acquire this attribute.

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What are some of the different forms of dishonesty?

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What can you do now in your life to become completely honest in your thoughts, words, and actions?

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Who in your life has set a good example of honesty? What did you admire about this person and what did you learn from him or her?

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Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

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