

HONESTY

The story goes that a bank teller was approached by a stranger one day and given the proposition to cash through his window \$1,000,000.00 in bogus checks. In exchange for this, the teller would receive \$100,000.00 in cash. The teller gave it some thought and then agreed to the dishonest deed. The stranger then changed the terms of the deal to a payoff of only one thousand dollars. Shocked, the teller asked the stranger why he thought he could do that? "You see, it's quite easy", said the stranger, "I already know you're a thief and a cheat, now I just have to find the lowest amount you will do it for".

For members of the church and for Stevenson's, honesty is not the degree of the dishonest act, it's the actual state of being - either we are honest to the core of our heart or we have no qualms about flat out lying here or there, no matter how big the issue.

Some time ago I filled out an application for refinancing our home. On the application was a question about any outstanding judgements. I did have an outstanding judgement, but, knew (or believed at the time) the judgement was not being pursued and had not been filed in county court. I rationalized and rationalized until I felt comfortable answering the question "no" - thinking that this was really not a judgement and it would not show up on any records. Obviously, that was the wrong answer. I should have just said the truth. As it turned out, the judgement had been filed, but, there was an error in indexing it to my name. Once that was corrected, my misleading answer on the application began to loom over our heads with some very real and ugly ramifications. The whole matter could have been avoided by being 100% honest.

In a libel suit involving CBS Network, a CIA memo was introduced in the course of discovery that contained an interesting question, "Have we gone beyond the bounds of reasonable dishonesty?". Today, there are too many people that are willing to lie and cheat as long as it does not go too far. Either you are honest or you are not. Honesty needs to be a way of life.

How many marriages have been destroyed because of one or both spouses being dishonest? How many friendships have been terminated because someone has been dishonest? Being trustworthy is such a vital element of any relationship! How many business deals have gone awry? How many lawsuits and billions of dollars have been spent in legal expenses, settlements and judgements because of someone being dishonest?

The world will beat a pathway to the door of the person that can be trusted because of their commitment to and practice of honesty. So many people are known these days for their reputation as liars and cheats. Unfortunately, there are not a whole lot of people in the world that are known for their integrity. But, when you find one, they are truly respected and held in deep admiration.

I had a young man call me once that was terminated from work and felt like he was entitled to some unpaid wages from his ex-employer. He said that he had the keys to the owner's business and was not going to give them back until he got paid. He asked me if I thought that was right. I said that more important than any money was his reputation and that he handle himself with

dignity. I said, "return the keys, say thanks for the job, express your feelings about the pay, and then, leave the matter in his hands". This way, no one can ever say that the young man ever acted inappropriately. Quite the opposite, he was acting very responsibly. He took my advice and worked out an agreeable deal on the wages with the owner.

"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom" - Thomas Jefferson

"When you tell the truth, you never have to worry about your lousy memory." - someone

"No legacy is so rich as honesty" - William Shakespeare

"Dishonesty is like a boomerang. About the time you think all is well, it hits you in the back of the head". - someone

"Prefer a loss to a dishonest gain; the one brings pain at the moment, the other for all time"
- Chilton

There is no question as to how the Lord feels toward dishonesty. In the Book of Mormon it says, "...and the liar shall be thrust down to hell". From D&C 76 we know the Telestial Kingdom is reserved for those that are among other things, liars. In the temple recommend interview we are asked if we are honest in our dealings with our fellow men. We know Satan is referred to many times in the scriptures as the "Father of Lies". Let's not chose to become his children by choosing to be dishonest.