

The Morality of Honesty (Ephesians 4:24-29)  
10-21-13

Why did people call our president Abraham Lincoln “Honest Abe”? His wife once said that “Mr. Lincoln . . . is almost monomaniac on the subject of honesty.” Even his enemies remarked on his capacity for honesty. After his death, one of his aides attempted to explain this characteristic: “He believed in the great laws of truth, the right discharge of duty, his accountability to God, the ultimate triumph of the right, and the overthrow of wrong.” (Leonard Swett)

Does the world value honesty? A recent survey of 29,760 HS students:

- 30% admitted stealing from a store within the past year
- 23% stole something from a parent or relative
- 20% stole something from a friend
- 42% said they lie to save money
- 83% said they lied to a parent
- 64% cheated on a test in a year
- 38% cheated two or more times

When asked to review themselves:

- 93% said they were satisfied with their personal ethics and character
- 77% said that when it comes to doing what is right, they are better than most

Clearly, the world does not value honesty. But this is not a problem with young people; it is a trickle down issue. *“The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge”*

Honesty is a manner of Living. Job believed it was the main part of his integrity; Job 31:5-8. Honesty as a lifestyle is dealing on the “up and up”. It means defrauding no one of any thing, and never seeking to deceive.

Conversely, dishonesty is a manner of living too. It is about living to better myself; selfishness and Covetousness and Materialism. Our excuses? Everyone does it; They deserve it; I deserve it

The damage of dishonesty is extreme. Dishonesty Destroys Reputations (Reputation: A Good Name Proverbs 22:1). We are meant to uphold a good name in our conduct as Christians, and dishonesty wrecks that characteristic (1 Peter 2:12). Dishonesty shatters a reputation; The reputation of Christ and the church itself is hurt. As well, dishonesty destroys relationships. Relationships depend on trusting (Job 31:1-8).

God’s Desire for Honesty is revealed in Ephesians 4:24-29. There we are told to put away lying. We are told to speak truth with his neighbor, not always easy. Steal no longer (and stealing is much broader as we have seen). Work with the intent to share, and let no corrupt word leave your mouth