

Who Gets Hurt?

Dub McClish

It is not unusual to hear all sorts of dishonesty and everyday cheating justified by the lame excuse, "Nobody got hurt." Abe Lincoln did not so reason. Remember the time he walked seven miles to repay two cents he had overcharged a woman while working as a clerk? Look at some common dishonesties of the times. Is it all right to take some of our employer's merchandise for personal use? After all, he owns a big company and won't even miss it. Besides, if I don't get caught who will it hurt?

What about my schoolwork? What does it hurt if I cheat on a test to make a passing grade, if I don't get caught? It does no harm either to the teacher or the school. Out of all of the income tax forms that are filed each year and the billions of dollars collected, surely our government will not miss a couple of hundred dollars worth of cheating on my tax returns! Thousands of others reason that a "little" padding on their insurance claim won't do any harm. After all, the insurance company deals in hundreds of millions of dollars every year and one claim is only a drop in the bucket. Teenagers often fall into the trap of thinking that they can take a side trip or two, although they have been instructed by their parents to "come straight home." What will it hurt if I don't get caught?

True, it may not hurt the employer, the insurance company, the school or the parents (although in many cases it does hurt all of these in some way). Even if I hurt no one else, when I cheat, I hurt myself! The cheater forgets God's immutable law: "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). When one proves unfaithful in "little things" he advertises his lack of trustworthiness in all things (Luke 16:10). Paul sternly commands, "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. 4:28). A cheating student steals answers, a sneaking, disobedient child steals authority given to his parents and one who "fudges" in his business affairs steals money. They are all in the same class and are foolishly destroying their own worth and honor. James Cockrell describes them:

Such a person is woefully immature as a human being. He is also cutting his own stupid throat. In an age when man is reaching for the stars, this person still lives in the Dark Ages. This person is a skulking pickpocket; and worst of all, a cipher, a zero, a nothing.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, February 26, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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