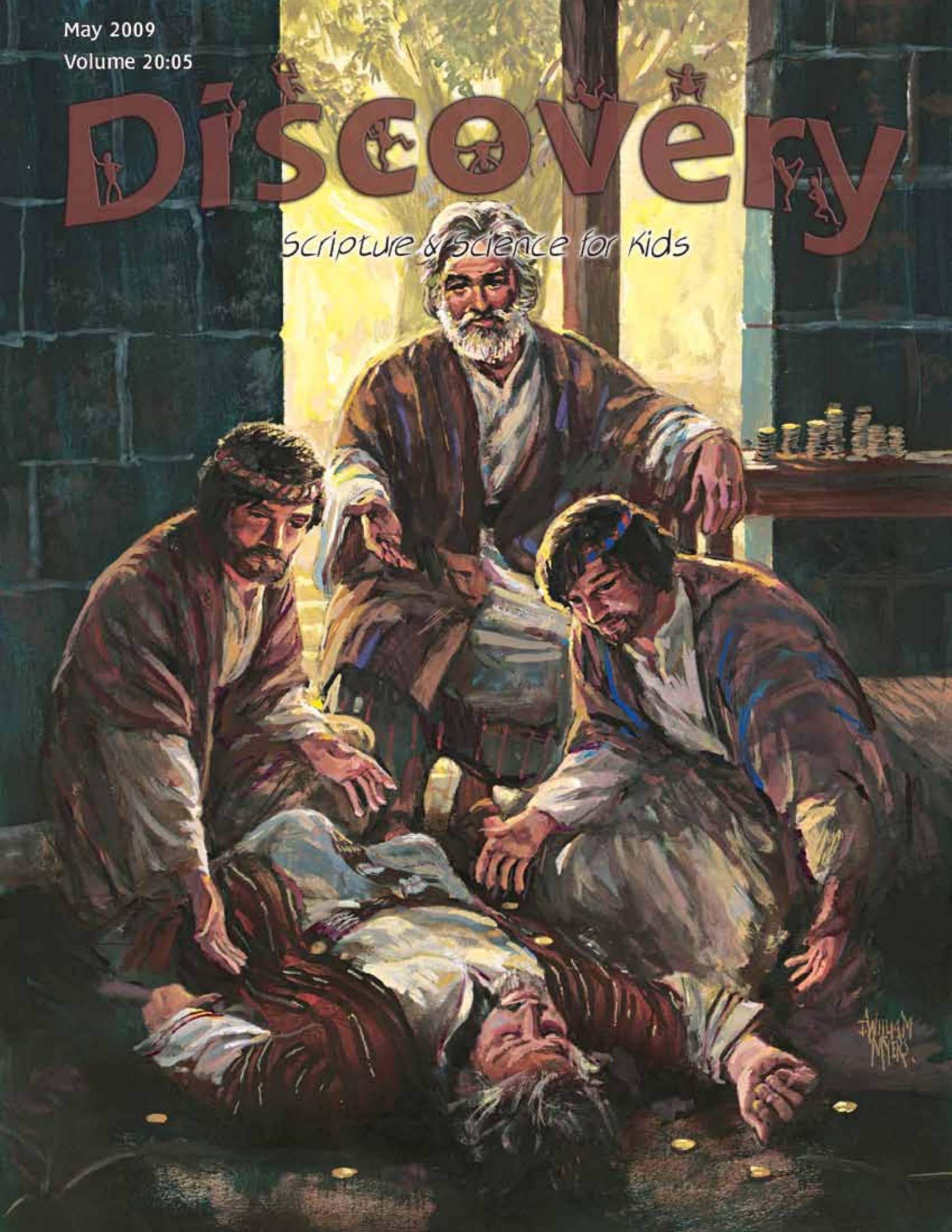


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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



Lying



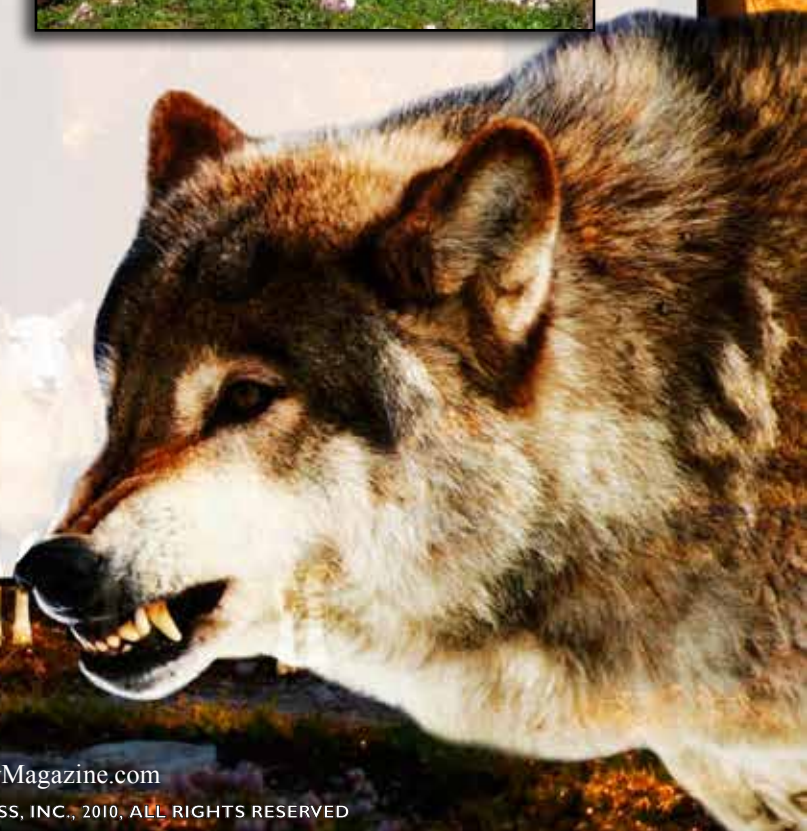
Have you ever told a “little white lie” to cover up for something you did? Have you ever told a lie to “help” a friend who did something wrong? If you have, did you feel bad about it afterwards? Lying is the opposite of honesty. All lies are wrong, no matter how big or little they are. When a person lies about his grades in school, it is just like when a criminal lies before the jury and judge. All lies are sins in God’s eyes, despite how “big” or “small” the world thinks they are.

The Bible clearly condemns lying and commands us to tell only the truth. It has examples of people who gave in to the temptation to lie, and it has stories of godly people who avoided lying and faced the consequences of telling the truth. Paul wrote: “Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor” (Ephesians 4:25). If we decide to always tell the truth, we can have a stronger relationship with God. Proverbs 12:22 says: “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.” If we want to have a good relationship with God, we must not be dishonest.

Have you ever heard of the story of the boy who cried “wolf”? The boy kept telling the townspeople that there was a wolf that was attacking the sheep, but actually there wasn’t. He did this many times, and the townspeople became tired of his dishonesty. One day, however, the boy was taking care of his sheep, and he really did see a

wolf. When he tried to inform the townspeople, they ignored him because of his bad reputation. Because the boy had lied many times earlier, the wolf ended up killing the boy’s flock of sheep.

One lie can easily destroy your reputation, and it is very hard to earn respect once you have lost it. Don’t you want a good reputation, so others will be able to believe what you say? We need to follow the example of God, Who, as Paul wrote, “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2). God is faithful to His promises, and we need to be faithful and trustworthy in all we say and do.



THE TROUBLE WITH LYING

Have you ever been tempted to lie? Maybe you did something you knew you were not supposed to do—like going somewhere after school rather than going straight home. When your mother asked you if you came straight home, you felt panicked and did not want to tell her the truth. Or, maybe in school, you were talking in class. When the teacher asked if you were the one talking, you were tempted to say, “no.” The urge to lie to avoid the consequences of our actions is a strong temptation. The first evil action recorded in the Bible was the lie that Satan told to Eve. Jesus said that Satan “is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). And Cain lied when God asked him, “Where is Abel your brother?” (Genesis 4:9).

Lying is a very serious sin. It is not too serious when a little boy accidentally spills his milk, or a little girl gets her dress dirty. But it is very important for children not to lie about such things. Children who get away with enough lies in their early years find it easy to tell lies as adults. They can become so comfortable with lying that it no longer bothers them.

A Christian husband and wife (named Ananias and Sapphira) in the early church sold some land for a certain amount of money. They decided to give some of that money to the apostles to help needy Christians. It would have been fine for them to give only some of the money—if they would have been honest about it. But rather than telling the truth about giving only **some** of the money, they lied and said that they were giving **all** the money they had received from the sale of the land. Peter accused them of lying to God (Acts 5:4). God struck both the husband and wife dead that day for telling a lie.

In our day, God does not miraculously strike people dead for lying. But lying is still just as serious to Him. It is very important for us always to tell the truth—even if doing so means we get into trouble. The Bible says: “All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8).



COPY CAT!

Have you ever been taking a test at school, when someone asked you, "Hey, what's the answer to number six?" What did you do? Did you tell him the answer, ignore him, or tell the teacher? Two of these solutions are right. You should either ignore him, or tell the teacher. It is wrong to cheat on tests—whether you are copying someone else's work, or letting someone copy your work. If you are copying someone else's work, you are stealing. And if you are letting someone copy your work, you are letting someone else break the teacher's rules.

Stealing is a sin. In 1 Peter 4:15, Peter said: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters." If you are writing a report, and you get on the Internet and copy some other person's work to put in your paper, you have just done something called plagiarizing. Plagiarizing is taking someone else's work and calling it your own. It also can be called stealing, which is forbidden in the Old Testament and the New Testament (Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28).

Sure, it may **start** with plagiarizing a little test or essay, but it could grow into other kinds of thievery, which can lead to prison. A person who cheats on tests will likely also be tempted to lie in order not to get in trouble for cheating.

Always remember that you should never cheat, and you should never let others cheat off of you. Think about Jesus. If He were tempted to cheat, or to let someone else copy His work, what would He do?



THE LIE THAT KILLED A MAN

One story in the Old Testament tells how a man was killed because of a lie (read 1 Kings 13). God sent a young prophet to give a message to the wicked King Jeroboam. The young prophet was told by God to deliver the message, and then leave immediately. He was not to stay there long enough even to drink or eat. The prophet began to do just as God commanded. He gave Jeroboam the message, and began his trip home.

But on his way, he was stopped by an older man who invited him to stay and eat. The young prophet refused, because God told him not to stop. But the older man said, "God told me to bring you to my house to eat and drink." The Bible says, however, "he lied to him" (1 Kings 13:18). The young prophet believed the older man's lie.

After he finished his meal, the prophet again started for home. On the way, a lion jumped on him and killed him. God sent the lion to punish him for disobedience. From this we learn two important lessons. First, we must never disobey God, even if someone else says it is okay to do so. Second, we should never lie. The old man lied, and caused the young prophet to die. God hates lies (Proverbs 6:17). We should always tell the truth and obey God.

A COUNTRY OF Liars

In the United States, lying is a common practice. Famous people have lied, heads of companies have lied, and even some of the heads of our country have lied. Sadly, students lie to get into certain colleges, husbands lie to their wives, and children often lie to their parents. So many people are not telling the truth that it seems easy just to follow along. After all, everybody else is lying, so why shouldn't I?

One reason not to lie is that even though many are dishonest, not everyone gets away with it. In the United States, lying under oath or to the police is a crime that can cause you to go to jail. President Bill Clinton was almost removed as President because he lied. The heads of several companies have lied—and been sent to prison. Each year in the United States, many students get into severe trouble for lying. People lie, but they can get caught, and pay the price.

Another reason not to lie is that just because other people are doing it, does not make it right. Some people murder. Can we murder? Some people steal. Can we steal? Some people lie, so can we lie? By no means! Just because many of our friends lie, it doesn't mean that we should, too.

Peter wrote: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10). As followers of Christ, we have been called to a higher path; we have been called out of darkness. We can be an example to the people, and even to the country around us. By not lying, we can show others the correct way to live. By not following the crowd, we stand apart and proclaim the Gospel to the whole world! Let us not live as the world—"put away falsehood" and "speak the truth" (Ephesians 4:25).



ACTIVITY PAGES

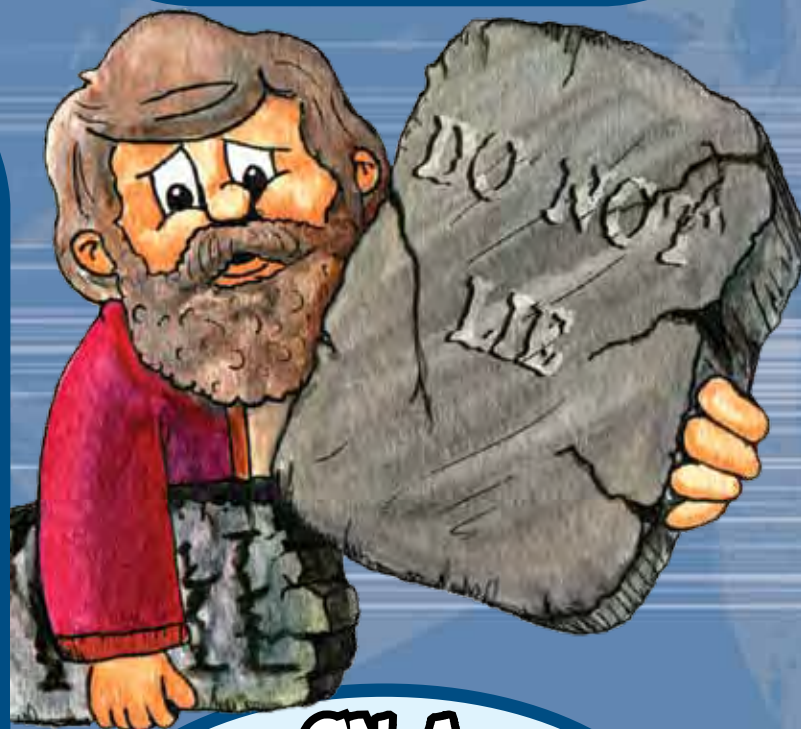


FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Ananias and _____ were struck dead for lying.
2. A _____ killed a young prophet on his way home after believing a lie.
3. We should never disobey _____.
4. Jeroboam was a wicked _____.
5. One way to fight the temptation to lie or steal is to remember the Golden _____ (Matthew 7:12).
6. "Therefore, putting away _____, let each one of you speak _____ with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25).
7. The first evil action recorded in the Bible was the lie that _____ told to Eve.
8. If you are copying someone else's work, you are _____.
9. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal _____ are His delight" (Proverbs 12:22).
10. God sent a young prophet to give a message to the wicked King _____ (1 Kings 13).

UNSCRAMBLE

1. ygini _____
2. hecatgni _____
3. taingsle _____
4. orhpetp _____
5. olin _____
6. pprshaai _____



ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

1. Write down as many Bible verses as you can about lying.
2. Write down three good reasons why we should not lie.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. Some lying is acceptable.
2. Cheating is a sin only when you get caught.
3. The Bible condemns lying.
4. God takes lying seriously.
5. Lying can become addictive.
6. The younger prophet was killed by a lion, because he believed a lie and disobeyed God (1 Kings 13).
7. Copying from someone else's test is acceptable behavior.
8. Many powerful people lie, but this does not make it right.
9. Rahab was rewarded for lying.
10. Rahab was rewarded for her great faith.



Dear Digger Doug,
Was Rahab rewarded for lying about the spies?

Dear reader,

Rahab lied to the soldiers of the king of Jericho who were looking for the two Israelite spies whom she had hidden (read Joshua 2). The Bible clearly forbids lying, however (Exodus 20:16; 23:1; Ephesians 4:25). So your question about whether Rahab was rewarded for lying is a good question.

Rahab actually was rewarded for some of her actions, like receiving and hiding the spies, but she was not rewarded for lying. She was rewarded for her belief and trust in God, and her heroism. The writer of Hebrews did not commend Rahab for lying, but praised her because "by faith...she had received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 11:31).

Rahab is a great example of faith in God, but our belief in God should not include the sin of lying. Under no circumstance does God condone lying.





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PART OF THE GAME

Once, a man was interviewing for jobs at several major corporations. Three of the corporations had accepted him, so all that was left to do was negotiate his pay. In order to get the best offer, he lied to each company about how much money the other companies had offered him. The man is a religious person, and when a friend of his asked why he lied, he said, "It's not lying. It's just part of the game."

Most people admit that lying and stealing are wrong. When we hear about someone stealing a car, or lying to their teacher, it seems so plain that their actions are wrong. Sometimes, however, situations are not so plain. What we know to be wrong when we are dealing with individual people might seem less wrong when dealing with a large corporation or the government. Big groups like these seem far away and less personal; we can't see their faces, so stealing from

them doesn't bother our consciences as much as if we had stolen something from our next-door neighbor. Sometimes it is easy to lie to big companies or cheat the government out of tax money, at least in our minds, but we must remember that it is just as wrong to cheat and lie to a big company as it is to lie to or cheat one of our friends. Some people justify dishonesty by saying that the government and big businesses have plenty of money anyway, so they don't need anymore. However, simply because a person or corporation is wealthy, and we are not, does not give us the right to act unethically.

One way to fight the temptation to lie or steal is to remember the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). If we treat big businesses and the government fairly, which is how we want them to treat us, then God will be pleased. The enormous size or wealth of an organization does not change the rules. The world of business may be called a game by some, but it is a game in which God's rules still apply!



ANSWERS

UNSCRAMBLE: 1. lying; 2. cheating; 3. stealing; 4. prophet; 5. lion; 6. Sapphira; 7. Satan; 8. stealing; 9. truthfully; 10. Jeroboam.
 TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-F; 3-T; 4-T; 5-T; 6-T; 7-F; 8-T; 9-F; 10-T.
 5. Rule; 6. lying; truth; 7. Satan; 8. stealing; 9. truthfully; 10. Jeroboam.
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