

Questions / Answers

1. If we tell lies, who will always know what we have done?
God.
2. What did Ananias and Sapphira plan to do?
*Sell their land. Give part of the money to the poor and keep part of the money. But pretend that they had given **all** their money.*
3. Was it wrong for them to keep part of the money for themselves?
No. It was their money and they could choose what to do with it.
4. What did they do that was wrong?
They lied to God and to the brothers and sisters.
5. What happened to Ananias and Sapphira?
They both fell down dead.
6. Is it alright to take small things that belong to others?
No. It is stealing whether it is something small or something big.
7. What is bribery?
Paying someone to do something wrong for you. Or receiving money from someone to do something wrong for them.
8. Give 3 examples of how we should be honest in our lives.
Always tell the truth. Never take or give bribes. Never cheat or steal.
9. What will happen if we preach about honesty, but live dishonestly?
People will not believe what we preach. We will bring shame on the Name of God.
10. What sort of people will be in the Kingdom?
See box with list from Psalm 15 in lesson.

Memory verses

Psalm 101:7 Psalm 139:1—4 Psalm 15:1—2

Discussion

Discuss or make a drama about situations where you might lie, steal, cheat or take a bribe. How could you overcome these temptations and act differently?

Writing

Write the story of Ananias and Sapphira. What lessons does it teach us?

CBM Senior Lessons



Lesson 47 Honesty

READING Proverbs 12:22; Psalm 101:7; Psalm 139:1-4; Acts 5:1—11;
Psalm 15:1—5; Proverbs 11:1

LESSON

God is a God of truth. All His ways are true. God is like a rock; He is absolutely dependable and true in everything He does and says. We depend on God's promises being true. We trust that He will never lie to us or deceive us.

Honesty is an essential part of a Christian's life. We cannot live and worship together if we cannot trust each other. The Bible tells us how important it is to be honest in every part of our lives. God hates lying and dishonesty.

We lie because we think we can get away with it. We think no-one will know we have not told the truth. God **always** knows what we do and say and think. We cannot hide anything from God.

Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were Christians in the early church. They thought they could cheat the other brothers and sisters and cheat God. At that time many Christians sold their land and their houses and gave the money to help the poor.

Ananias and Sapphira wanted the other Christians to think they were very good. They were the sort of people who were always talking about the good things they did. They would help people if someone was looking! Jesus said that we should not try to make other people think we are good. We should do good things to show that we love God.

Ananias and Sapphira saw that many Christians were selling their land and houses and were giving the money to help the poor. Ananias and Sapphira thought that people would think they were very good if they sold their land to help the poor. They wanted people to think they were good—but they did not want to give away all their money! They made a plan to cheat the brothers and sisters. They thought no-one would find out about their plan. They forgot that no-one can do anything that God does not see.

Ananias and Sapphira sold their land for a lot of money. Their plan was to give part of the money to help the poor, and to keep part of the money for themselves. There was nothing wrong in doing this. Their plan was wicked because they lied about how much money they were giving. They said that they were giving **all** their money to help the poor, but they were only giving part of it.

Ananias took part of the money to Peter. He told Peter, “We have sold some land. We have brought **all** our money to help the poor.” Ananias thought that Peter and the brothers and sisters would think that they were very good.

Ananias had forgotten that God knows everything we do and everything we think. We can deceive our brothers and sisters, but we cannot deceive God. God knew about the plan that Ananias and Sapphira had made. He knew that Ananias was lying. God showed Peter what Ananias had done.

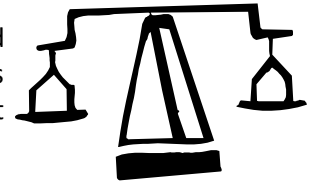
Peter was very angry. He said to Ananias, “Why have you lied to God? The land was your own. You chose to sell it. God would have been pleased that you gave part of the money to help the poor. It was not wrong to keep part of the money for yourselves. But you wanted to deceive people and make them think that you are good. You have lied to God.” Immediately Ananias fell down dead on the floor. Some young men came and wrapped him up. They took him out and buried him.

About three hours later Sapphira came to Peter. She did not know what had happened to Ananias. Peter asked her, “Is this all the money you got for selling your land?” Sapphira lied and told Peter that they had brought all their money to help the poor. Peter said, “Why have you planned together to lie to God?” Sapphira also fell down dead. She was buried next to her husband.

It is very easy to make ourselves look righteous, when we are really lying in our hearts. We must not pretend to give God everything, but keep back part for ourselves. It was not wrong for Ananias and Sapphira to keep part of their money for themselves. If they had been honest about what they were doing, God would have accepted it. What they did wrong was to lie to Peter and to God.

When we sin we may hurt other people, but the most important thing is that we sin against God. God does not strike down dishonest people today as He did with Ananias and Sapphira. But when Jesus returns to set up God’s Kingdom, dishonest people will be punished.

The Bible teaches us to be honest in both big things and little things. We must be honest in every way. Proverbs 11:1 tells us that God hates dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight.



Imagine a shopkeeper who deliberately adjusts his scales to give less than his customer pays for. The shopkeeper may think he is clever, but God hates this sort of dishonesty.

We can all cheat people in a similar way. We can lie, saying that we are ill as an excuse not to go and help someone. We can lie to avoid getting into trouble. We can pretend we are being kind to someone in front of other people, when we are actually very unkind to them when no-one is looking. We can steal little things from school or work—like a pencil or some paper. Taking anything that does not belong to us is stealing, whether it is something big or something small.

Bribery is one of the worst sorts of dishonesty. Bribery is paying someone to do something wrong or dishonest. Or someone might offer us money to do something that is wrong. It is wrong to give or to take a bribe. God hates bribery and He tells us that those involved in bribery will not be in His Kingdom.

There is another reason why Christians must be completely honest. People will look carefully at our lives to see whether we practice what we preach. If we live honestly then people will see that we really believe what we preach. If we preach about honesty, but live dishonest lives, then people will not believe the words of God which we preach. We will bring shame on the Name of God.

In Psalm 15 God tells us what sort of people will be in His Kingdom:

- They do right things, keeping God’s commands.
- They always speak the truth. They say what they really think.
- They do not say bad things about other people.
- They honour those who love and worship God.
- They keep away from those who ignore God’s commands.
- They keep their word and never break their promises, even when it hurts.
- They do not cheat other people.
- They never take bribes.

God always deals fairly and honestly with people and keeps His promises. We cannot expect God to accept us into His Kingdom if we are dishonest and cheat people. Let us ask God to help us to be honest in every part of our lives.