

New Life Bible Study Lesson



THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP #6 – CHEATING

DAILY READINGS:

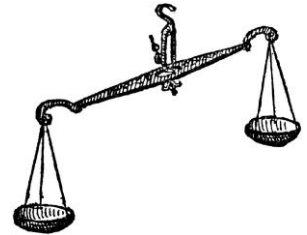
- ❖ **Monday:** Cheating with balances was wrong (Deuteronomy 25:13; Proverbs 11:1; Hosea 12:7; Amos 8:5).
- ❖ **Tuesday:** Jacob cheated and then was cheated (Genesis 27:34-41; Genesis 31:4-7).
- ❖ **Wednesday:** Jesus called the moneychangers "thieves" (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17).
- ❖ **Thursday:** You will not get away with cheating (Proverbs 10:9; Luke 8:17; Galatians 6:7).
- ❖ **Friday:** God wants you to live an honest life (Exodus 20:15; 1 Timothy 2:2; Romans 12:17b).
- ❖ **Saturday:** Consider others when you are tempted to cheat (Luke 6:31; Matthew 5:16).

MEMORY VERSE: *"The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him."*

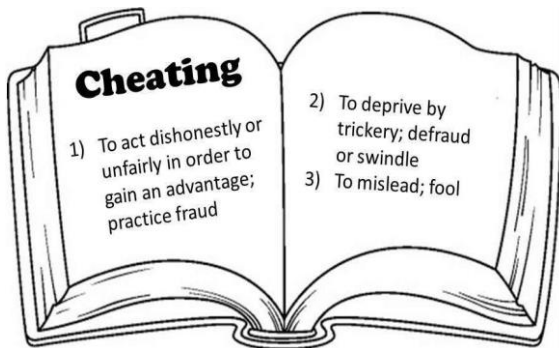
– Proverbs 11:1

Cheating Is a Serious Problem

Have you ever heard someone say, "I was ripped off"? What does that mean? If you buy something and it is not what it was advertised to be, you might feel that you were ripped off, or cheated. In Solomon's day cheating had become a serious problem. In the marketplace, scales were used in the business of buying and selling. On one side was the item being sold, and on the other side a set of weights was placed. This determined the weight and price of the item being sold. Many merchants had two sets of weights: one that was just (an accurate weight) and one that was not ("a dishonest scale"). This made it to cheat unsuspecting people who had come to the market to do business. (Read Deuteronomy 25:13.)



Today cheating comes in many forms, and too often it is considered acceptable. Excuses often heard are: "Everybody does it"; "Cheating never hurts anyone"; "I'd be stupid not to cheat"; "I'll never pass if I don't cheat"; and "Ten years from now, what will it matter?" In a survey of *Who's Who Among American High School Students*, 80 percent of them admitted to cheating. Pressure on students for high performance academically and athletically often creates an atmosphere where cheating is seen as the only way to succeed. Students who do not cheat find themselves at a disadvantage. Also, cheating is widespread throughout the business world, politics, professional sports, and in many marriages. What message is this sending to today's youth about this tool of the devil?



What Is Cheating?

When the word *cheating* is used, you might think of copying someone's answers for a test. However, cheating is much more widespread than that. One definition of cheating is this: "Cheating is essentially acting dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain a personal advantage. Cheating disregards set rules in favor of personal success" (*GotQuestions.org*). Examples of cheating include: presenting work that is not your own without giving the proper credit, bribery, falsifying records, unauthorized copying (including copy-

ing someone's homework or allowing someone to copy your work), sneaking notes into a test, taking performance-enhancing drugs, filing false tax information, and being unfaithful to one's husband or wife.



Technology has made cheating much easier and more tempting. Websites have been created for the sole purpose of helping students cheat; file sharing websites have made it easy to copy music and movie files without paying for them; and students have learned how to hide test answers in cellphones and calculators or take pictures of tests to share with other students. For many students cheating is widespread, accepted, and expected. Because of this, education for many students is not as much about learning as it is about obtaining high test scores, getting accepted into prestigious colleges, and receiving a degree.

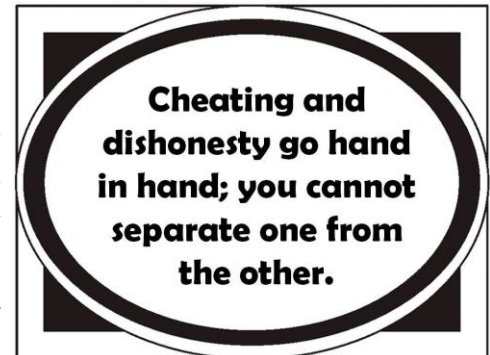


The Consequences of Cheating

There is an old saying, "Once a cheater, always a cheater." What do you think that means? Every time you cheat, it becomes easier to cheat the next time, and soon it becomes a habit. Someone who is willing to cheat in the small things will soon cheat in the bigger things as well (Luke 16:10). Cheating does not end with graduation. Once that sinful habit is firmly established, it follows the graduate on into adulthood. Resume fraud ("Padding Your Resume") will seem like a good idea. Cutting corners on the job will not be considered dishonest. Taking unauthorized shortcuts will be viewed as the smart thing to do. Studies show that students who cheated on high school exams are more likely to cheat on their taxes, lie to their spouses and also to their customers, and to inflate insurance or expense claims (*Josephson Institute of Ethics*).

Sometimes there are immediate consequences to cheating, such as: receiving a failing grade, suspension from school, or negative notes on the student's transcript. However, there are often more serious results of cheating that are less obvious. These can include: cheating yourself out of a good education (having the grades but not knowing the material), losing the respect of others, and lacking in moral and ethical standards of honesty and integrity. One's willingness to cheat will not go unnoticed, and it will cause people to not trust you.

The Bible gives several examples of people who cheated and had to face the consequences for their cheating. Jacob cheated his brother Esau out of the birthright, but later Jacob was cheated by his father-in-law Laban. Cheating among tax collectors was common, and they were often shunned by their neighbors. The moneychangers in the temple were known for taking advantage of people who came to purchase animals for the sacrifice. Jesus was so angry at them that He overturned their tables and cast them out, saying, "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it 'a den of robbers'" (Matthew 21:13).



Resist the Temptation to Cheat

If you have cheated and seemingly gotten away with it, do not be deceived. God's Word promises, "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open." (Luke 8:17). Cheating might seem to be the easier way and the smarter way, but Proverbs 10:9 warns, " ...whoever takes crooked paths will be found out." To resist the temptation to cheat, learn what God thinks about cheating and living honestly by reading Scriptures, such as: Proverbs 11:1; 1 Timothy 2:2; and Romans 12:17b. Read the eighth commandment in Exodus 20:15. Cheating is a form of stealing. Do not let the opinions of others convince you that cheating is necessary. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world" In other words, do not be shaped by this world.

Consider how cheating affects more than just you, and heed the advice of Luke 6:31, which reads, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." Finally, ask God to help you. Are you procrastinating or failing to study for tests? Are you looking for shortcuts because you are too tired, too busy, or too lazy? Ask God to help you in these areas. It is His will that you not only live an honest life but that you also are a witness to others. When you are asked to cheat and you refuse, you are letting "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).

- 1. How were merchants cheating people in the marketplace in Solomon's day?**
- 2. What are some common excuses given for cheating?**
- 3. What are some areas (other than school) where cheating often occurs?**
- 4. What are some examples of cheating?**
- 5. What does the saying "Once a cheater, always a cheater" mean?**
- 6. What are some immediate consequences of cheating?**
- 7. What are some long-term consequences of cheating?**
- 8. How was Jacob cheated by his father-in-law Laban?**
- 9. In the end, why is cheating not the easier way?**
- 10. What are a "false balance" and a "Just weight"?**