

# THE STING OF DISHONESTY



*Angry bees and shirtless boys—our sweet plan was falling apart rapidly.*

**By Michael R. Morris**  
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I had noticed the commercial beehives before—several times, in fact. They stood out like white sentinels in a clearing off the road just outside the small town where we lived in central California, USA.

But it wasn't until my brother, several friends, and

I rode by on our bikes one Saturday that we decided to take a closer look. Honey sounded especially good that morning. But how could we “borrow” a little without getting stung?

I don't remember who came up with the idea, but we all agreed it was a good

one. One of us simply had to tuck his pants inside his socks and cover his upper body, including his hands, arms, neck, and head. Then he could approach the hives without worrying about getting stung and grab what is called a “honeycomb frame.”

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It was a sweet plan. What could go wrong?

We drew lots, and as with Lehi's sons, the lot fell to the eldest—my brother, Mark. We knew we'd picked the right boy for the job when he grabbed his leather bicycle bag, cut two small eyeholes in it, and

put it over his head.

The rest of us pulled off our T-shirts and layered his arms and neck for protection. When we took off our shoes and gave him our socks for his hands, he was ready for battle.

Captain Moroni would have been proud—had we not been about to use our makeshift armor to take something that wasn't ours.

My friends and I stood what we thought was a safe distance from the hives as Mark ran up to them. He quickly grabbed a honeycomb frame from one of the beehive boxes. Then he shook it, dropped it to the ground, and hightailed it back to us. The bees were not amused, but they soon settled down.

So far, so good.

Now all Mark had to do was run back, pick up the honeycomb frame, shake it free of bees, and sprint back with it.

All went according to plan until Mark started running toward us. Turned out he had company. The bees

were coming too—and they were madder than hornets!

During the next few exciting minutes, I gained valuable knowledge.

I learned that honeybees fly fast—at least, faster than barefoot boys running on rocks and stickers.

I learned that honeybees are brave—they die after they sting you. As my shirtless friends and I tried to run away, about two dozen bees sacrificed themselves on our ears, necks, backs, and arms.

I learned that when we make a choice, we also choose the consequences of that choice. As President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said:

“When you pick up a stick you pick up both ends.”<sup>1</sup>

After the honeybees had finished teaching my friends and me these

painful lessons, the surviving bees retreated to their hives. We boys—smarting, swollen, and wiser—trudged back to my brother, who had enjoyed the spectacle without getting stung and who was now enjoying the honey.

By then I had lost my appetite—for honey *and* for “borrowing,” which I knew in my heart was just another word for stealing. My body wasn't the only thing that was stung. So was my conscience.

I can honestly say, however, that the lessons I learned that day from the bees and their honey have stuck with me. **NE**

#### NOTE

1. James E. Faust, “Lord, I Believe; Help Thou Mine Unbelief,” Oct. 2003 general conference.

**“Be honest with yourself, others, and God at all times. Being honest means choosing not to lie, steal, cheat, or deceive in any way.”**

*For the Strength of Youth, “Honesty and Integrity.”*