

# Honest in All Things

## Lesson 37

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**Purpose** To help class members commit to make a constant, conscious effort to be honest in all things.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Exodus 20:16; Ecclesiastes 5:4–5; 1 Nephi 4:31–33, 35–37; Alma 27:26–27; Doctrine and Covenants 3:5; 14:7; 20:77; 82:10; 89:19; 124:15; Moses 4:4; Articles of Faith 1:13.
2. Materials needed: A set of scriptures and a scripture marking pencil for each class member. Continue to encourage class members to bring their own scriptures to class each week.

*Note to the teacher* *Honesty includes being true to oneself as well as being honest with others and with the Lord. It is a gospel principle that affects many other eternal principles. Help class members see that the blessings of honesty are many: self-respect, love of others, and eventually all the blessings that the Lord can offer.*

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### **Suggested Lesson Development**

#### **Honesty in Word and Deed**

#### **Story and discussion**

Relate the following story to the class:

Even though Tony had poor study habits, he got passing grades. Everyone thought he was good at taking tests. But in reality, he had simply learned how to cheat.

Tony's parents wanted him to go to college, but they were worried because he never seemed to study or do homework. They frequently asked how he felt about school. He always told them that he was doing fine.

One day Tony's father asked him some questions that required an understanding of simple algebra. Tony was unable to answer them, but he said that he had received passing grades in his algebra class, so the questions must have been too difficult for a high school student.

When Tony's grandmother asked him about the books he had been reading in his literature class, she found that he had little or no understanding of them. She questioned Tony about this, but he responded that he had passed his literature class, so he knew all he needed to know.

One day Tony's parents asked him if he felt prepared to go on to college. He replied that he thought he would be fine. He insisted that his passing grades proved that he was ready. He challenged his parents to wait and see how well he would do at college.

After the discussion, Tony had an empty feeling. He had mastered skills for cheating that never failed to get him through his classes, but he knew he really

hadn't applied himself and hadn't learned much of anything in school. He wondered if he would find a college where he would be able to cheat and bluff his way through the classes the way he had so far.

- With whom had Tony been dishonest? (With his teachers, his classmates, his parents, his grandmother, and himself.)
- What other kinds of dishonesty are there besides cheating? (Answers may include stealing, lying, telling only part of the truth, remaining silent when someone says something that isn't true, and so on.)

#### Quotation

Explain that although Tony's dishonesty was obvious, some forms of dishonesty are more subtle. Ask a class member to read the following statement by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"[After] 50 years . . . some former students recall with lasting appreciation the words one teacher had her class repeat at the beginning of each day. Every school morning this [teacher] implanted the meaning of honesty into our minds by having us recite 'A lie is *any* communication given to another with the intent to deceive.' A lie can be effectively communicated without words ever being spoken. Sometimes a nod of the head or silence can deceive" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 10; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 9).

Emphasize that anytime we cause or allow someone to believe something that is not true, we are being dishonest. To be exalted in the celestial kingdom, we must learn to be honest with ourselves, with others, and with the Lord.

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### Being Honest with Ourselves

#### Discussion

Refer back to the story about Tony, and ask the following questions:

- Who was hurt most by Tony's dishonesty? (Tony himself.) How was he hurt?
- How was Tony dishonest with himself? (He tried to make himself believe that cheating was not serious because the things he did not know were not important anyway.)
- If Tony's lack of honesty continues, how do you think it will affect his life?

#### Scripture discussion

Have class members read Moses 4:4. Explain that in this verse the Lord is speaking.

- In what ways did Satan's influence affect Tony? (Tony was deceived or "blinded" into thinking that his dishonesty was not a serious problem. His dishonesty with himself caused him to deceive others also.)

#### Chalkboard discussion

Write *Honesty with oneself* on the left side of the chalkboard.

- What does it mean to be honest with ourselves? (Answers may include accepting responsibility for our decisions instead of blaming other people or circumstances; recognizing that our decisions have consequences; and being willing to recognize our strengths and our weaknesses.)
- Why is it important to be honest with ourselves? (If we are honest with ourselves about our own thoughts and actions, we will know what we must

do to become more like the Lord. We can ask for his help in overcoming our weaknesses, and we can thank him for our blessings.)

- How can we develop this kind of honesty?

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### Being Honest with Others

Chalkboard  
discussion

- How does being true to ourselves help us to be honest with others? (When we are honest with ourselves, we develop a sense of honor and self-respect. We can apply this same respect in our relationships with others.)

Write *Honesty with others* under *Honesty with oneself* on the chalkboard.

- What things keep us from being honest with others?

List class members' answers on the right-hand side of the chalkboard. Answers may include:

Pride  
Greed  
Manipulation  
Hate  
Rationalization  
Fear of being found out

- How do these things keep us from being honest with others? (If we are filled with pride, for example, we may be so concerned about our reputation that we are willing to lie to make others think highly of us.)

Scripture  
discussion

Ask class members to turn back to Moses 4:4 and reread this verse.

- How can lies cause us to be led captive?

Emphasize that if we are dishonest and do not repent, we may continue in more dishonest behavior. For example, imagine that someone steals a neighbor's bike. When the neighbor asks if anyone has seen it, the person who stole the bike can either admit it or say no (another dishonest act). To keep the bike, the person who stole it will have to hide it from the owner or sell it to someone else (other dishonest acts). Thus, if we commit one dishonest act and do not repent, we often have to continue being dishonest to avoid being caught. This pattern of dishonesty can greatly harm our relationships with others and with the Lord.

Have someone recite or read the thirteenth article of faith.

- How can being honest help us in "doing good to all men"?

Have class members read and mark 1 Nephi 4:31–33.

- Why do you think Nephi spoke to Zoram, the servant of Laban, with an oath or promise? Do you think he intended to keep his promise?

Have class members read and mark 1 Nephi 4:35–37.

- What happened when Zoram responded to Nephi's promise with a promise of his own?

Explain that in the time of Nephi and Zoram, an oath was sacred and would not be broken. Therefore when Zoram promised to leave Jerusalem and follow Nephi and his family into the wilderness, Nephi had no fear that Zoram would try to escape and return to his home. Likewise, Nephi's oath assured Zoram that he would be treated kindly and fairly by Nephi and his family.

- What are some promises we make to others? (To fulfill Church assignments, to do jobs around the house, to be home at a certain time, or to do our own schoolwork.)
- If our promises to others were as solemnly observed as Nephi's and Zoram's, how would our relationships with others be improved? How would our communities, and even the world, be improved? (Have class members read and mark Alma 27:26–27.)
- What experiences have you had in which you were blessed for being honest with other people?

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### Being Honest with God

Scripture and  
chalkboard  
discussion

Have class members read and mark Ecclesiastes 5:4–5. Explain that a vow is an earnest promise.

Write *Honesty with God* under *Honesty with others* on the chalkboard.

- What are some of the vows we have made with God?

Erase the right side of the chalkboard, and list the responses toward the top of the right side. The list should include:

1. Take upon us the name of Christ.
2. Remember him always.
3. Keep his commandments.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 3:5, and have class members note the phrase “the promises.” Explain that God has made marvelous promises to us.

- What are some of the promises God has made to us if we live the gospel?

List class members' answers near the bottom of the right-hand side of the chalkboard. If they have difficulty answering, have them read the scripture references below. The list on the chalkboard should include:

1. The Lord's Spirit to be with us always (see D&C 20:77).
2. Great treasures of knowledge (see D&C 89:19).
3. Eternal life (see D&C 14:7).

Have class members read and mark Doctrine and Covenants 82:10.

- Why is it important to be honest in keeping our covenants with God?

Testimony

Bear your testimony about the blessings and importance of honesty in all things.

Urge class members to always be honest with themselves, with others, and with the Lord. Encourage them to remember the promises the Lord has made to those who are honest and faithful. Conclude by reading Doctrine and Covenants 124:15 to class members and challenging them to develop the kind of integrity (honesty) that Hyrum Smith had.

## Enrichment Activities

You may want to use one or more of these activities during the lesson.

### 1. Relate the following story:

A seminary teacher had been teaching his class the importance of honesty and had stressed that often we do not know when our honesty is being tested. One day he gave a quiz in class and collected the papers. He graded them at home that night and recorded the scores, but did not mark any of the papers. The next day, he returned the papers and asked the students to grade their own tests and report their scores. Most students reported high scores. “John?” “85.” “Susan?” “95.” “Harold?” “80.” “Arnold?” “90.” “Mary? . . . Mary?” The response was very quiet: “45.” Once all the scores were recorded the difference between the two scores was revealing. Many students had reported higher scores than the teacher had recorded when he graded the tests himself.

An unusual silence settled over the class when the teacher explained what he had done: “This was a different kind of test. This was a test for honesty. I noticed that many of you looked at Mary when she announced her score of 45. I want each of you to know that in my book Mary just achieved the highest score in class” (*Family Home Evening Resource Book* [1983], 195).

### 2. Sing with class members or read the words to “True to the Faith” (*Hymns*, no. 254). Ask class members to think about how honesty helps us defend “truth and right” (verse 1).

### 3. Before class, arrange the following role play with one of the class members:

Explain that you will be asking her (or him) why she was late coming home from school. Tell her to make up whatever reasons she can think of to keep you from finding out that she went to her friend’s house instead of coming straight home as she was told. You will need a long piece of string or yarn for this activity.

Begin the role play by asking a simple question such as “Why were you late getting home from school today?” As the class member answers falsely, wrap a long string or yarn around her once. Then ask a follow-up question (for example, “Why did you have to stay after school?”). As she answers falsely again, wrap another length of string or yarn around her. Continue to ask questions, wrapping the string around her each time she answers falsely.

Explain to the class that you asked the person to give wrong answers to help show how one lie leads to another and how quickly we can become trapped by our lies. (For suggestions on effective role plays and dramatizations, see *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 141–42.)

4. If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement* (53276) is available, show “Honesty Leads to Integrity,” a six-minute segment.
5. Have class members describe several situations in which it is easy to be dishonest and list reasons why it might be tempting to be dishonest in each of these situations. (Reasons may include to avoid embarrassment, to gain some advantage, to hurt others, and to excuse poor performance.) Then discuss the damage that could be caused by dishonesty in each situation and the blessings that could come from being honest. Emphasize to class members that even when honesty seems to cause immediate difficulties (for example, you do poorly on a test for which you did not study), it provides eternal rewards.
6. Read or tell the following story told by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland when he was president of Brigham Young University:

“One night I came home quite late from work. My nine-year-old daughter . . . seemed visibly distressed. . . . She walked softly into the living room and said, ‘Daddy, I have to talk to you.’ I held her hand and . . . she started to cry.

“‘I was at [the store] this morning and saw a ladies’ compact I knew Mother would love. I was sure it was quite expensive, but I picked it up just to admire it. . . . It fell out of my hands onto the floor. I quickly picked it up, but Daddy, the mirror was cracked. I didn’t know what to do! I didn’t have enough money to pay for it, and I was all alone. . . . I put the compact back on the shelf and left the store. Oh, Daddy, I think I’ve been dishonest.’ And then she wept and wept.

“I held her in my arms as that little nine-year-old body shook with the pain of sin being expelled. She said, ‘I can’t sleep and I can’t eat and I can’t say my prayers. What will I do? I won’t ever get it out of my mind.’

“Well, Mother joined us, and we talked quite a while that night. We told her that we were very, very proud of her honesty . . . and we would have been disappointed if she had been able to eat or sleep very well. I told her . . . the compact probably wouldn’t cost *too* much, and that we would go back to the store manager, tell him of the problem, and, between the two of us, cover the cost. If the compact was still there, [perhaps we could] buy it for Mom. That little cracked mirror could be a reminder for [Mom] as long as she owned it that her little girl was unfailingly honest and spiritually sensitive. . . .

“The tears gradually stopped, her little body began to relax, and [she] said, ‘I think now I can say my prayers’” (quoted by J. Richard Clarke, in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 86; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 63–64).

- Do you feel this way when you have been dishonest?
- How can we increase our sensitivity to being honest?