

# Straight Bible Talk

Manchester Church of Christ, Share Christ's Love and Share His Message

## A Nation of Cheaters

There are many honest people in America. The honest, hard-working immigrants who came to America helped build the strong country that we have today. The prosperity of America may be linked to honesty, industry and freedom to pursue happiness.

There are also many people in America today who routinely cheat. There are school students who cheat to get good grades. There are employees who cheat their employers out of a full day's work. There are workers, who with the complicity of their employers hide their wages from the Internal Revenue Service. Others cheat on their spouses. Others cheat by giving false information when applying for a job. These are just some of the examples of rampant cheating in this country.

There seems to be an attitude that cheating is okay as long as one does not get caught. Cheating achieves goals easily that might be incredibly difficult to achieve without cheating. For many people it seems obvious that "cheating pays."

Let me suggest some possible motives for all of this cheating. I believe people want to be happy. There is a sense that if I could get a better job or have more money (which is about the same thing as having a better job) or find the "right person," I could be happy. Thus people try to cheat their way to happiness.

But what is happiness? Perhaps one might consider a pleasant feeling that comes from achievement or recognition as happiness. One cannot get that by cheating.

Perhaps another might consider happiness the thrill of excitement. Cheating can definitely produce that! The problem is that this kind of happiness is fleeting and

does not endure. The Bible speaks of the "passing pleasures of sin." There is pleasure that lasts and there is pleasure that turns to sorrow. Cheating produces the latter, sooner or later.

Consider the case of the one who cheats on his wife. The spouse finds out. There is a nasty divorce. Children suffer the consequences as they are reared in a single parent home or by a step-parent.

When the founders of our country spoke of certain "inalienable rights," happiness was not counted among their number, rather it was "the pursuit of happiness."

How is it that some people can be happy although poor and others cannot find happiness even amidst all of their wealth? Why is it that some people find happiness in being alone and others cannot find happiness no matter how many relationships they try? Why is it that some people with miserable health find happiness and others enjoying the finest of health are unhappy? What is it about happiness that seems so elusive to some and so easily achieved by others?

Paul, an apostle of Jesus, wrote long ago: "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."

Or, again, he wrote: But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

June, 2006

Volume 1 Issue 6

Editor/Writer – Steve Bastin  
E-mail – mancchrist@snet.net  
manchesterchurchofchrist.org

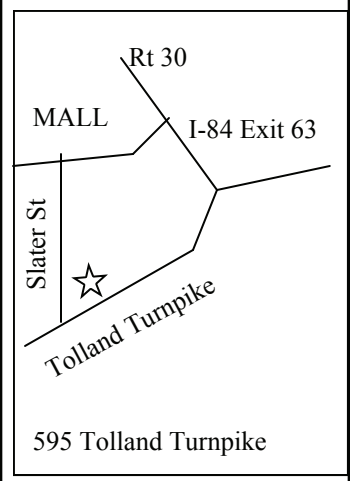
Manchester  
Church of Christ

Meeting at  
595 Tolland Turnpike  
Sun Bible Classes—9 AM  
Sun Worship—10 AM  
Sun Eve Worship—6:00 PM  
Wed Bible Class—7:00 PM

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:31

All scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.



- Please send me a free Bible
- I am interested in a Bible study program
- I am looking for a church
- Please send me a free copy of the book,  
"A Christian Survival Manual"
- Please add my name to receive "Straight  
Bible Talk" free each month
- I have a question

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Send requests/questions to: Manchester  
Church of Christ, 595 Tolland Turnpike, Man-  
chester CT 06042 or call 860-646-2903 6/06

Manchester Church of Christ  
595 Tolland Turnpike  
Manchester, CT 06042

Address Service Requested

While pursuing happiness the cheaters find grief. By trying to be something that they could not be without cheating, they lose the very thing that they most want.

Let me suggest some passages from the Bible that need to be considered by those who cheat. These are ideas that need to be considered by one who is faced with the choice of cheating or being honest.

"He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need." Cheating is simply a form of stealing. In school one steals a grade that has not been earned. Sometimes the stealing involves taking credit for what has been written by someone else. When one conceals income from the Internal Revenue Service, one is stealing from the government. The result is a larger tax burden on those who report all of their income. But this is of no concern to the cheater since he only cares about himself.

"Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." When some years ago a presidential candidate used the ideas of another (called plagiarism) without

giving recognition to his source, he was guilty of a failure to give honor to whom honor was due. He cheated. He also was found out and had to give up his campaign!

Jesus referred to another kind of cheating in his sermon on the mount. He spoke against cheating on one's spouse. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery;' but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Adultery often begins by someone looking at a person to whom they are not married and deciding that they would like to be with that person. Thus is "born" a cheater!

Often the person being observed with a lustful look has dressed in a way calculated to get such looks. There are those who want others to cheat (for their own personal pleasure). So we have those who cheat on their spouses and those who encourage such cheating. Broken homes, unhappy marriages and a whole range of problems can be traced to such cheating.

Cheating is tempting. In many situations it appears that detection may be impossible. Happiness appears to be guaranteed by simply cheating a lit-

tle. Perhaps one even argues, "No one will get hurt." Or, "Everyone else is cheating so what's the harm." There appears to be no "down side" and everything looks positive to the person considering cheating. There is no consideration of the consequences that one may suffer at the hands of God. That possibility seems so remote that it is not even in the cheater's thoughts.

Righteousness is not something that varies over time. It is not decided by culture nor personal likes and dislikes. Righteousness is not practiced because of immediate rewards, but because it is conduct that has the approval of God. It secures great gain in eternity. It is right because God says that it is right.

"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."