



"Who's stealing

from whom? When you work for a big corporation and they deliberately limit your work hours to less than 30 a week so they don't have to pay benefits—that sounds like stealing to me. When a department store advertises a sale when the price is the regular price, is the store stealing? When gas companies falsely announce a shortage of oil and raise gasoline prices on gasoline, it looks like stealing. Insurance companies, corporations, oil companies are stealing from us. So when we take back what was ours in the first place, that isn't stealing."

Josh, high school graduate

The Stats

It appears that an increasing number of teens and young adults are ready and willing to lie, cheat, or steal to gain desired goals, according to a 1997 report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics.

Among the findings:

- ☐ 37% of high schoolers stole from a store in the preceding year, up from 33% in 1993.
- ☐ About 65% of high schoolers cheated on an exam, up from 61% in 1993.
- ☐ 17% of college students stole in the past year, up from 15% in 1993.
- ☐ Nearly a quarter of college students say they'd lie to get or keep a job, compared to 21% in 1993.

USA Today
February 23 and 25, 1997

By the Book...

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:9-10

STOLEN BARGAINS

Chuck didn't have the money, and it would be at least another six months before he could afford to buy a new stereo for his truck. Car stereos with all the amps Chuck wanted don't come cheap.

Now here he was at school, being offered the most amazing stereo system he'd ever seen—for \$50. He couldn't believe it. In truth, he didn't believe it. He knew the sound system had to be stolen. Well, actually, he didn't know for sure, because he hadn't asked, and if he didn't ask then he didn't technically know it was stolen. What you don't know won't hurt you, Chuck thought. Besides, he couldn't go checking on every student at his high school. Hey, maybe the guy was rich, didn't need the money, and just wanted to get rid of it so he could get a new stereo system.

Chuck bought the stereo on the spot and installed it in his truck. It worked great. His parents were impressed that he was able to get such a good deal on the stereo. Chuck's new motto? "Ignorance is innocence."

1. Is ignorance really innocence?



2. What questions could Chuck have asked to find out if the sound system was stolen?

3. What if it was stolen and the guy lied and said it wasn't?

4. What if you had doubts about the truth of his answer?

5. To what extent is Chuck responsible to determine if the stereo system was stolen?

6. What would you have done in Chuck's situation?