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Lesson 9 / November 1, 2026

God's Way to Success

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as STEP 1

Lesson 9	Lesson 9	Lesson 9
Focus:	**Bible Basis:**	**Memory Verse:**
Being sneaky is not God's way.	2 Samuel 14:25—15:37; 17—18; Psalm 63	"Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another." —Leviticus 19:11

Students will weigh the reasons for and consequences of being sneaky and will see that deceit is never God's way to success.

Materials:

- Internet access

Sometimes it's hard to get what we want. Others get to go first. Others are chosen for a team or a part in a play. No matter how hard we try, others earn higher grades. Others get to have things we do not have enough money to buy. We want success, too, but how will we ever get it with these obstacles?

In 2019, a big college admissions scandal came to light. It was discovered that university staff at some ivy-league universities (such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale) were accepting bribery from parents to let their students into these schools. It's taken years for the courts to sort out this scandal, with some people involved being sentenced for their crimes just this year. Recently, one woman involved in the scandal went public about why she participated. Let's take a look at what she has to say.

Play the following video for your students [2:29; stop at 2:07]:
Felicity Huffman speaks out on college admissions scandal
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZJLk1D-YVc

Like the woman in the video, the parents involved in this scandal wanted their children to go to the best schools in the country—even if they had to be unethical and deceitful to make it happen.

➢ **Have you ever wanted something so badly that you were tempted to do whatever it took to get it—such as doing something sneaky or telling a few fibs? What was it that you wanted? How did that work out for you?** (Answers and experiences will vary. Accept them without judgment.)

➢ **Now, think about some examples of when you felt deceived by someone who was dishonest in order to get what he or she wanted. What was the situation? How did it affect you?** (Answers will vary.)

Our lesson today is about Absalom. He wanted to be king, but he knew his chances were slim. Let's see what schemes he resorted to in order to achieve success his way. And let's see how that turned out for him.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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God's Way to Success

for use as STEP 4

Lesson 9
Focus:
Being sneaky is not God's way.

Lesson 9
Bible Basis:
2 Samuel 14:25—15:37; 17—18; Psalm 63

Lesson 9
Memory Verse:
"Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another."
—Leviticus 19:11

Materials:
- Index cards (1 per student)
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

Absalom wanted success, and he chose a path other than God's way to get that success.

➢ **Absalom experienced consequences for his sneaky methods of achieving, or trying to achieve, success. Which do you think is worse: not getting what you want when you want it, or experiencing the consequences for using deceit to achieve success? Explain your answer.** (Answers may vary.)

➢ **Even when we are followers of God, we often try to design our own success rather than waiting and trusting in God's ways. Why do you think that is?** (Answers may vary; waiting is hard; we are unsure of God's plan; others might get what we want while we wait; what if God does not want us to have that specific form of success; we focus on our wants rather than on our God.)

You may have heard the term "ladder of success." People get the sense that they are climbing, one rung at a time, to reach their definition of success. We are going to make our own definitions of success to remind us of God's way.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Have students copy Leviticus 19:11 on the front of their index cards. On the backs of the cards, have students write ways that they can live by that standard of success in their daily lives. Give students a few minutes to write their ideas. Then, ask for a few volunteers to share ways they'll live by God's success this week.

Encourage your students to keep their cards in a place they'll see them often as a reminder of godly success. Then, close in prayer asking God to give us hearts to want what He wants for us and to pursue success His way. Ask for help not to steal, lie, or deceive.

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