
CHAPTER 11

The Context of Our Character, Part I

*Why We Are Dishonest, and What
We Can Do about It*

In 2004, the total cost of all robberies in the United States was \$525 million, and the average loss from a single robbery was about \$1,300.¹⁵ These amounts are not very high, when we consider how much police, judicial, and corrections muscle is put into the capture and confinement of robbers—let alone the amount of newspaper and television coverage these kinds of crimes elicit. I'm not suggesting that we go easy on career criminals, of course. They are thieves, and we must protect ourselves from their acts.

But consider this: every year, employees' theft and fraud at the workplace are estimated at about \$600 billion. That figure is dramatically higher than the combined financial cost of robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, and automobile theft (totaling about \$16 billion in 2004); it is much more than what all the career criminals in the United States could steal in