Probably honesty does pay in the long run. In business, for example, a man who deals straight forwardly with the pubic, who sells at fair prices, who gives good quality, and can be relied upon not to cheat, will generally establish a reputation that will be a fine business asset. People will be glad to deal with him; and though he may not make a fortune he will have a sound and satisfactory business.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that success is often due to trickery, and great fortunes have been built up upon dishonesty. Too many successful rogues have proved by experience that for them dishonesty had been the best policy.

It has a suspiciously worldly flavor, for it means that from a worldly point of view it pays to have honesty. Now a man of complete honesty will not ask whether honesty pays or not. He feels he must be honest, even if honesty brings him loss or suffering, simply because it is right to be honest and wrong to be dishonest. This proverb is therefore of little use to people of sincere honesty it is really meant only for those unprincipled men who will be honest only if honesty pays, and will be dishonest if they think honesty will pay them worse.