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# Trust and Free Enterprise Go Together

**W**HEN you can't depend upon a merchant to deliver the kind and quality of merchandise he says he is selling or if he can't depend upon you to pay for what you buy, the deal is likely to turn sour.

Examples of such unreliability may be turned up in the news almost daily. Although numerous, they usually are small-scale compared to mammoth frauds committed in government, certain entertainment and communications media, the courts and big business.

Certainly, there always have been individuals who would cheat, rob and steal. These corruptions are almost as old as mankind, which is why moral and ethical laws against them were invoked centuries ago.

Now we have a "see no evil" attitude that permits wrongs to be committed within our observation without making objection. Honest citizens often look the other way muttering, "What can I do about it?"

Take a look at a few recent examples.

A supply firm representative reportedly admitted he paid more

than a million dollars in bribes to county commissioners in Oklahoma.

Warehouse receipts for stored grain, long regarded as solid collateral for bank loans, now have become somewhat questionable assets.

A popular young man obtained investments from trusting friends to expand apparently thriving businesses that suddenly fell apart.

Students, veterans and home buyers are among millions who have defaulted on loans made either directly or guaranteed by the government.

The number of personal bankruptcies is increasing, raising questions of deliberate intent to defraud in many instances.

A state agency is occupied with helping employees recover wages from employers who won't pay for work done.

Employee thievery is on the rise, aided by employers who try to avoid embarrassment by refusing to prosecute. Electronic devices have enabled employees to steal as much as \$20 million in single thefts from

some of the nation's largest banks. The difference between an employee taking home an electric drill and another embezzling a million dollars is in size of offense; not in principles of honesty.

Pettifogging lawyers sometimes make responsible defendants in lawsuits look like criminals, persuading confused juries to award exorbitant sums that make millionaires of people who look like swindlers.

Humanist religion that does not regard violation of traditional moral principles as necessarily being wrong is being taught in public schools as well as by immoral movies, TV entertainment and popular songs.

Through books and magazines, writers espouse unscrupulous practices as the way to get ahead in business. Ambitious executives are encouraged to give expediency priority over ethics.

Free enterprise is based upon mutual confidence of buyer and seller. When trust is gone, free enterprise is through. You can't have Triple-A bonds founded upon X-rated morality!