

The Old Paths

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“Buy It And Do Not Sell It”

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In Proverbs 23:23, Solomon sets forth some things that are of the utmost importance to the child of God. They are things which are so important that Solomon, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said when we acquire them, we must never let them go. Let us look into this text and see the things that are true necessities for the child of God.

“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23:23). What did Solomon mean when he said to “buy” the truth, as well as “buy” wisdom, instruction, and understanding? First, let us understand the word “buy.” To “buy” is “to get, gain, acquire, possess” (Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies, p. 61). Also, to “Spare no pains, cost, or sacrifice to obtain; and when gotten, keep it safe: do not barter it for earthly profit or the pleasures of sense; do not be reasoned out of it, or laughed out of it” (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 9, p. 443).

What Solomon has told us to buy needs to be considered of the highest value! Many times, “buy” means a simple exchange. (To exchange money for goods or to exchange one item of value for another.) Christians often forget that they have exchanged some things in order to become children of God. For example, when we become a Christian, we exchange our old life in sin for our new life in Christ (Rom. 6:3-6, 12:1-2; II

Cor. 5:17).

Yet, please notice that Solomon not only said to buy the truth, but also told us to “sell it not.” This means, “Do not part with for any consideration” (ibid.). This emphasizes our need for buying AND then retaining the items (truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding)! Let us study Proverbs 23:23, and learn what we are to buy and not part with under any circumstances.

Truth

When we think about the truth, let us remember the words of David. He said, “The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea above fine gold” (Ps. 119:72, 127).

Solomon said, “He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit” (Prov. 12:17).

Why should I buy the truth? I must buy the truth because it purifies me. Peter said, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Pet. 1:22). Jesus said the truth sanctifies people (Jn. 17:17). The truth will bring us closer to Christ, seeing that Christ is “full of truth” (Jn. 1:14, 14:6; Heb. 6:18). Finally, the truth is what makes us free (Jn. 8:32).

The Galatian brethren are examples of some who, once they had the truth, had sold it. In fact, when Paul wrote them, he said he “marveled” at how quickly they had gone astray (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul asked

who it was that had “bewitched” them and caused them to disobey the truth (Gal. 3:1). Let us make sure that once we have the truth that we do not part with it for ANY reason!!

Wisdom

Wisdom is something else that must be bought and never sold. Wisdom is simply, “practical knowledge” (Pulpit Commentary). In fact, the book of Proverbs is dedicated to obtaining wisdom (Prov. 1:1-6). Solomon said, “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not (wisdom is personified as a woman, JJ), and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all they getting get understanding.” (Prov. 4:5-7, Also 16:16).

This wisdom under discussion is not just “any” wisdom. This wisdom is from God (I Cor. 1:17-21). When James talked about God’s wisdom, he described it as that which is “from above.” He went on to say that “it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas. 3:17). Friends, this is what we ought to have!!

How do we obtain the wisdom from above? We get it by demanding that Christ be preached, and settling for nothing less and nothing else (Col. 1:28-29)!!

Instruction

Instruction has always been a necessity to God’s people. We see this truth in both the Old and New Testaments (Jer. 35:12-13; II Tim. 2:24-25). Without instruction, we’ll never be able to serve and please God! Solomon said that instruction from God is the most valuable thing we can possess (Prov. 8:8-10).

What is God’s command concerning instruction? He expects His people to

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)

HEAR the words of instruction (Prov. 8:23). He then expects them to RECEIVE those words (Prov. 19:20). In other words, the surest way to know that we have bought instruction and have not sold it is when we are LIVING what we have learned!! (See: Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 11:6; Jas. 2:17-26; etc.). We must make personal application in our lives to the words of God. This is easier said than done, but God's instruction means nothing to us unless and until we are ready to do what we have been instructed (i.e., taught) to do!

Upon hearing and receiving the divine instructions, we have the tools at our disposal to be "*perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (II Tim. 3:16-17). God's words contain "*all things that pertain to life and godliness*" (II Pet. 1:2-3). Since this is true, what does this tell us about those things NOT found in His word?

Understanding

Finally, Solomon says that we must "buy" understanding. Understanding is "discernment" (Pulpit Commentary). This spiritual discernment/understanding is something which each and every Christian must not spare any cost in order to obtain. Are we striving for this? How badly we need spiritual discernment among God's people these days!! Mature Christians who have spiritual understanding are too few and far-between among God's people! Therefore, let us resolve today to be a people of spiritual understanding. Let us be a people who place a premium on God's word, and understanding what God's will is.

In Proverbs 24:3 we read, "*Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established.*" When it comes to the understanding that is stressed in the Bible, we must be mature

Christians (I Cor. 14:20). It is a command that Christians be "*understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Eph. 5:17). How obedient have we been to this command?

"*A fool hath no delight in understanding*" (Prov. 18:2), but "*He that keepeth understanding shall find good*" (Prov. 19:8). Think about it!!

Do Not "Sell" These Things!

In addition to "buying" the truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding, it is also imperative that we not "sell" what we now have! "*Do not part with it for any consideration*" (Pulpit Commentary). Paul stated this truth in a similar way when he said, "**Hold fast** *the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*" (II Tim. 1:13). Let us make sure that nothing comes between us and the truth!

Sadly, there are some who "sell" the truth. Judas did this when he betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15). Peter did this when he denied the Lord (Matt. 26:69-75). In like manner, people today "sell out" the Lord and the truth when they deny Him, whether in words or actions (Matt. 10:32-33; Titus 1:16). People sell the truth when they allow men (peers) to influence them to do wrong when they know what is right (I Cor. 15:33). The truth is sold today when people hold tightly to the false teachings of men, whether

it be the theory of evolution, salvation by "faith only," denial of Hell being an eternal punishment, denying that the earth was created in six consecutive 24-hour days, denying the deity of Christ, saying that one church is as good as another, denying the inspiration of the Scriptures, etc.

Please understand that when the truth is sold, then the "*wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*" go, too! When so-called "wise men" in this world deny the truth, and sell it for the praise of men, these men then do not have wisdom, nor true understanding, seeing as they have refused instruction from Heaven!

David (Solomon's father) said he had more wisdom and understanding than his teachers and his enemies because he spent time in God's word (Ps. 119:98-100). Don't we want to be like this, today? Moses made a similar statement in Deuteronomy 4:5-7. Seeing that these things are true, perhaps we need to repent of "selling out" the truth, and take steps now to "buy" it back before it is too late!

Conclusion

Jesus said, "*Lay up for yourselves treasure in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is; there will your heart be also.*" Are we doing what the Lord said to do? Friend, what are you buying and saving? What are you letting go? (In light of this article, please read Phil. 3:7-8.)

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