

August 18, 2019

“Buy The Truth And Sell it Not”

“Buy the truth, and sell it not; Also wisdom and instruction and understanding,”
Prov. 23:23.

Proverbs is filled with very, very important and wise maxims, which affect every relationship of life. The truths set forth in this great book, though penned nearly 3,000 years ago, are as modern as tomorrow. The truths declared in this book are of such nature that they can never be out-dated so long as man dwells upon planet earth.

Prov. 23:23 contains one of its many great words of wisdom, and it is to this particular proverb that we direct our attention in this article. Specifically, we are alluding to the first part of this proverb, wherein Solomon exhorted the readers thereof to “Buy the truth, and sell it not.”

We live in a world of buying and selling. Millions of shares are bought and sold daily on the New York Stock Exchange. Shakespeare said that “all the world is a stage and men and women are the players.” But it would be more correct to say that all the world is a market and men and women are the buyers and sellers. The point is simply that we live in a world of buying and selling. Buying and selling are terms we use continually in the every day world. But in our text, the writer used commercial terms (buying and selling) to stress the importance of buying the truth and refusing to sell it, regardless of the price offered. We shall now focus more thoroughly on the first half of Proverbs 23:23:

“Buy the truth.” “Truth,” not error, is the commodity we are encouraged to “buy.” But, like Pilate the Roman governor before whom our Savior was arraigned, we ask, “What is truth,” John 18:38. The Answer to this question involves **God**, who is the ultimate Source of truth. We concur with *Moses who praised God, saying, He is “a God of truth and without injustice,”* Deut. 32:4. Jesus spoke to the Jews in the temple, saying, “*He Who sent me is true, whom you do not know,*” John 7:38. The Psalmist praised God, saying, “*You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth,*” Ps. 31:5. The apostle Paul spoke of God as One who “cannot lie,” Titus 1:2. Indeed, God is the Source of truth! And even as God is the Source of Truth, Jesus Christ is the **manifestation** of truth! Jesus, the Word, is described in John 1:14 as being “*the only begotten of the “Father, full of grace and truth,*” John 1:14. In fact, Jesus Himself said “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,*” John 14:16. And even as Jesus is the Manifestation of truth, **the Holy Spirit** is the Revealer of truth. Speaking to His apostles, Jesus promised them, saying, “*However, when He the Spirit of truth, has come; He will guide you into all truth...,*” John 16:13. The One described as “*the Spirit of*

truth” in this verse in John 14:26 is called “*the Holy Spirit*,” wherein Jesus told His apostles that “*He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*” Yes, the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of truth! And as the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of truth, the Bible, the word of God, is the record of truth! In fact, Jesus prayed to the Father, saying “*Your word is truth*,” John 17:17. Hence, in view of these facts, if we really “*buy the truth*,” we will seek, learn, believe, and obey those sacred precepts set forth in the **Bible**, which is indeed the record of truth.

Buy Only the truth! Even as many things sold in the market place is not as good as they are said to be, much of what we hear in the religious world, is not “*the truth*.” In Old Testament times there were prophets who prophesied “*lies*” in the “*Name*” of the Lord, prophets who gave a “*false vision*,” setting forth the “*deceit of their heart*,” Jer. 14:14. The apostle Peter issued a sober warning when he said, “*there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction*,” 2 Pet. 2:1. The apostle Paul wrote of those “*who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ*,” Gal. 1:7. Indeed, in view of the many “*blind leaders of the blind*,” Matt. 15:14, it behooves each of us to be like the Bereans who “*received the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*,” Acts 17:11. Even as there is counterfeit money, there are counterfeit religions!

Buy ALL the truth! We should seriously ponder the words of James 2:10: “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*” Sadly, there are countless persons who will accept what the Bible says about the Person of Jesus Christ, but refuse to believe what the same Bible says about the necessity of baptism. Many will accept what the Bible says about baptism, and the one church which Jesus built, but refuse to accept what the same Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Buy the truth regardless of the price! “*Truth*” is like the pearl of great price. Remember Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a “*merchant man seeking beautiful pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it*,” Matt. 13:45-46. Regardless of the price, one must “*buy the truth*,” or else he will suffer the dire consequences of embracing error. Truth is worth the price — regardless of how great the cost. But the price paid may vary from person to person. For example, a good moral person must repent and be baptized “*for the remission of sins*,” Acts 2:38. Repentance demands that one, being filled with “*godly sorrow*,” 2 Cor. 7:10, must turn away from every sin and every sinful relationship. To one addicted to alcohol, to gambling, or who may be involved in an adulterous marriage, the purchase price of truth will be steep indeed. Buying the truth may cost a person his friends, his family, his popularity, or even his job. In the first century, buying the truth cost many people their very lives. But, regardless of the price, in view of eternity and contrasting destinies of the saved and the lost, truth is always worth the price!

BUY the truth! It is not sufficient to just hear the truth, though hearing is necessary, Rom. 10:17. It is not enough to just know the truth, though knowing the truth

is necessary. It is not enough to just intend to buy it. Regarding truth, many have good intentions, but they never act upon those noble intentions. Someone has well said that “the way to hell is paved with good intentions.” “*Buy*,” in our opening text (Prov. 23:23) equals the the price paid for the actual acceptance of, and obedience to the truth. “***Buy the truth***” — don’t just believe it!

“And Sell it not!” Many “*sell*” the truth after they initially believe and obey the truth by wandering back into the world of sin and error. The sobering fact is this: truth is hard to buy, but it is easy to sell! How many professed Christians have compromised their convictions and principles for social prestige? How many have sacrificed honesty and integrity for material gain? How many have sold out to the devil for fleshly satisfaction?

Conclusion: Indeed, we must “*buy the truth and sell it not!*” We must “buy the truth;” we must buy **only** the truth; we must buy **all** the truth; we must buy the truth **regardless** of the price. And once we have bought the truth, we must “*sell it not!*”

But **why** buy the truth? The answer to this question is found in John 8:32 wherein Jesus said “*you shall know the truth and the **truth** shall make you **free**.*” Only “***the truth***,” when believed and obeyed, will free a person from the bondage of sin and the servitude of Satan. Indeed, it behooves each accountable soul to “*buy the truth and sell it not!*”

*** —B. Witherington

“If we let God guide, He will provide.”