

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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## What's the Price for Your Soul?

**J**esus said, *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul"* (Matthew 16:26). Is your soul for sale? The Devil would like for it to be. He'll give you anything within his power for it. Sadly, there have been many over the years who have sold their soul to the Devil, and in each case the Devil has gotten a bargain. The soul is the most precious thing in the world. You do not own anything that is as valuable as your soul. Yet, amazingly, many will exchange their soul for such little in return. Here are some examples:

### Popularity

Everyone likes to be popular, at least to a certain extent. It is nice to have people pay attention to you. It is nice to be flattered with words. It feels good to know that others like you. These are some of the things that come with popularity. But are they worth the soul? Obviously the answer is no. Paul realized that and so he was willing to give up things that would certainly make him very popular. In Philippians three we read, *"Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"* (Philippians 3:5-7). Paul went from being esteemed among the Jews to being an enemy. He could go back to Judaism and regain his lost standing in the Jewish community. He could sell his soul for popularity. However, to Paul it was not worth it. What about you? Is popularity worth the cost of your soul? I hope not.

### Earthly Riches

The Devil has frequently cashed in on man's desire to possess the riches of this world. Demas sold his soul for the things of this world. Paul said, *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. . ."* (2 Timothy 4:10). He was not the last to sell his soul for riches. In fact, it happens all the time. Many are obsessed by the lure of the mighty dollar. Think of all the people who have lived recklessly as they chase mammon. Think of all the drug pushers, thieves, scam artists, etc., that have one thing in common: the love of money. Think of those who have lost their lives savings by gambling. It may be, according to society, that they have a disease, but rest assured, it all started because of the love of money. Think about the murders that have taken place and the lives destroyed because of an over-bearing desire to be rich. Truly, the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). The sad thing is, many sell their souls by desiring to be rich, yet never obtain the riches they crave so much. And even those who do obtain them, do not seem to realize, at least until it is too late, that those riches do not completely satisfy (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

Citizens of the kingdom of God have to be careful of this. It is not just a problem among worldly-minded people who are outside of Christ, it is a danger of which we must all be aware.

Jesus was speaking to those who would be members of the body of Christ when He said, *“Lay not up for your-selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures 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”* (Matthew 6:19-21). Let us all be on guard. Let’s be sure to set our affections on things above (Colossians 3:2).

### **The Desires of the Flesh**

This is another area where Satan has enjoyed great success. Many say, “what can be wrong with bringing a little pleasure to one’s self, especially when no one else is hurt by my actions?” Commercials on T.V. abound with advertisements that suggest the only way to live is to fulfill fleshly desires that are contrary to God’s law. People of intelligence conclude that there is nothing wrong with getting drunk once in a while, as long as one is not an alcoholic. Then there are those who believe that there isn’t anything wrong with having sex outside of marriage, as long as it is done safely. I have even heard pornography justified, as long as it is done in good taste. People who reason like this are those who have sold their souls to the Devil. Those who give in to the lust of the flesh are those who have exchanged the salvation of their souls for the pleasures of sin that last for but a moment (Hebrews 11:25).

What is your soul worth to you? What is more important to you than the salvation of your soul?

*Don*

## **“Go And Do Likewise”**

by Leon Willis

**T**he historian Luke records that on one occasion a certain man challenged Jesus with the question, *“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* (Lk. 10:25). The question is surprising since the man was a lawyer, an expert in Jewish law, and as a serious student of the Law, he must have already known the answer. Actually, he was testing Jesus. Was Jesus’ reputation as a teacher deserved? Was His knowledge of the Law as profound as that of the questioner?

Note, however, the manner in which Jesus passed the “test.” Using one of His favorite teaching techniques, Jesus answered the question with a question, *“What is written in the Law?”* Although this lawyer seems to have a wrong attitude regarding Jesus, his answer was very perceptive. Instead of expressing his opinion about how to obtain eternal life, he quoted from the Law. He responded, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and strength, and mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.”*

The lawyer was exactly right. When asked on a later occasion, *“Which is the great commandment of the Law?”* Jesus gave the very same answer. In Matt. 22:40, Jesus explained that *“on these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”* The first commandment was the basis of man’s relationship with God and the second was the basis of man’s relationship with others.

Even though the lawyer knew the correct answer, there still seemed to be a problem.

When Jesus told him, *“Do this, and you will live,”* the lawyer sought to justify himself. He defensively replied, *“Who is my neighbor?”* possibly implying that the word was difficult to define, therefore the law could not be kept.

Actually, the lawyer probably knew the answer to this question also, but Jesus used another effective

teaching technique as he related the *“parable of the good Samaritan.”* A familiar parable to many, we understand the Samaritan was considered a good neighbor since he stopped and cared for the injured man. But why did the priest and the Levite NOT stop? They should have stopped! Like the lawyer, they were trained in the Law, and knew the “great commandment.” The fact was the Law had no reality in their lives. They were *“armchair theologians.”* To them, the Law was something to memorize, to argue about, to impress people with, but not something to live.

Jesus changed the whole emphasis of the lawyer’s question. Jesus implied that if the Law had any meaning in the lawyer’s life and if he really loved God and his neighbor, he wouldn’t have to ask questions like, ***“Who is my neighbor?”*** but would be actively searching for ways to BE a neighbor. The lawyer’s problem was that he KNEW, but he wouldn’t DO! Jesus’ answer seems simple enough: “DO this, and you will live...go and DO likewise.” The same applies today. It is not enough to say we love God, or to even know His will. We must DO His commandments (Jn. 14:15).