

MONEY-MAKING BIBLE HUCKSTERS AND MAMMON : PART 1

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Online Money-Making Bible Hucksters, Freely Ye Have Received, Jesus' Example Of Freely Sharing God's Truth, Not Infallible, Casting The Bait, Secret Societies, Lure Of Esoteric Wisdom, Worldly Commercial Spirit And What Is In It For Me, Helping Others Because It Is The Right Thing To Do, Jesus' Anger In The Temple, Simon The Sorcerer Tries To Purchase Holy Spirit, Peter Heals Lame Man, Biblical Meaning Of The Word "Publish", A Free Written Record, What If The Original Manuscripts Had Been Sold?, Modern Friends Of Mammon, Abundant Life Doctrine, Lay Not Up Treasures On Earth, We Cannot Serve Two Masters, Dilemma Of Wealthy People, Example Of Moses & Other Examples, Bob Dylan - You Gotta Serve Somebody, Parable Of The Sower, Freely Preach The Gospel, Danger Of Filthy Lucre, Practicing Humility In Our Preaching, Modern Self-Proclaimed Prophets

Some time ago, while scanning various Internet newsgroups, I happened upon one of many messages in which the writer offered some interesting information related to Endtime prophecy. Following the instructions that were provided in the message post, I sent him a reply to obtain additional information. This person responded with an email message which was even more tantalizing than his first newsgroup post. It provided some additional comments on the knowledge which this person claimed to possess, but it didn't contain the actual information. At this point I was beginning to get a better idea of what this man was all about. Following the instructions in the email message, I went to the URL that he had included. You can imagine the deep disappointment that I experienced upon discovering that the message posted in the newsgroup, as well as the private email message, were only bait to lure me, and other spiritually hungry folks, to what amounted to nothing more than a commercial web site, where God's Word, or at least what this person claimed was the proper interpretation of God's Word, was being sold for a profit.

Quite frankly, I find it rather objectionable, and in fact, it really upsets me, that modern Christianity has become so overrun by Bible hucksters who feel that they have the right to convert the sharing of God's truth into nothing more than another worldly business venture. Being a prolific writer myself, I can understand and appreciate that many Christian writers invest a considerable amount of time, energy, thought and money into their writing and research endeavors. However, this is no excuse for anyone to sell the truth, or at least what we believe to be the truth, concerning the Scriptures. Like this person who posted a message in the newsgroup, I've been dedicated to sharing Biblical truth with those who are willing to hear it for many years. However, I do not sell it. I firmly believe in what the Lord taught us in the Gospels when He said:

". . . freely ye have received, freely give."  
Matthew 10:8b, KJV

In my view, to put a price on Biblical truth is to indirectly suggest that the only people who are worthy of hearing it, or reading it, are those who are willing to pay for it. This, of course, is in direct contradiction to the whole Spirit of the Bible. This is most definitely not the method which Jesus and His followers practiced. Jesus didn't go around on book tours or speaking engagements in which He charged hefty fees before He would even be willing to speak. He shared God's truth in the open air, for all to hear, freely. Furthermore, being as the ideas of any Christian writer are not infallible, anyone who is foolish enough to pay money for their books, videos or whatever it is that they are selling, is taking a big gamble.

Let us be honest about this. The truth of the matter is that we may truly and sincerely believe in what we are writing and teaching, but to promote such beliefs as some absolute truth which supersedes the writings of all other Christian writers and teachers -- as some of these fast-talking Bible hucksters do -- is simply a product of vanity and pride, and an attempt to enrich oneself by relying upon the gullibility of others. As I said, I often receive emails from some of these crafty characters, and I will sometimes visit their websites. When they make the claim that they are going to reveal something new, some shocking revelation that they have just discovered which has never been heard before, -- for a modest price, of course -- that is when they lose me. I wonder how many people send in money to some of these money-making Bible hucksters, only to be disappointed later when they find out exactly what it is the writers espouse. Perhaps you are one who has been "burned" by some of these scam artists.

You see, this is precisely the gimmick that some writers use in order to attract gullible souls to their lairs. They will tease you and purposely pique your curiosity with some hidden "truth" which they have purportedly discovered; but until you bite the bait and send in your money, they won't let you know exactly what it is. This is the same technique that is used by some individuals who are involved with certain so-called "secret societies", such as the Kabbalists, Freemasons, and other such groups. Even the Roman Catholic Church just loves to surround things in mystery, such as the so-called secrets of Fatima. Certain cults will employ this very same method in order to attract new recruits. They all claim to possess some secret knowledge, or some esoteric wisdom, or some mystical power which is only meant for the "chosen few". You have to go through certain initiation rites and advance one level at a time, until they feel that you are worthy of the "ultimate truth", and the powers which they supposedly possess. This issue is something which I likewise discuss in some of my Endtime and New Age articles.

Well, I am sorry folks -- no, not really -- but it is rather difficult for me personally to believe in the sincerity of some of these money-making Bible hucksters. If their hearts were really right with the Lord, and if they were sincerely interested in enlightening people, instead of in just making money, they would freely share what the Lord has supposedly revealed to them, and not hoard it, and only share it with those people who are willing to pay them money for it. In my view, such "Christian" writers are guilty of yielding to the very same commercial spirit which has polluted the world. It is so sad to see that everything today is based on money and profit. There was a time when good-hearted people did things simply because it helped someone else and because it was the right thing to do. Now, however, everything has a price; and so many people want to know what is in it for them first,

before they are willing to extend a helpful hand to someone.

Many of you reading this will be familiar with the story of how Jesus became upset with the moneychangers and sellers in the courts of the temple in Jerusalem. Those merchants were profiting from the devotion to God of the common people, and Jesus didn't like it one bit, as we see here:

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Matthew 21:12-13, KJV

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

John 2:13-16, KJV

In another example, which is found in the Book of the Acts, there was an evil sorcerer in Samaria by the name of Simon, who actually thought that he could purchase the power of the Holy Spirit from the Apostles. Consider the following verses:

"But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans."

Acts 8:9-25, KJV

Another interesting example is found in the third chapter of the Book of Acts, where Peter heals a lame man who is asking for alms near the temple in Jerusalem. Peter plainly tells the man that he has no money, and then proceeds to heal the man by the Power of God. Even though Peter obviously has no money, does he ask the lame man for a financial gift before he is willing to heal him? Of course not, as we see here:

"And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him."

Acts 3:2-10, KJV

It is plain to see then that Biblical truth, and the Power and the Spirit of God, cannot, and should not, be bought or sold for profit. In my view, there is no difference between what these money-making Bible hucksters are doing today, and what the moneychangers and temple merchants did almost two thousand years ago. Whether you sell doves in the temple, or exchange coins so that people can pay their tithes, or sell books, magazines, tapes or videos which purportedly contain the truth of God's Word, it is all the same selfish spirit of worldly commercialism. It is making a worldly business out of God's Divine Business of winning lost souls to His Kingdom.

On a related note, it may interest you to know that the word "publish" is mentioned eighteen times in the Authorized King James version of the Holy Bible. The word "publisheth" is also mentioned four times. In every instance, these words are not referring to writing and selling books, but rather to verbally proclaiming or declaring something. Following are a few examples which may be familiar to you:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"  
Isaiah 52:7, KJV

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"  
Romans 10:15, KJV

Notice how the Apostle Paul substitutes the word "preach" in order to show the true meaning of the word "publish", as it was used by the Prophet Isaiah. When Jesus told His Disciples in Mark 16:15 to "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature", that is exactly what He meant: Go preach, or verbally publish, the Good News. Of course, thanks to the Lord's foresight, He gave His followers the wisdom to

eventually write down everything so that future generations of Christians could be spiritually edified by their accounts and teachings. However, when the holy men and Prophets of the Bible did write their various parchments, books, Gospels and Epistles, they did not go around selling them for a profit. They freely distributed them to the Body of Believers. It was probably very similar to a free courier system, to maintain communication between the early Believers. Their intent was to exalt the Lord, and to instruct, strengthen and edify the Church; that is, the worldwide Body of Believers. It wasn't to earn a profit like so many of these money-making Bible hucksters do today.

Imagine if the original writers of the Bible had only sold their works to those who could afford them. Would the truth of the Bible be as widely dispersed as it is today? Probably not. It would probably be similar to when the Roman Catholic Church intentionally kept the Bible in Latin, and out of the hands of ordinary people, so that they could dictate what it meant, and thus maintain control over the consciences of the masses. Is it any wonder then that today the Roman Catholic Church has compromised with the secular world, and continues to be one of the largest and richest commercial enterprises? Sadly, many other denominations have quickly followed in the steps of the Roman Catholic Church, and are equally guilty of the very same things. In our modern day, these money-minded Christians don't even realize that they have fulfilled one of the very things that Jesus warned us against when He said:

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Luke 16:9, KJV

Nowadays, some materialistic Christians claim that the Lord came to give us the abundant life. The Southern Baptists are particularly notorious for promoting this false belief. They will quote all of their favorite verses in their attempts to justify their selfish lifestyle, but they have gotten it all wrong. Jesus was not talking about physical abundance, but rather spiritual abundance; that is, being rich in Spirit. In fact, if we turn to the Sermon on the Mount, we find the following verses:

"Lay not up for yourselves 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, KJV

So tell me; who has really misinterpreted the Scriptures? Those verses certainly don't talk about an abundant life in the flesh as these material-minded Christians like to claim. Only a few verses later, Jesus made it even more clear what He meant when He said the following:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Matthew 6:24, KJV

That word "mammon" is derived from the Greek "mammonas", and is referring to accumulating physical wealth. As Jesus also stated in several of the Gospels:

". . . Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God . . . And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."  
Matthew 19:23-24, 29, KJV

". . . Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"  
Mark 10:24b, KJV

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."  
Luke 14:33, KJV

The Apostle James likewise had some rather harsh words for the rich people of the world. In the fifth chapter of his Epistle he wrote the following:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."  
James 5:1-7, KJV

Why did the Lord teach such difficult things? Quite simply, because He fully knows and understands the heart of man; and He realizes that the vast majority of wealthy people are not willing, or capable, of giving up their riches. They prefer the riches and power of this current temporal world, and not the spiritual rewards and riches of God's Eternal Kingdom. I have often said that we should never forget that such people are in business to make as much money as they possibly can, and at whatever the cost; because they are married to their money. Furthermore, as the Apostle Paul tells us, the love of money is the root of all evil. Why are there so many wars and other evils in the world? In many cases, after we clear away all of the lies and deceptions that are put in place by worldly governments, we discover that it is all about money and profit. Paul wrote:

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."  
1 Timothy 6:10, KJV

This secular attitude of loving money, power and fame is so unlike that of Moses, of whom we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that he was willing to forsake it all in order to serve the Eternal God, as we see here:

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

Hebrews 11:24-27, KJV

Moses could have remained in Egypt and continued living the royal life. Perhaps Elijah could have earned his millions by stopping the rain for the enemies of Israel. Jesus could no doubt have been a billionaire in His day, had He charged for His healing services and other miracles. Perhaps the Apostle Paul could have continued to enjoy life as a self-righteous, law-abiding, affluent Pharisee, instead of becoming number one on the Jews' "Most Wanted" list. But that is not what any of these men did, because they all had their eyes on something far greater which transcends this temporal human existence. As Paul so eloquently stated in his Epistle to the brethren at Philippi:

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"

Philippians 3:8, KJV

As legendary folk singer Bob Dylan proclaimed more than two decades ago in one of his powerful Christian-oriented songs, "Now it may be the Devil, and it may be the Lord, but you gotta serve somebody!" As was to be expected, Dylan suffered some degree of persecution after writing such a hard-hitting song which was so contrary to his Jewish roots. Sadly, it seems that Bob Dylan was like the seed that was sown on the stony ground in the Lord's Parable of the Sower, found in Matthew 13:3-23; and after putting out a few Christian CD's, he returned to his earlier musical roots. As Jesus stated in that Parable:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away . . . But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

Matthew 13:5, 6, 20, 21, KJV

But to reiterate an important point that I made earlier, when a person preaches the Word of God, such as through a public street ministry, singing, passing out tracts, sharing God's Word online, etc., they are fulfilling the actual meaning of the Biblical word "publish", because they are freely sharing the truth of the Scriptures with anyone who is willing to receive it, and not with just a select few who can afford to pay for it. As I explain in a number of my articles, Jesus has already paid the full price for our Salvation by way of His Sacrifice on the Cross; and now we must return the favor by glorifying Him, by allowing Him to use both our bodies and spirits as His vessels to share the Gospel of Salvation with the world. As the Apostle Paul tells us in several of his

Epistles, as well as in the Book of Acts:

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:20, KJV

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

2 Timothy 4:2, KJV

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,"

Acts 20:20, KJV

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:9-10, KJV

As far as I am concerned, when the Lord reveals something to one of His servants, it is that person's responsibility to freely share it with as many people as he can without giving any thought to what he might gain in return. Isn't that what the Bible teaches us? The Apostles of the First Century had some very clear things to say regarding those who preached the Gospel for personal gain -- or "filthy lucre" -- as we see by the following verses:

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous . . . Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;"

1 Timothy 3:3, 8, KJV

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre . . . Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

Titus 1:7, 11, KJV

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

1 Peter 5:2, KJV

As some of my long-time readers know, over the years, I have devoted a lot of time and energy to this writing ministry. I have likewise invested quite a large sum of money in it as well. However, I really don't care if I never earn any money from it, because I am not trying to. I am not motivated by personal financial gain -- or filthy lucre -- and profit. My primary interest is simply to share what I believe may be the truth concerning the Scriptures. My primary task is to remain faithful to the Lord's command found in Mark 16:15. As I have said before, I believe that we each possess different pieces of the puzzle. No one possesses the entire puzzle or knows it all; not me, not you, not any of us. If anyone believes they do, then they are just deceiving themselves, and are lifted up in their own pride and vanity, and are seriously lacking in Christian humility. As the Apostle Paul also tells us, knowledge can puff us up, or make us proud, and that can be



dangerous:

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

1 Corinthians 8:1, KJV

The Book of Proverbs also offers us a stiff warning regarding those who become puffed up in their own pride, as we see by this verse:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Proverbs 16:18, KJV

So again, regardless of how much the Lord may reveal to us in His Word, we all need to maintain a level of humility in our preaching. This is not always easy. After all, we're all just humans who are born with a sinful nature, and that old pride just loves to pop up whenever it can, just like one of those stubborn jack-in-the-boxes. As the Apostle James said:

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

James 4:10, KJV

Sadly, as I mentioned earlier, I've visited certain websites where the author will boastfully exclaim, "Oh, I've got the truth! I've received a special, unique revelation from God! Everyone else is wrong except me! I guarantee that you will not find this kind of information on any other website! I'm unique! I am the one and only! I am God's Prophet!"

That is nonsense! In addition to the many self-proclaimed "prophets" who have established themselves on the Internet, some of those Christian mega-sites are affiliated with some affluent church or religious organization which has piles of money to throw around, and they are simply promoting their particular doctrines. The point is, if they claim, "Everyone else is wrong and we are right", you better be careful; and please don't send them your hard-earned money. It is only in coming together and sharing what we have that we can all get a clearer understanding of God's whole picture. While we may not always see eye to eye on every single point -- because we're all different and our backgrounds and life experiences will affect how we understand the Scriptures -- at least we are talking, and discussing, and making our ideas available for each other's consideration, instead of merely hoarding what we have learned, or worse yet, selling it for a profit.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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MONEY-MAKING BIBLE HUCKSTERS AND MAMMON : PART 2

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Paul's Counsel In 1 Corinthians, Phony Donations, Charity And Supporting God's Workers, Seek First The Kingdom And God Will Provide Your Needs, The Cheerful Giver, Suffer All Things For The Gospel, Apostle Paul's Example, Lords Over God's Heritage, 1st Century Church Financial Plan, Christian Communal Living, Not For Personal Gain Or Filthy Lucre, Greedy False Shepherds, Modern Commercialized Christianity And Superficial Preachers, Modern Christianity's Dandy Bad Example, Hindering The Gospel, The Antichrist Jewish Leaders, Judged According To Our Works, Church Of Laodicea, Danger Of Materialism, Babylon The Great

I would have been interested in reading some of the material which this man, and others like him, offer; however, I'm not about to encourage any of these money-making Bible hucksters to continue in their practices by sending them money. It is my firm belief that those who preach the Gospel should find some other means of supporting themselves, so that they can deliver the truth of God's Word freely to the spiritually destitute of the world. The Apostle Paul had to deal with this very same problem, and wrote the following in his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth:

"Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

1 Corinthians 9:3-14, KJV

Some people have used the previous verses as a means to try to justify commercializing our Christian faith. There is an old saying some of them use which says something like "The Gospel am free, but it cost somethin' to pipe it to ya!" It does cost money to preach the Gospel of Christ; there is no doubt about that; however, I am by no means convinced that the Apostle Paul was advocating that we should commercialize our faith, such as by selling books, videos, music CD's and the like, or by charging money for speaking engagements. It also really irks me when some of these Bible hucksters claim that they will give you their book or CD in exchange for a generous "donation". When these hucksters refuse to give you their product unless you "donate", then it really isn't a donation, is it? They are in fact selling you something, and

it is hypocritical to try to pretend that it is a donation.

My understanding is that if we faithfully preach the Gospel, then those people to whom we are ministering, who gladly receive the Word, should feel an obligation to help support us in return. In other words, I am talking about good old charity; and I believe that this is what Paul is referring to as well. If we, as preachers of God's Word, provide their spiritual needs, then in return, they should be willing to provide our physical needs. Perhaps someone can offer you a rent-free place to live, or food to eat, or clothes to wear. That is basically all that any of us really needs to survive happily, and of course a computer, if you happen to have an electronic ministry as I do. If you happen to be a traveling missionary, a car or truck with a trailer or camper would take the place of a stationary home. Folks can also donate monetary gifts as well to help pay for utilities, gasoline, etc.

As I point out in "Seek Ye First The Kingdom Of God", all I know is that if we faithfully preach the Gospel of Salvation as we've been called to do, God will provide our every need. He will take care of us, somehow, in some way, even if that means subsisting on donations and charity. He may not provide everything that we want, but He will most certainly provide everything that we really need, and we won't have to sell His Word in order to obtain it either. Jesus promised us this, and other writers in the Bible promised it as well, as we see by the following verses:

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart . . . I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Psalms 37:4, 25, KJV

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Matthew 6:33-34, KJV

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-8, 11, KJV

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Luke 12:6-7, KJV

"And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for

they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Luke 12:22-31, KJV

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Romans 8:32, KJV

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19, KJV

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

1 John 5:14-15, KJV

Please notice that in the previous verses, it is emphasized that we should direct our prayers, concerns and needs to God the Father, and then He will provide accordingly. Nowhere in those verses do we find anyone suggesting that we should sell God's Word, or other Christian-related materials, for money, in order to provide our own needs. In short, God will provide for us through those people to whom we preach the Gospel.

Furthermore, as I also point out in the article "The Cheerful Giver: Supporting God's Work", if Christian believers support those who preach the Gospel to them, God will bless them in return; because as the Apostle Paul also tells us, God loves a cheerful giver. In other words, God loves those people who freely give from their hearts, because they want to give, and not because they are forced to give, or feel pressured to give; and they don't grumble about it either, as we see here:

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:7, KJV

In the previous verses that I shared with you, Paul clarifies that we aren't supposed to force people to pay us in any way, before we are willing to share the Gospel with them; yet this is precisely what some of these modern preachers are doing, such as the person who inspired this series. In their haste to try to justify their actions, some of these unscrupulous people who commercialize our Christian faith will quote the last verse where Paul says "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel". However, what they neglect to point out is that a few verses earlier, Paul also states "Nevertheless we have not used this

power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ". In other words, Paul is clarifying that while they could use their position as the Lord's Apostles to force people to give money to them, or to provide them with whatever other needs they may have, they refuse to exercise this Apostolic authority, because to do this could hinder the furtherance of the Gospel.

A few verses later, Paul again verifies that it is better to suffer personal need for the Gospel's sake, than to exercise his power as an Apostle of Christ, and demand payment for his preaching services. Rather than become a selfish shepherd of the Word who will only share the Gospel with those who are willing to pay for it, Paul clearly states that he prefers to make the Gospel of Christ known "without charge", as we see here:

"What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."

1 Corinthians 9:18, KJV

Sadly, as we have already seen, to our shame, today there are many of these money-making Bible hucksters who have chosen to ignore everything below verse fourteen; and I suspect that at least some of them do it because they know that those verses expose their sins of selfishness and greed. I encourage you to take the time to read the whole chapter so as to obtain a better understanding of exactly what Paul is saying in these verses.

One thing that is certain, is the fact that because Paul was not willing to charge money for preaching the Gospel, he was willing to "suffer all things", because he simply didn't want to hinder the propagation of the Gospel of Christ. We know from the Book of Acts, as well as from some of the Epistles, that Paul and his companions often suffered as a result of being ambassadors of the Gospel of Christ. Not only was both verbal and physical persecution common, but sometimes, they also lacked their own physical needs. This is made quite clear for us in passages such as the following:

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

1 Corinthians 4:10-13, KJV

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Philippians 4:11-13, KJV

If Paul was charging money for his preaching services, if he was earning filthy lucre as he shared the Gospel of Salvation with people, why would he even make such statements? He would have all of his needs met all of the time, right? It becomes obvious then that he wasn't asking for anything in return. He was seeking first the Kingdom of God, and simply trusting God

to touch people's hearts to share with him, just as he was sharing his spiritual riches with them, as he stated in his Epistle to the Corinthians. It was an exchange of spiritual blessings for physical needs.

What a far cry from the glitzy, well-groomed, fast-talking preachers of our current time! So we see then that people who make such demands on their flocks are in contradiction to the Scriptures. They are not following the financial plan of the First Century Church, and they are abusing their position as ministers of God's Word. In fact, this kind of behavior is probably what Peter was referring to when he stated that we should not be "lords over God's heritage", as we see in the following verses. Please notice again that Peter states that we should not preach the Gospel for personal gain -- or for filthy lucre. Peter is clearly making a connection between preaching for our own personal gain, and being lords over God's heritage:

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

1 Peter 5:2-4, KJV

It seems then that Peter and Paul were very much in agreement regarding this particular issue of commercializing our faith. They shared the belief that fleecing the sheep was not God's financial plan for the First Century Church. So exactly what was God's financial plan for the Early Christians? Well, as the old adage goes, "Where God guides, He will also provide". In looking at the New Testament, we learn that the Disciples of the Early Church made ends meet through a variety of ways. Primary among these was their sharing of the goods or money donated by new Disciples, as well as others who believed in and supported their work. Consider the following verses:

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

Acts 2:44-45, KJV

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,"

Acts 4:34, KJV

In a later chapter, we discover that when a congregation in one place had more than was actually needed, it would share its surplus with a congregation in another city. For example, consider how Paul and Barnabas were sent to help the Elders in Jerusalem:

"And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Acts 11:28-30, KJV

Thus we see that the early followers of Christ practiced a pure form of Christian communism. They lived communally, and

they shared everything according to each person's need. Yet in spite of this straight forward financial plan that's laid out for us in the pages of the New Testament, there are many Christians today who will say "Oh, that was for back then; we cannot possibly live like that today. Life has become far too complicated."

While this may be partially true, I remain convinced that two factors which contribute to this problem, is our own lack of faith and trust in the Lord, as well as the extremely selfish lifestyles that we lead. This makes Christian communal living more difficult to achieve today. There have been Christian and non-Christian organizations which have attempted it; and they have been successful for a number of years. Eventually, however, it seems that selfishness and materialism creep in, and some of them don't last. What likewise hampers Christian communal living is the fact that the secular world frowns upon any group of people who choose to live in this fashion due to their common religious or philosophical beliefs, or simply to save money, or for whatever their reasons. Just try it, and you will quickly be branded as a dangerous cult by "respectable" civic and religious leaders alike. Before you realize it, government agencies like the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Child Protective Services, etc., will be after you, looking for reasons to discredit you.

If you are interested in reading more about the Early Church Plan, I encourage you to read my companion article "Where Are The First Century Churches?" The point is, God can and will provide today, just as He did two thousand years ago, if we only have the faith to believe. After all, as we are told in the Scriptures:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Malachi 3:10, KJV

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."  
Hebrews 13:8, KJV

But returning to the main subject of this series, it should be clear to you, the reader, by now, that we are not to seek financial reward for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are not to do it for filthy lucre's sake. If you've felt the call to be an Ambassador of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then I truly hope that you're willing to preach simply out of your love for lost souls, even if you never receive any reward or recognition here on Earth. After all, we have our reward, and it is in Heaven.

So again, these money-minded preachers are misrepresenting the Gospel. They are giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ a very bad name. They are being lords over God's heritage, and living the so-called "abundant life" at the expense of their flocks. They are fleecing their flocks much like the greedy shepherds which are described in the thirty-fourth chapter of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, as we see here:

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"

Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock . . . Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

Ezekiel 34:2-3, 7-10, KJV

What a stinging rebuke to modern day false shepherds who do the very same thing! They wear their fancy clothes and their expensive rings. They ride around in their luxurious cars and build their multi-million dollar mega-churches. Some even own vast amounts of real estate and large companies worldwide. We see flashy preachers making multi-million dollar deals with various facets of the mass media, while others preach a vast array of strange and unscriptural doctrines. These wolves in sheep's clothing preach about living the "abundant life", but they are the only ones who are actually living it! Our faith has also been shamed by preachers and preachers' wives who have been unfaithful to each other, while others have been involved with homosexuality and pedophilia. Yet others are discovered to be entangled in questionable financial deals, and on and on the bad dream goes.

Is it really any wonder then that modern-day Christianity has obtained such a bad image, and a bad name? Is it really any wonder that some people see the superficiality and hypocrisy of some Christian churches and leaders today and say "I don't want any part of that! I'd rather be a Buddhist, or a Muslim or a Wiccan, or a New Ager, or an atheist"? Tragically, while I don't agree with their choices, I can't say that I really blame them to a certain extent. What kind of an example have these people been given by the so-called "leaders" of modern Christianity? I must fully concur then with the Apostle Paul when he states that this kind of abusive behavior has indeed hindered the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It has prevented some people from entering the Kingdom of God, and in some cases, it has made it difficult for some people to believe in God at all. In fact, I am reminded of a similar comment that Jesus made to the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees of His day when He said:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

Matthew 23:13, KJV

Of course, in that case, I believe that Jesus was saying that those religious leaders had placed the bar so high, through all of their special laws and requirements, that no one could have gained Eternal Life even if they had wanted to. Not only that, but it is quite evident that the Scribes and Pharisees persecuted and threatened anyone who dared to believe in and follow Jesus. As I point out in other articles, not only did they murder Jesus in cold blood, but they then proceeded to persecute, incarcerate and kill His followers in the Book of Acts. What some of these church leaders and famous preachers



are doing today isn't quite the same, but the end result is still the same; and that is that they are hurting the message of the Gospel, through their dandy bad examples of hypocrisy, materialistic living and superficiality, and they are driving people away from our Christian faith, instead of towards it.

One thing is certain. According to the Scriptures, some day, these shameful and irresponsible Christian leaders will be held accountable for their actions. In fact, we all will; for as it is clearly written in God's Word:

"If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

Proverbs 24:12, KJV

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Matthew 16:27, KJV

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:"

1 Peter 1:17, KJV

". . . I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

Revelation 2:23b, KJV

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Revelation 14:13, KJV

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Revelation 20:12-13, KJV

As I pondered the previous verses, and wondered what kind of a reward these money-making Bible hucksters might receive on their day of judgment, the verse that came to me was this:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel 12:2, KJV

I can't begin to imagine what it would be like to be scorned for all of eternity; can you? It would be simply dreadful; yet that is apparently what some people are going to have to endure, as a result of their sins in this current life.

In thinking about the rampant commercialism that's perverted and corrupted our Christian faith, I'm reminded of the Lord's message to the church at Laodicea, as written in the Book of Revelation. In the third chapter, we find the following dire warning:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."  
Revelation 3:15-19, KJV

Such is the danger of being enticed by, and overcome by, the materialistic pleasures of this current world. We become so complacent and spiritually blind that we're no longer capable of seeing our true spiritual condition. The physical comfort that riches bring can draw us away from the Lord without us even realizing it. It is a slow, subtle process. The Apostle John was fully aware of this danger, and thus he warns us:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."  
1 John 2:15-17, KJV

The previous verses from the Book of Revelation concerning the self-confidence of the church at Laodicea remind me of boastful Babylon the Great, which some Christians view as being the false, worldwide religious system of our modern day. In Revelation chapter eighteen, we find the following verse concerning the mystery woman Babylon:

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."  
Revelation 18:7, KJV

For more in-depth information regarding this topic, please consider reading my article "Revelation's Babylon The Great".

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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MONEY-MAKING BIBLE HUCKSTERS AND MAMMON : PART 3

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Mark Of The Beast, What Will You Do?, A Sad Conversation In

Heaven, Using Modern Technology To Reach The Lost, Motivated By Love, Money - The Root Of All Evil, Erring From The Faith, Good Samaritan And Spiritual Doctors, A Free Gospel For All, Follow The Example Of The First Century Church, Conclusion

As we have seen, some Christians today have replaced their faith in the true God of Heaven, with faith in the false god of this current world -- Satan -- and his devilish system of money, profit and materialism. They have been enticed by his deceitful offerings, and they have lost their way. They may still proclaim "In God We Trust", but the god in whom they are trusting seems to be the one which is printed or molded on worldly money. However, as I point out in other articles, eventually, even that will be replaced by a more diabolical system. When the time comes, not even credit cards and Smart Cards will suffice then. The god of this world won't be happy until he has everyone worshipping him directly. Ultimately, he will force his loyal followers to receive a unique mark; possibly a biochip implant, similar to the VeriChip, to demonstrate their sole allegiance to him. As we also read in the Book of Revelation:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."  
Revelation 13:16-18, KJV

So we must ask ourselves: What is going to happen to all of these money-making Bible hucksters and wheeler-dealers who currently depend upon filthy lucre -- the unrighteous mammon -- to sustain their "abundant lifestyle"? What are they going to do when there isn't any money left for anyone to buy their books, magazines, tapes, videos, DVD's, CD's, etc.? Will they simply stop preaching the Gospel? Are they simply going to go along with the crowd and accept the Mark of the Beast so they can continue to survive in a Satan-dominated world, and sell their commercialized brand of Christianity? More importantly, if you are such a money-making Bible huckster, what are you going to do when some day you have to face the Lord? I can just imagine a conversation similar to the following:

"Well Lord, I bet you are really proud of me. After all, I sold one million copies of my book on how to be a successful Christian in the modern world, and three million copies of my Endtime video presentation with special emphasis on the Book of Daniel, and five million copies of my tapes on the Book of Revelation with special sound effects. I was a well-respected member of my church, and a pillar of my community. I was an acclaimed Christian writer, I helped to fund our mega-church, and . . ."

And then, after you've explained to the Lord in great detail why you merit your Crown of Life, and entrance into Heaven, maybe the Lord will look at you sadly for a moment, and then say something similar to the following:

"Well son, you know, I really wanted to use you to reach some of those poor folks down there in that poor neighborhood, but you informed them that they couldn't have a copy of your book unless they gave you a "donation" first. You just teased them

by telling them about the wonderful things they could learn from reading your book. I had to go and send someone else who had a real love for the lost, and who wasn't just interested in making money or upholding his public image. I am certainly glad to see those folks made it into the Kingdom despite your dismal failure. Depart from me ye worker of iniquity! I never knew you!"

Now, let me clarify here that I am not saying that it's wrong to use all of these different methods -- printing magazines, books and newsletters, producing music and lesson tapes and CD's, making videos, recording MP3's -- in order to preach the Gospel. We live in the modern world, so naturally, we should take advantage of modern technology and use modern methods in order to reach people with the Gospel and to feed God's sheep. Furthermore, we should each do whatever the Lord shows us to do, use whatever method works for us, and do whatever we can afford to do. As we read earlier in the Book of Acts, "every man according to his ability". As Paul explains in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, we each have our chosen ministry, and we each have our particular gifts and talents from the Lord.

However, as I have made abundantly clear, where the problem lies is when these money-making Bible hucksters turn God's business of winning souls to the Kingdom of Heaven into just another worldly commercial enterprise, and they refuse to let people hear the Gospel -- assuming that they're preaching the real Gospel -- simply because people can't afford to pay for it. When they do this, when they put money before the Most High, as many of them now do, it is wrong, wrong, wrong, and it is really time for them to check their hearts, and to see what their real motives are for being in the Gospel business.

After listing all of the different gifts and ministries of the Spirit in chapter twelve, the Apostle Paul concludes by saying the following:

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."  
1 Corinthians 12:31, KJV

It is right after this, that Paul expounds on the importance of the gift of charity; that is to say, love. Now, if you are saying, "Pay me first, and then I will send you what the Lord has shown me", then I will tell you here and now that you've got your priorities all wrong! You are not being motivated by God's love! You are not lovingly sharing the Gospel with the Lord's sheep; you are raping them! You are not really serving the Lord, you are serving filthy lucre! Whether or not you have realized it, you have erred from the faith! If you doubt that this is so, then please remember the warning that Paul issued in his Epistle to Timothy:

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."  
1 Timothy 6:10, KJV

So as you can plainly see, when you covet money and profit, and place profit above preaching the Gospel and reaching the lost, you have in fact erred from the faith, plain and simple. It's right there in black and white. Furthermore, unless you straighten out, one of these days you are going to face a sorrow which you will wish you hadn't -- shame and everlasting contempt!

I don't know how hospitals operate in your area, but where I live, the hospital is not permitted to turn away anybody if they do not have any money. Of course, I will admit that the local hospital experiences certain financial problems as a result of its adherence to this policy; but quite frankly, I think that they are doing the right thing, and that it is a real sign of compassion. It reminds me of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. As you will recall, the Samaritan also spent money out of his own pocket in order to help a stranger; that is to say, the injured man whom he found lying on the roadside. Along the same vein, aren't we Christians supposed to be spiritual doctors as well? Aren't we suppose to help heal people in a spiritual sense by bringing them to Jesus and sharing the Good News of Salvation with them, whether they can pay us for it or not? That's what my Bible teaches me.

In conclusion, it is my firm belief that no one should ever have to pay a single penny, pound pence or peso in order to hear or read information regarding Biblical truth. All of it should be freely available to all people everywhere, because we have freely received the precious Gift of Eternal Life by Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross, and He has never charged us anything for it, other than our love and devotion to Him.

If you are a preacher of the Gospel, I sincerely hope that this series will cause you to stop and really check your own heart. I hope that you are freely sharing God's truth out of genuine love for the lost, and not for any other reason. I also pray that you will find a way to freely distribute your books, magazines, newsletters, CD's, DVD's, MP3's, etc., to the people of the world, and thus follow the example of the First Century Church leaders and disciples, who were willing to suffer personal discomfort and inconvenience, rather than make a worldly business out of preaching the Gospel. I also hope that you are building upon the right foundation, so that your works will last, and will follow you into Heaven. As it is written:

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

1 Corinthians 3:14-15, KJV

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Revelation 14:13, KJV

May the Lord richly bless you as you freely share the Gospel of Salvation with others out of a pure, unselfish heart. If you know of anyone who is not following the Biblical counsel contained in this series, then I encourage you to share this series with them, so that they may know the truth. Please also feel free to share the URL of this series with all of your online friends far and wide. Thanks so much!

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