

*In search of...*



# Truth & Right

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## The Value of Heaven

It's the time of year that many people are focused on gifts; gifts for others, gifts that they would like to receive, gifts from the heart or just gifts from a sense of charity. Yet presents are not defined by their dollar amount, as most of us well know; they are defined in value by how much they are wanted and by how much cheer they will bring to the one receiving them. You have probably been on the receiving end of a present that you did not really want. It's not that the gift

was dirty or broken or cheap, and since someone was kind enough to think of you, you thank them and do not show your opinion of it. All of this has to do with the old saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." How much we personally want something determines its worth in our eyes.

Now, how many times has there been something that you wanted so badly you could taste it? You researched it,

compared it to competitors' similar things, and spent much time in the store examining it, just to make sure that it was everything you wanted. Maybe there's an item like that on your "list" this year. So what would you do in order to get it? Tell others? Drop hints? Save your money?

In reading God's word it is plainly seen that the things of this world are only temporary. "Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world." (1 Tim. 6:6-7) So it becomes clear that what it really important are the things that are eternal in nature: our souls, and Heaven. There is no denying the worth of eternity; after all, it is being in the presence of God forever, with no pain or fear or sorrow. Anyone would give everything they had to have such a blessing! And that is the principle shown in two parables Jesus tells in Matthew chapter thirteen:

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Stop and consider the phrasing of these two parables for a moment. Yes, these are figurative in language, because a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. But do you see what it says? They sold all that they had. All of it. In your life, right now, what do you want so badly that would move you to sell everything just so you could get it? I imagine most people would say "nothing," because we always like to hold something back, and we understand the danger in pinning all of our hopes in just one thing. We know this because we think in human terms, yet the scripture is clear: the kingdom of heaven is worth it all, and we cannot afford to hesitate when it comes to desiring God and eternity with Him.

More often than not, what most people experience in their lives is a series of phases, of periods where what they want the most changes. In childhood, it could be a toy or a bike. Teenagers desire the freedom that a car or phone promises. Adults want any number of different things. But how does that go? There's a new car or gadget that is all the rage, and even if we can list practical reasons for wanting it & having it, after we obtain it the thrill fades somewhat. Perhaps we built it up so much in our minds that the real thing just

could not compete? Just to drive this point home a little better, let me ask: have you ever heard someone say, "my new obsession?" We focus on one thing, talk about it, read about it, and try to get our hands on it, but sooner or later a new fad comes along.

All of which says a great deal about our lives here on Earth. This is not paradise; the things here are not meant to last, and we are not going to get everything we want exactly when & how we want it. If that were the case, why would anyone desire to be in Heaven? Paul said, "If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better." (Phil. 1:22-23) The hard part is, it is easy to read those verses and know in the back of your mind that it is far better to be in Heaven, but putting that into practice and living each day with the attitude that the things of this life are immaterial is a challenge.

This brings me back to my first point: value, in many ways, is relative. Every one of us, individually, has to decide what is valuable and what isn't. Take, for example, the parable about the pearl of great price; I personally don't like pearls or find them that beautiful. I still know that a large pearl is a

valuable item, but it has no real strong value to me. Now, apply that same line of thinking to Heaven: how much does it mean to you, personally? Understand that your opinion of an eternity with God will in no way change the fact that it is worth more than all the riches of Earth, but know this: your opinion does decide what you are willing to do to get there, and how much you are ready to give up in exchange for such a great reward.

Don't be bogged down by the distractions of sin or possessions. Don't glance over what the Bible has to say about Heaven. As a wise man I know has said many times, if you miss Heaven, you've missed it all. Know that your salvation through the blood of Jesus is a personal affair. Your relationship with God through Christ is a personal one, so be personally invested! Value an eternity with the Father, and do whatever it takes to make sure that you do not lose such a great salvation!

Jarred Currence

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# The Sanhedrin

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- One, N\_\_\_\_\_, came to Jesus by night (John 3)
- Joseph of A\_\_\_\_\_ was a member & a disciple (Luke 23)
- It was made up of S\_\_\_\_\_ members & the high priest (Num. 11)
- They listened to the defense of S\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6-7)
- Peter and John were told not to P\_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus' name (Acts 4)
- Many bore F\_\_\_\_\_ witness against Jesus (Mark 14)
- G\_\_\_\_\_ was wiser than the rest of the council (Acts 5)
- Jesus was brought before C\_\_\_\_\_ the high priest (Matt. 26)
- Paul gave defense before A\_\_\_\_\_ the high priest (Acts 23)
- Caiaphas' father-in-law was A\_\_\_\_\_ (John 18)
- They told the crowd to ask for B\_\_\_\_\_ instead (Mark 15)