

# Study Guide: “Buy the Truth”

*Based on the sermon outline on Proverbs 23:23*

## Overview

**Text:** Proverbs 23:23: “Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and discipline and understanding.”

**Big idea:** Absolute truth exists because God has spoken. Solomon’s command has two halves: *acquire* truth at any cost, and *never compromise* it for anything.

**Key thought:** Truth is not truly “bought” until it is loved, practiced, and obeyed. Hearing alone is not purchase.

## Introduction: Why Truth Matters

- God is true and cannot lie (Rom. 3:4). Jesus is “the truth” (Jn. 14:6). The Spirit is the “Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:17).
- We are saved and sanctified by truth (Jas. 1:18; Jn. 17:17).
- God’s word is lasting (Ps. 119:89), pure like refined silver (Ps. 12:6), and powerful like fire and a hammer (Jer. 23:29).
- We need truth to grow in Christ, resist Satan (Eph. 6), escape damnation, and inherit heaven.
- Truth is the only thing we can carry into eternity.

**Reflect:** Which of these reasons for needing truth is most real to you right now?

## Part 1: The Command to “Buy the Truth”

**Meaning of “buy”:** To acquire by money *or labor*. This is a metaphor. The emphasis is on investing resources and energy to possess truth.

### Why we buy: its value

- Truth is precious and irreplaceable (Ps. 119:162).
- It comes from God (2 Tim. 3:16), is powerful (Rom. 1:16), and never returns empty (Isa. 55:11).

- A rich man without Christ loses; a poor man with God's Word is rich.
- The man who sold everything for the treasure in the field shows what true value looks like (Matt. 13:44).

## What we buy it with

| Currency            | Main point                                                                                                                                | Key passages                              |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Love</b>         | We can't possess truth without loving it. If love is low, ask God for more and keep asking.                                               | 2 Thess. 2:10; Lk. 11:13; Mark 4:19       |
| <b>Faithfulness</b> | Daily Bible intake and regular church gathering are how we "spend" faithfulness. Small compromises ("little foxes") lead to truth-lapses. | Song 2:15; 1 Cor. 4:2                     |
| <b>Submission</b>   | Obedience is the "receipt" proving truth was bought. Application is purchase.                                                             | Rom. 6:17-18; Matt. 19 (rich young ruler) |

**Illustration to remember:** A hungry person walks through a grocery store, surrounded by food, and leaves hungry because nothing was purchased.

## Part 2: The Command to "Not Sell It"

**Meaning of "sell":** Any attitude or action that compromises or betrays truth. Not selling means refusing to compromise convictions that come from Scripture (compare Rom. 1:25).

### Why we sell it

#### 1. Lack of interest

- The world competes for our love. Demas forsook truth inwardly before he left Paul outwardly.
- Other desires "choke" the word (Mark 4:19). Harmless things can become obsessions.
- Warning signs: losing interest in Scripture, church, small group, and prayer.

#### 2. Lack of application

- Hearing without doing is self-deception (Jas. 1:22).

- We sell truth when we think "hearing is enough," when we think of who else needs the message, or when we leave it in the sanctuary.
- The house built on hearing without doing falls (Matt. 7). The word will judge us (Jn. 12:48).

### 3. Lack of faithfulness

- Neglecting daily Bible reading and worship is neglecting the means of grace.
- Opportunities missed are never regained.

## Conclusion: The Call

Now is the time to buy. Buy in bulk, and never sell. The only "sale" we need is to sell off our compromises, our pursuits that lead away from the cross, and the passions that choke true joy.

## Key Terms

- **Absolute truth:** Truth that does not change because it comes from God, who cannot lie.
- **Wisdom literature:** Biblical books like Proverbs that teach through metaphor and vivid pictures.
- **"Buy":** To acquire through cost or labor; to invest oneself.
- **"Sell":** To compromise or betray truth.
- **"Choke":** To crowd out the word gradually through competing desires (Mark 4:19).
- **Little foxes:** Small compromises that ruin the vine (Song 2:15).

## Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that truth is "bought" with love, faithfulness, and submission rather than money? Why do you think Solomon used a buying metaphor?
2. The sermon says that if we don't love truth, we'll never possess it (2 Thess. 2:10). What can a person do if they feel their love for truth is low?
3. How is the rich young ruler an example of someone who heard truth but could not "purchase" it? What "wallet" items might hold us back today?
4. What are some "harmless" things in your life that could slowly choke the word (Mark 4:19)?

5. Is there a difference between *understanding* a sermon and *buying* it? What does application look like this week?
6. How do small acts of unfaithfulness (the "little foxes") lead to bigger lapses? Where have you seen this?
7. What are examples of "selling" truth in modern culture or in the church? How do we recognize compromise early?
8. Why does the sermon say missed opportunities to hear God's word "cannot be re-purchased"? Do you agree, and how should that shape your priorities?

## Personal Application

Choose one concrete step in each area this week:

- **Love:** Ask God for a deeper love of His word (Lk. 11:13). Write down one thing you'll pray.
- **Faithfulness:** Set a specific time and place for daily Bible reading. Plan to attend each gathering for worship.
- **Submission:** Identify one truth you've already heard that you haven't obeyed, and act on it.
- **Guarding:** Name one "little fox" that is crowding out the word, and decide how you'll remove it.

## Memory Verses

- Proverbs 23:23
- Mark 4:19
- James 1:22

## Quick-Review Questions

1. What are the two commands in Proverbs 23:23?
2. Name the three "currencies" used to buy truth.
3. What is the "receipt" that proves truth has been bought?
4. Name the three reasons we sell truth.
5. Who is the biblical example of someone who loved the world and forsook truth?
6. According to Mark 4:19, what happens when other desires enter in?

**Answers:** (1) Buy truth; do not sell it. (2) Love, faithfulness, submission. (3) Obedience. (4) Lack of interest, lack of application, lack of faithfulness. (5) Demas. (6) They choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.