

# What Does it Profit?

**Numbers 22:7-8 (NASB 2020)** So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian left with the fees for divination in their hands; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him. And he said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you just as the LORD may speak to me."

**Mark 8:35-37 (NLT)** If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?

## I. The willingness to suffer for gain

**Numbers 22:18-19 (NLT)** But Balaam responded to Balak's messengers, "Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I would be powerless to do anything against the will of the LORD my God. But stay here one more night, and I will see if the LORD has anything else to say to me."

If you continue reading in the Number, you will find in Chapter 31...

**Numbers 31:16 (NLT)** These are the very ones who followed Balaam's advice and caused the people of Israel to rebel against the LORD at Mount Peor.

What makes this unique: He travels long distances—Endures a terrifying encounter (the angel and the donkey incident)—Builds multiple altars, and offers sacrifices repeatedly—Speaks with God multiple times! In other words, he pays a cost in time, effort, and even personal risk. **\*\*Balaam was willing to suffer inconvenience, spiritual pressure, and even fear—but not to surrender his desire for gain. At the end of it all He was willing to compromise for gain—and in the end, he gained nothing.**

**Matthew 26:23-25 (NLT)** He replied, "One of you who has just eaten from this bowl with me will betray me. For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!" Judas, the one who would betray him, also asked, "Rabbi, am I the one?" And Jesus told him, "You have said it."

Judas left everything to follow Jesus—Walked with Him for ~3 years—Endured hardship, travel, rejection—He paid a real price to be a disciple. Judas was willing to follow, serve, and sacrifice—as long as it served his own interests.

However, Judas was remorseful and caught the deception.

**Matthew 27:3-4 (NLT)** When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he declared, "for I have betrayed an innocent man."

**Balaam never did!**

**Numbers 31:8 (NLT)** All five of the Midianite kings—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—died in the battle. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.

**You can pursue gain so hard that you lose the very thing you were chasing—and yourself along with it.**

## II. Is all self-interest wrong

Scripture does not condemn all self-interest—only self-interest that is disconnected from God or harmful to others. In fact, the Bible affirms a form of rightly ordered self-interest.

**Matthew 22:39 (NASB)** You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus is not rebuking self-love—He is assuming it. Caring for your own well-being is normal and appropriate, and that same concern is to be extended outward. Proper self-interest becomes the standard for loving others.

**Ephesians 5:28-29 (NLT)** In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it...

**1 Timothy 5:8 (NLT)** *But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.*

**Proverbs 27:23-24 (NLT)** *Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for your herds, for riches don't last forever, and the crown might not be passed to the next generation.*

**God is not against you desiring what is good for you—He is against it becoming your primary pursuit.**

### III. There is a way to do both and be blessed!

**Mark 8:35-37 (NLT)** *If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?*

**Giving up your life is not losing yourself—it is exchanging a lesser life for a greater one.**

**Mark 10:29-30 (NLT)** *"Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.*

**1 Timothy 4:8 (NLT)** *"Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."*

**Godliness:** 2150 εὐσέβεια eusebeia; from 2152; piety:—godliness(14), piety(1).

**Piety:** Piety is the virtue of religious devotion, spiritual reverence, and dutiful respect, often manifesting as a deep, habitual desire to honor God or uphold sacred obligations. It combines internal faithfulness with external acts of worship,

**Psalms 37:3-5 (NLT)** *Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.*

**John 15:10-13 (NLT)** *When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

**Matthew 6:33 (AMP)** *But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.*