

The Price Tags of Life
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

“Take what you want in life, but the price must be paid.” Chinese proverb

Everything in life has a price tag. In fact, one of the basic differences between good and evil is that the good things in life must be paid for in advance; while sinful, unacceptable behavior, is paid for afterward, and usually on the installment plan.

A news report told how some boys broke into a department store at night. They did not steal anything but only switched some price tags. The next morning, customers were amazed to find mink coats selling for \$4.98, diamond rings \$2.49, umbrellas \$500.00 and mens' socks \$998.00.

Surely, we can see this same pattern in life today. Material things and the so-called pleasures of sin that do not last and cannot satisfy, are priced very high. Whereas love, family, faith, forgiveness, salvation – values that really matter and abide for all eternity are often treated as almost worthless.

We are told that over half of all purchases today are on credit. But the catch is, someday the debt must be paid. That little piece of plastic does not eliminate the need for money, it simply postpones the payment.

The devil's motto is: “Sin now, pay later!” One of the most vivid examples of this consequence is seen in the life of Sampson, recorded in Judges, chapters 14 – 16. He was chosen by God to be the leader of his nation. He was endowed with a magnificent body and a keen mind. But Sampson committed almost every sin in the book. He disobeyed his parents, he lied, he murdered, he yielded his body to immoral behaviour.

Strange to say, nothing happened. There were no thunderbolts from heaven. God was very patient and grieved over Sampson for 20 long years. But, “Sin now pay later” is a verdict that does work. One day Sampson went to sleep in the lap of Delilah and when he awoke, he had lost his strength, then his eyesight and finally his life. He ended up in a heathen dungeon, remembered more as the man he might have been.

But, God wants us to understand the positive side to this principle- the price we must pay in advance for the good things in life. A valuable education is built through years of discipline, integrity and perseverance. A happy home, a strong marriage, these have to be paid in advance through love, sacrifice and faithfulness.

Finally, there is one gift, above all, that had to be paid in advance – the price of our salvation. It cost God the death of his son. It was our sins, your sin and mine

that nailed Christ to the cross. He became rejected that we may be received,
wounded that we may be healed, died that we may live.

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord ”(Romans 6:23).*