

It Is Written

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LOSS PREVENTION

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Loss prevention is a term used in the business world, and is defined as “the strategies and practices implemented by businesses to minimize financial losses from theft, fraud, operational errors, and accidents.” Essentially, it is doing everything one can think of to prevent losses of some sort or another, and it is an ongoing effort that is ever-changing because reasons for losses are not going away, and the methods some use to create losses are always trying to get around the methods of loss prevention.

Loss prevention is something many of us practice on a regular basis, sometimes without thinking too much about the fact that is what we are doing. We lock our car doors and set the alarm; we lock our doors at home when leaving; we put perishable foods in the refrigerator; we keep our dogs on a leash when we take them for a walk; and, of course, we back up our computers regularly so we don't lose all those files, photos, and important documents. [We do backups, right?]

For the more important or more valuable items, we take extra measures to ensure loss prevention, and sometimes go beyond what some might think as sufficient just so we have some peace of mind. Individuals with items of great value and desirability sometimes hide those valuables in a theft-proof safe — which itself is hidden from view and has extra security measures before one can even get to it. So, what would we do to prevent the loss of our most precious possession — our souls?

Our Most Precious Possession. Unfortunately, the great majority of mankind ignores or denies this reality, and does nothing to prevent its loss, but our Creator has told us plainly of its great value, and we would do well to do everything necessary to prevent the loss of our souls.

Jesus once asked, “What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26); implied in the question is the fact there is nothing more valuable than a man's soul, for one could literally gain the entirety of this world's material goods and wealth and it would be meaningless if his soul was lost. The soul of one man is more valuable than this entire world!

But man quite often shows his interest in the meaningless things, measured by how much time he spends thinking about those things, obtaining those things, and maintaining those things. And they are all things — material possessions! It is these things, Jesus also said, that “moth and rust destroy and...thieves break in and steal” (Matt. 6:19). It is these things, Paul wrote, “which...are temporary” (2nd Cor. 4:18). Yet so many put such a high value on things and so little value on the most important thing [which is not a thing]: their soul!

While our souls are individually more valuable than any material possession, the fact is, no amount of wealth can buy it. The psalmist noted long ago, “Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psa. 49:6, 7); the wise writer also noted, “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath” (Prov. 11:4). The reality of life is that we cannot buy one more day on this earth, and neither can any man buy one's way into eternity. And while there is no material thing we may offer to God for it, let us never forget that a price was paid for our souls; Peter reminded the early disciples that they were “not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1st Pet. 1:18, 19). Having already noted that just one man's soul is more valuable than the totality of

this material world, what must that say about the value of Christ's blood if it redeemed the souls of all the saved?

Instead of focusing on the material things of this world and accumulating material possessions and wealth, we should have the greatest concern for our souls and show the greatest degree of respect to the one who is able to destroy it. Jesus said as much when He sent the disciples out in what is often called 'The Limited Commission,' telling them, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). While many care also for their physical bodies, we will one day surrender it in death and what we have left — our souls — will continue to exist. The value of a soul should cause us to make it our priority in life, but let us not forget every man has a soul, so we should live with that in mind, too, striving to get others to see its value and the need for preventing its loss!

How A Soul is Lost. There are literally millions of ways a soul can be lost, but let us consider just a couple:

Loving anyone more than Jesus. Jesus told His disciples, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 10:37-39). It could be our family members, or it could be even our own lives, but whatever we put before Jesus makes us unworthy of Him and we cannot be saved.

Loving worldly things. Peter also admonished the early disciples to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1st Pet. 2:11); anything that will "war against the soul" is not going to save it! There was a reason Jesus once warned, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23)! Love for material things will be the cause for many people to lose their souls.

How A Soul is Saved. When the gospel message was first preached and some were convicted by it, they asked Peter and the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter told them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (v. 38), and "those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (v. 41). It should be noted that these souls were added to the existing disciples — the Lord's church (v. 47). That is how a soul can be saved!

You see, one is not saved by some arbitrary 'feeling' one gets when emotions run high and the crowds are all bounding with enthusiasm. As James reminds us, it is when we "receive with meekness the implanted word" as those Jews on the Day of Pentecost did in Acts 2, that it is "able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21, 22). James also makes it clear we must "be doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Once we heed the word of God and are forgiven, we must continue in the ways of Jesus Christ, for turning back to the world and its ways ensures "the latter end is worse for [us] than the beginning" (2nd Pet. 2:20, 21). Considering we were all lost before coming to Christ in obedience, I don't know what's worse than being lost, but it cannot be good! Faithfulness is required of all disciples!

Protect your most valuable possession; treat it as the priceless thing it is. Save your soul by giving it to God through faith in Jesus Christ His Son.