



## It is Important to Pay

### Introduction:

What are you willing to pay for good advice; or for a helpful relationship; or to save another's soul? The price for these things is increasingly valuable but even as the value rises the cost remains subjective. This is because the price is not money—it is *only care*. The price that must be paid is simply your "attention".

It is common to speak of "paying attention"; in fact, as children we are told to pay attention in school, or pay attention to our parents when they speak. This is a phrase that we become familiar with, very early in life. Later in life, as adults we have the freedom to pick and choose where our attention is spent but with this freedom some are missing out on the good things that really need their attention now.

There is a time to pay attention and there will be a time when it is too late. It is regretfully too late when we find ourselves saying, "I should have paid more attention..."

Let's consider some of those things that demand the price of our attention and are worth our full attention—*not just what we think we can afford*.

### It is important to pay attention to God

God is speaking right now, through His holy word, are you listening? God has seen fit to reveal His will to mankind in the form of words (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; James 1:17-25) and He has preserved His words, even to today—the *Bible is the word of God*. Knowing this fact helps us to focus on the fact that our opportunity to pay attention to God is limited.

Our opportunity to pay attention to God is limited by the extent of this volume's information—we *have no other source of information to listen to*. There will be no more revelation (Hebrews 1:1-2 "*God has spoken in these last days through His Son*"). We are also limited by our health and life. We must know the risk of putting God's advice "on a shelf for later" since injuries and illnesses can take away our opportunity to listen and death certainly ends all opportunity to listen (Hebrews 9:27). Life is fragile and our need to pay attention is limited by this fragile thing. Along with these facts we also have another limiting factor that we must not ignore. Our opportunity to pay attention to God is limited by the timing of Christ's return (2 Peter 3:9-11)—*if that event is realized before you have paid attention, it will be too late*.

God is worth all of your attention! His words are your hope of success in this life. God wants you to succeed and has advised such for you (Psalm 19:7-11; James 1:21-25). According to God true success in this life is searching for and finding your Creator (Acts 17:25-31). True success in this life is the salvation of your soul (Matthew 16:26). True success in this life is preparing for eternal life in Heaven (John 14:1-6; 1 Peter 1:6-9).

God is speaking, through His word—are you willing to pay attention and follow His advice?

### It is important to pay attention to our Brethren:

Our brotherly relationship requires attention. This relationship can be the most importantly rewarding relationship we can have in this life. Our brethren are to encourage our successes (Romans 15:7-14).

Our brethren are our most direct source of help in this life, when they are paying attention to us as they should be. We should be meeting one another's needs (Romans 12:9-15). We should love one another (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Our brethren are worth our attention. We need to pay attention to meet their needs (Hebrews 10:24-25). Often, we "hint around" or only "make suggestions" of need, without openly saying we have a need. Knowing that this happens, we need to pay extra close attention to what our brethren say so that we can be there for them.

Another area among our brethren that demand close attention is that of making sure we hear our brethren correctly and come to the right conclusions about them. All too often, feelings are getting hurt because of misunderstandings and false conclusions. Because we are to guard ourselves from "evil suspicions" (1 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:4) we should listen very carefully. But also give your brethren the benefit of the doubt.

We need to listen, so that we will be listened to, when your brethren speak—are you willing to pay attention, and know the relationship of brotherhood?

### It is important to pay attention to Others

Whether they are aware or not, every soul will stand in judgment; giving answer for their life (2 Corinthians 5:10-11). Our friends, neighbors, fellow citizens of planet earth, are accountable to their Creator. Yes, the world is filled with souls who desperately need God, and His plan of salvation.

Others, around us, are worth listening to. What we are listening for is not their advice, but rather we need to listen for their desire for help. The world is lost and dying in their own sins, by following their own hearts they have separated themselves from God (Romans 3:23; 6:23a). We have what they need—the *hope salvation and life everlasting*—the gift of God (Romans 6:23b). The world is in need of a Savior and there is only One (Acts 4:12). We must carry His message out to the world (Matthew 28:18-20). We must hear those who are asking for help, we must listen to them and give them what they need (Romans 1:16).

The world is in need. Those who recognize their need are asking for help; you have the source of help—are you willing to pay attention, and perhaps lead a soul to salvation.

### Conclusion:

What are you willing to pay for good advice; or for a helpful relationship; or to save another's soul? The price for these things is increasingly valuable but even as the value rises the cost remains subjective. The price is not money—it is *only your care and your attention*. Your attention is very valuable.

Salvation is worth our attention, so pay attention to God; comfort and strength are worth our attention, so pay attention to your brethren; and the hope of saving a soul from condemnation is worth our attention, so pay attention to others around you. It would be such a shame to stand in judgment with the remorseful thought of "I should have paid more attention"—*then it will be too late*. Are you paying attention? By **T. Sean Sullivan**