

## Buying without Possessing

### CONTRIBUTION

You've probably heard many people talk about when they read the Bible, there are times when a verse or phrase jumps out that they had never noticed before. This happened to me on December 29, 2011 when I read 1Cor 7:30. The context of this verse isn't about giving. But Paul is telling the Corinthians that because of distress in this life, they need to be removed from the cares of this world. We are called out of the world from its worries and distractions in order to be devoted to Christ. Isn't this the exact thing that Jesus warns us about in His parable of the sower? Some seed is choked by the thorns which are the worries of this age and the seduction of wealth (Matt 13:22). Now I'm preaching to myself also, for I have not fully achieved this. But I remember that in late 2014, God has moved me to get rid of many things in my life that are vain, things that will burn up on Judgment Day. He has given me a new motivation to devote more time to the things that will last into eternity. In other words, get rid of all those thorns from my life.

Back in 1Cor 7, Paul said that those who are married should act as though they weren't, those who have joy or sorrow act as though they have neither. But the phrase that jumped out at me is in verse 30 which says: "those who buy as though they did not possess."

Paul's paradox that "we should buy but not possess" could be the foundation... the heart... the core of our giving! When it comes to our giving, we might discuss when to give, how much to give, how to give it, etc. The Bible gives us a few instructions on these things, but if we follow the idea that when we buy and don't possess, then all these other things will fall into place.

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would not be choked by thorns which are this world's cares and wealth's seductions. Matt 13:22

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would not consider any of our possessions as our own. Acts 4:32

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would have all things in common. Acts 2:44

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would not have a needy person in the church. Acts 4:34

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would not refuse to let anyone borrow from us. Matt 5:42

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would let others borrow and expect nothing in return. Luke 6:35

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would give our possessions to the poor and thus have treasure in heaven. Matt 19:10

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would have no problem leaving extra for the person who is suing us. Matt 5:40

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would not worry about having the things we really need. Matt 6:25, 31-34

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would be content with food and clothing. 1Tim 6:7-9

If we bought as though we didn't possess, we would cheerfully give out of love and not out of duty. 2Cor 9:7

These are many instructions found in the NT that teach us about our giving, yet all these can hang on the idea "those who buy as though they did not possess." What transformations would we see if Christians bought as though they did not possess! Again I'm preaching to myself also, for I have not fully achieved this. So then, we should ask ourselves: though we are God's seed on the earth, are we being choked by the thorns of life which are the worries of this age and the seduction of wealth? Or are we buying as though we do not possess?