

BUYING

Proverbs 20:14 (Amplified Bible)

It is worthless, it is worthless! says the buyer; but when he goes his way, then he boasts [about his bargain].

1. Buying something for a low price is dangerous. Telling a seller all the problems with an object to get the price reduced and then bragging to friends or family about your great deal is lying and stealing. Righteousness demands a fair price and impeccable honesty.

The LORD of heaven cares about details. The Word of God and the true Christian faith include even minor aspects of our lives ([Ps 119:96](#); [Deut 22:6-7](#)). He judges how we buy things from others. If we take advantage of a seller and boast of it, He counts it as sin.

The Scriptures often condemn wicked selling practices, such as false weights and balances ([11:26](#); [16:11](#); [20:10,23](#); [Lev 19:36](#); [Deut 25:13](#); [Mic 6:11](#)). But here the LORD puts us on notice about wicked buying practices. See the comments on [16:11](#) and [11:26](#).

Natural man wants to buy low and sell high, even the same thing from the same person. Adam begat thieves! So men are prone to dickering - they do not want to pay the asking price. To get the seller to lower his price, they use many deceitful techniques. They say, "This thing has problems; it is nothing; it is not worth the price you are asking; others sell it cheaper; it is not what I was looking for; I don't really need it anyway."

2. BOASTING But when these men get with friends and family after buying it at a reduced price, they boast about the great deal they got. Why the change in tune? Why the reversal of story and tone? Here is the lie. Why didn't they tell the seller that it was such a great deal? Why did they tell the seller that at the lower price it was barely acceptable?

Such men are liars; and since they used lies to obtain another's property, they are thieves. So they have a common expression by which they admit their guilt, when they boast, "I got a steal!" Consider it, reader. The thief confesses his crime and sin, while he boasts!

3. REASONING These men will often reason, "I didn't force him to sell at that price. It's a free market and a free economy. He was a grown man. If he didn't think it was a fair deal, he would not have sold it to me at that price." These men are froward, perverse, and naughty.

4. TAKING ADVANTAGE If you boast about your great deal, you are admitting plainly that you took advantage of the seller, especially if you bought it for less than the asking price. If you did not take advantage of the seller, then what in the world are you boasting about? Your boasting is clear evidence that you lied and stole the merchandise. Why didn't you tell the seller, "I can't believe you are selling it for this low price; you're practically giving it away"?

The LORD is the avenger of defrauding, including buying and selling ([Lev 19:11](#); [25:14-17](#); [I Thess 4:6](#)). What is the rule to follow in economic transactions, the rule to follow in all transactions and relations? The golden rule ([Matt 7:12](#))! A Christian buyer should treat the seller, as if the roles were reversed. And only by this rule can we be void of offence before God and men and do all to His glory ([Acts 24:16](#); [I Thess 10:31](#)).

5. Negotiate Other men say, "I must negotiate to get ahead. I don't make much, so I must buy things as cheaply as possible." Have you noticed that such men are usually dirt poor? There is a reason. God is turning their sinful ways upside down on their own heads. Paying a little extra will bring financial reward ([11:18,24-28](#); [28:8](#); [Ecc 11:1-6](#); [Luke 6:38](#)).

An honest man will use the same language, and talk as openly, with the seller, as he will with his family. He does not change his story after getting the merchandise, for he paid a fair price and did not lie. He does not boast about what he did to the seller in buying below market. God hates all lying, false witnessing, misrepresentation, and defrauding, which are some of the crimes in this proverb ([12:17,19,22](#); [20:17](#); [26:18-19,24-28](#)).

6. Honesty We must provide things honest in the sight of all men ([Rom 12:17](#)). Here the LORD tells us just how honest He expects us to be! We should speak as openly and honestly in business

as with friends and family. If we boast like we are taking advantage of people in private conversation, we must be lying and/or stealing in our public practices.

Those who are salesmen must consider the force of this lesson. They cannot misrepresent their product, the price, or any aspect of their business to increase sales. They should be as honest and open with their customers as they are with their suppliers!

Could you overstate your qualifications to get a job, then boast of getting a job for which you are not qualified? Could you understate your liabilities to obtain a loan, then boast of getting financing you did not deserve? Could you overstate your financial need to obtain a bigger pay increase, then boast of getting a raise higher than expected? Could you tell a boss you are sick to get the day off, then boast of fooling him while playing golf? Could you tell a policeman you were only driving 40, then boast of talking your way out of ticket when doing 50? Dear reader, let us measure every word by the rule of this proverb.

7. THE STANDARD What a beautiful standard of holiness and honesty! Glory! There is no God like the LORD. He is our Rock, and there is no evil in Him. And the Lord Jesus Christ is His Son, Who loved righteousness and hated iniquity more than any man. Praise the Lord!

There is no holy book like the Scriptures. No wonder Moses told Israel God's statutes were their life, wisdom, and righteousness before the nations. If such honesty and integrity were practiced, there would be no war or dispute of any kind. But alas, the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it ([Jer 17:9](#))?

Holiness is more than worshipping reverently on Sunday mornings. It is the strict and careful observance of all God's laws; it hates compromise with any evil; it applies to very small events of life; and it includes your approach and words. Let the buyer beware!