

The \$2400 Telephone

by Gene Taylor

What kind of telephone would you expect to get if you paid \$2400.00 for it? You would anticipate getting the latest in technology, possibly a video phone. The last thing you would expect would be just a plain old rotary phone that was not cordless; had no call-waiting, caller-ID, or speed dialing; and would not even accept touch-tone service. But that is exactly what my parents got. As a matter of fact, they had two of them for the same price.

You see, when they moved into their house in June 1958, no one could own their own phone. You had to rent it from the phone company. So they rented two of them: a desk model for the den and a wall model for the recreation room. Each phone cost them \$5.00 per month on their bill. They paid that amount for each phone for 40 years, 480 months. When you multiply it out, it comes to \$2,400.00 per phone. Several years ago, when the government regulations changed and people could now own their own phone equipment, they just never bothered buying any. Their phones worked, and they were happy with them. Anyway, five dollars is such a small amount. So they kept paying that rental fee every month, never realizing how expensive those old rotary phones were to them.

As my parents never realized how costly those phones were, many people are in the same boat when it comes to the wages of sin. Sin seems pleasurable to them (Heb. 11:24-25), and they don't seem to suffer much because of it. What they do not realize is that if they continue in sin they will find it to be very costly in the day of judgment. Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death." The "death" in this passage is not the physical death which comes at the end of our lives here upon the earth. Rather, it is the "second death" of eternal separation from God in a place of torment. Revelation 21:8 says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Jesus tells of the high cost of sin in Matthew 16:26 where He says, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The sinner forfeits his eternal soul when he sins. Because of ignorance, many never realize what a price they are paying for their sins.

There is hope for the sinner, though. Jesus died on the cross to pay the high cost of sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Sadly, some, knowing of that sacrifice and the saving power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16), refuse to obey Christ because they are happy with their lives and possibly even rationalize that if God is really a loving God, hell won't be so bad. While God is described as love (1 John 4:8), He is also referred to as a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Never underestimate the high price of sin. Wake up to what it really costs you. Give obedience to the gospel of Christ to have your sins remitted (Acts 2:38) so that you will not have to pay with your soul.

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