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Grounders:

Why do you do what you do? The answer lies in what you value. *Value* answers the question, “Why?” because value connects *belief* with *behavior*. It begins in your heart and surfaces in your life. You *search*, *sacrifice*, and *prioritize* for that which you value. Jesus valued the kingdom of heaven—God’s reign, rule, and order in the hearts and lives of people on this earth now and in the future. In a word, it’s *wisdom*. In two parables, Jesus taught how to value the kingdom of heaven. The parables are *The Hidden Treasure* and *The Pearl* (Matt. 13:44-45).

First, search for it. Jesus described a treasure hidden in a field that a man had discovered along with a fine pearl that a merchant had been seeking. In each case, there was a search because the person valued the treasure more than his current possessions. Since no formal banks existed two thousand years ago, valued possessions were hidden in the land. Consequently, ownership of the buried treasures transferred with the title to the property. The scrolls discovered at the caves of Qumran included metes and bounds descriptions of the locations of buried treasure. Similarly, fine pearls were among the most valued commodities in the culture. You search for what you value.

Wisdom is the ultimate value in the kingdom of God, and we are called to search for it as for *hidden treasure* (Prov. 2:1-6). Rabbis referred to a proverb as a *pearl* of wisdom. Wisdom is God’s heart combined with street smarts. The apostle Paul referred to Jesus Christ as the wisdom of God—the intersection of the vertical (God) with the horizontal (man), (1 Cor. 1:24). Thus, wisdom is not merely a principle, but a person. Unfortunately, we spend most of our lives searching for things that promise to benefit only our own earthly kingdoms such as: money, material possessions, degrees, fame, or cool relationships.

Search for wisdom. This year, commit to reading two chapters in the Bible each day—one in Proverbs (the chapter number corresponding with the date of the month) and one in the New Testament, each day asking God to give you wisdom for your life. You will read through God’s wisdom book of pearls 12 times during the year and the entire New Testament as well. This will allow you to store up wisdom and learn more about Christ’s kingdom value.

Second, sell all. In each parable, the person who found the treasure sold all he had in order to buy it—he sold in order to reallocate his resources to something that he valued more than that which he had received in exchange. The first man sold all he had in order to buy the land with the hidden treasure. The second did the same in order to buy the fine pearl. A pearl poses an interesting illustration because it is formed from distress in the tender part of the oyster. God’s kingdom is made available to all through the pain of Christ who sold all for you (2 Cor. 8:9). David told his son Solomon to sell everything to get wisdom—the greatest value in the kingdom of heaven (Prov. 4:7).

Sell all to gain wisdom. Reallocate your resources (time, talent, and treasures) in order to value wisdom. This will mean *sacrifice*. In order to do this, quickly review your calendar, task list, and checkbook register. These three indicators reveal what you value—what is connecting your belief with your behavior, demonstrating *why* you do what you do. Remove what does not wisely advance the kingdom of God in order to add



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what does. In some cases, rather than remove you might reclaim the same time, talent, or treasure for God's kingdom.

Third, buy it. In each parable, the person who found the treasure not only sold all to gain it, he finally bought it. Christ bought you for a world record price (1 Cor. 6:19-20). In return, will you buy wisdom (Prov. 23:23)? When you buy something, you are saying that the commodity is more valuable than that which you give in exchange.

Buy wisdom. Invest in the hearts and lives of others in order to buy wisdom. *Prioritize* them—let them know that they are more valuable to you than that which you give in exchange. Spend time with a young person who needs direction. Listen to a friend. Give to someone in need. In every interaction with another human being, prioritize wisdom, the kingdom of heaven at work.

This week, begin to search for, sell all, and buy the kingdom of heaven's ultimate value, Christ the wisdom of God.

Searching, selling, and buying,
Mitch