The Advantages of Dishonest Gain: Sweet at First, Bitter in the End

One of the **apparent advantages of the sin of dishonest gain** is the illusion of financial efficiency: the chance to get more done with less money, money that is often not enough to begin with. But this "advantage" comes at a moral and legal price. To obtain such gains, we often have to work with people who dodge their taxes and issue no receipts or invoices. In doing so, we don't just break the law. We become **accomplices to tax evasion and partners in stealing from the public purse, just like Judas, who stole from the common bag.**

By accepting these practices, we prop up a culture of darkness, one that promotes lying, theft and irresponsibility. We join those who choose to live dishonestly, and our actions place us not only outside the law but also in **the greed of Judas.**

Scripture describes this illusion of dishonest gain very plainly: "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." *(Proverbs 9:17-18)*

This passage shows that the sin of greed can look attractive and profitable at first, "sweet" and "pleasant," but in reality it leads to **spiritual death and ruin.** Gain obtained through wickedness is not blessed. It is cursed. What looks like a convenient solution is a trap that destroys the soul.

This is the sin of Judas. **His love of money blinded him, and in the end it led him to sell the Lord Jesus and to a tragic death.** Judas's end is a solemn warning: dishonest gain doesn't only ruin the conscience. It can lead to eternal loss.

Building your house off the books: a witness against you

Take the building of a house as a telling example. Suppose the total cost comes to **€75,000**. About half of that sum (**€37,500**) is labour, paid cash in hand, with no taxes and no paperwork.

If that labour were declared, the following taxes would have to be paid:

- **VAT (21%)**: €7,875

- **Social contributions and income taxes (about 45%)**: €16,875 **Total taxes: €24,750**

So if the work were done honestly, the real cost of the house would rise from **€75,000 to €99,750**, an increase of 33%. This example shows how much is "saved" by dodging taxes, and also how great the moral compromise is. By accepting these practices, we become accomplices to tax evasion and join those who steal what belongs to the community. **In God's eyes, this is a form of theft and unrighteous gain.**

Scripture gives a sobering warning to those who chase dishonest gain to build their house and protect their family: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong." *(Jeremiah 22:13)*

A house raised by unrighteousness will not be a refuge. It will be a **monument to wickedness.** Nothing stays hidden before God: not the carefully laid plans, not the untaxed labour, not the materials bought without an invoice, not the beams set in place with an eye to filthy lucre. God's justice reaches into the most hidden details of life. **Wickedness cannot be plastered over, hidden between the walls or buried under the roof. It will cry out. It will testify. It will condemn on the day of judgment.**

Scripture speaks clearly: "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." *(Habakkuk 2:9-11)*

James 5:4 says the same: the wages held back from the labourers cry out against those who cheated them, and their cries reach the ears of the Lord of hosts. In the same way, money gained by hiding income does not keep quiet. **It cries out! It is a living witness to sin, evidence that rises up against the one who obtained it unjustly.**

It is a **dangerous illusion, a fatal deception, to think that security can be built on crooked foundations.** The man who builds his future on wickedness is only preparing his own collapse. What looks like a well-built house, a "nest on high" safe from danger, is in reality a fortress of shame and proof of sin.

The same thing happens in many other areas: painting the house, repairs to the heating, wiring or plumbing, renting a flat, car repairs, farm work (ploughing, sowing, harvesting), buying and cutting firewood, drilling a well, and so on. All of these are often done without an invoice to avoid paying VAT and other taxes. **They can be done without paperwork, if we love the wages of unrighteousness.**

For example, if someone buys **3,000 lei** worth of firewood (about €600, as Romania's currency is the leu) without an invoice, they avoid 21% VAT, that is, **630 lei**, a considerable sum for people on low incomes. But this apparent "gain" is wickedness, and God condemns it.

Scripture warns us about who we become when we join with thieves to share in unjust gain: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him." *(Psalm 50:16-18)* This partnership is not just a social or legal mistake. It is a spiritual choice that leads to death: "Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul." *(Proverbs 29:24)*

These verses leave no room for interpretation. When we agree to work with people who dodge their taxes for the sake of some advantage, we become accomplices to theft and take our stand with those who despise the law and the truth. **This is not merely an economic choice. It is a**

spiritual stance, a choice between light and darkness.

Living in the light means rejecting every form of dishonesty, even when it's hard and we can no longer do what we had planned. **True faith shows itself in everyday choices, including how we handle money, taxes and work.**

To claim that God is with you while you live dishonestly is to deny His holiness. God cannot be manipulated by words or appearances. He searches the heart and knows our deeds. **True fellowship with Him requires a clean life, a cleansed conscience and a walk in the light.** Only then does the promise "I am with you" become a blessed reality and not a dangerous illusion.

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