

## **How much would you be willing to pay for something?**

Before you start reading please understand in this article, the author will purposely and intentionally stray from the main focus or topic; however, what is mentioned or said can help give everyone a great appreciation, higher value, and meaning to the original question “How much would you be willing to pay for something?”

In the past few months and days, I’ve had a great need for a laminating machine. And now, it appears the timing is right for me to purchase one for my own use. How did I get to this point, here is what has happened thus far. Something was written that I’d like for others to read. The front and back covers need to be prepared so the pages inside will last and the booklet can survive appearing just like new for years. The congregation that was allowing me to use their machine by reimbursing them for material used, even though they known and have trusted me over 30 years...several men unknowingly placed barriers on me as to the use of this valuable tool. You are probably wondering how, so I’ll go ahead and tell you the specific details. The restrictions were as follows: No key was give to have access into the building, the laminating machine could only be used when the office or building was open, only 2 people had the key to locking device placed onto the power cord and one of these two ladies had to be contacted well in advance to make sure it was unlocked, of course this is after going through a labyrinth of decision makers before one of them finally gave permission for me to use the laminating machine. Oh’ this is just the start...I can go on and on. Working somewhere else during normal office hours, I couldn’t make it there when I’d like too. So, I did what I had to do which interfered with my other plans and what I would like to have done. These last few words may even be confusing to you. It really makes no difference, what it boils down too is this...I will try to say it another way to help make everything clearer. When you compare the value of your time versus the availability or the use of something what’s more important? The answer is without any doubt ***your time!***

To this cause and with a small budget, last Thursday I got an idea to check Ebay. Sure enough, there was one up for bid. Not that many people or business have laminating machines, so I knew I’d gotten lucky find only one up for sale that is to the highest bidder. On Friday, I asked my brother what he knew about Ebay and he told me about some of our nephew’s experiences. If it’s an item that folks need or want all of the action takes place in the last few hours or in the last few minutes. With this laminator machine, I had found their words to be true. After setting up an account with a log in user identification name and password, there I was on-line in the last few hours periodically checking what was the highest bid. This particular machine was old and hadn’t been manufactured in years, so while

surfing the web I couldn't even find what the machine cost new and didn't even find a used one for sale to help make a price comparison so I'd have an general thought as to what to bid. The only thing I found was its modern day manufactured equivalent a 27", but this one would waste too much material when the cover pages were trimmed to size. So time was running out and I went back to see what the current bid was at, to my amazement this used/old machine to be sold as is with no warranty was at \$380.00 and there was still one hour to go. When I first saw this only one "used" laminator, the seller's asking price was a minimum of \$199 and there was just one bidder wanting to buy it a price of \$202. From the 1<sup>st</sup> bidder's price, it went slowly up to \$300 with around two hours remaining. Then after doing some research, I was willing to put in a starting bid around \$325 and a maximum high bid around \$400. In the last 30 minutes, I was confused why would some pay so much for this old/used laminating machine that you might not even be able to find the parts for in a few more years? For the answer to this question, I'm going to let you think awhile longer as you continue reading some additional information.

Last night, I went to bed early around 9 PM and sometimes when this occurs it's easy for me to wake up much earlier than I want too with a thought in my head. When my eyes opened up, the clock indicated it was 12:15 AM and Babe Ruth's homerun record-breaking baseball bat was rolling around in my head. I don't know about you, but my dreams can become reality or at least sometimes another item to set on paper or write about. What you're currently reading started being typed at around 1:30 AM, you see the thought was so strong that I couldn't go back to bed. Plus, I'm slow and not the world's best in either grammar in typing right the computer clock says it's now 2:26 AM. Ok, let's get back to Babe Ruth's bat.

To tell you the truth, it doesn't really matter. It could be either Babe Ruth's or Hank Aaron's homerun record-breaking baseball bat. And it could even be one of Greg Lemmon's or Lance Armstrong's Tour de France winning bicycles. Basically, it doesn't make any difference these are just the tools that brought these particular men at that point in time success. Here is one of those side notes I talked about and it may give you a better understanding towards our original question. Was it their bat or the high tech bicycle that accomplished these accomplishments? Take for instance, Lance Armstrong, I've heard that out of the same air you and I breath somehow he gets more oxygen into his blood stream. What does that mean? If you and I where in the exact same physical fitness level as Lance then put us in the same race...while peddling up the same mountain or down the same long road, he is going to out perform us. When we get exhausted and slow down, Lance's body still has more oxygen in his muscles and doesn't need to stop or slow down. Yes, God made Lance different. Put him in any sport, he'd out perform almost everyone simply put that's just the way it is. [Warning this is 100% hear-say, I did not conduct the research or read the article myself someone verbally me about it

and for their own personal reasons they may have told me wrong or they themselves might have been told wrong by someone else themselves.] Ok back to...the article I'd heard, Lance's body gets up to 20% more oxygen than a normal typical person. What makes his body different, scientist are trying to figure that one out and if they do then they will have revealed another mystery that at this point only God knows. Figuring out how his body does it that just the 1<sup>st</sup> part. Then there's the bigger answer to follow, can a pill or drug be developed that you and I can take to make us perform on the same sports endurance level as Lance does without a pill or drug? Ok, that's enough...Surely you get it now --- It's not the bat, it's the person and everyone can easily see what some folks have done with their choice of equipment.

If Babe Ruth's homerun record setting bat came up on Ebay, what would it go for? On the 1<sup>st</sup> day, this would be an item that would surely get noticed. After finding out about it, Ebay would most likely place in their Most Popular Items right on the website's homepage. This one makes sense, they'd help this item become more popular and for this work their percentage/part of the price would also increase too. Newspapers/Magazines/TV newscasts around the world would be telling everyone. When it's all said and done...we'd have 2 folks that benefited the seller and buyer. Someone out there was lucky enough to have owned it and now someone has the bat to put up either on their trophy case, bookshelf, or put it on their desk as a conversation piece. To me, this doesn't make any sense - Ok, next I'll explain this. *This is the point* where we go off in another direction, so we can understand value.

Spiritually speaking, there are a few men and women in history that where on the same level as a Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, Greg Lemmon, or a Lance Armstrong. For their personal character and whether or not they will go to heaven according to God's simple straight forward instructions, I do not know their particular passing or failing report card/grade. What we can see is their accomplishments that they left with us to help everyone in their own personal quest to fulfill our Christianity. King James had the various scattered books and letters put together into one book. To this day, no one has come close to meeting the same authorization when a comparison is made back to the original Hebrew and Greek text. Some have come close, but 99.99% is no where near as good if we are talking about your spirituality and following what all is required from you to get into heaven. We can't afford to make one mistake or let's use the example of driving around in a car with a tire that's defective without knowing it. Why take a risk, get the best tire for the price.

King James left us a remarkable accomplishment...God's work in one Holy Bible. As to the man, I didn't ever meet him or get to know his character so let's leave that up to God from what I've read that's what we are suppose to do anyway right?

There are three other men that I have only read about or heard about with God's blessings they've had a similar level of accomplishment. Thomas Campbell, put 2 and 2 together when reading the Bible and didn't like what he saw. So this became our restoration movement...to follow the simple instructions and do it; that is, to not add too or take away from what the Bible has to say. If Thomas had the idea, then he may have taught his son Alexander Campbell to go and share this knowledge with as many people as possible. During this time period, revivals were held all over the country and we need to thank this father and son team. And now I need to remind you, all these above words could be totally wrong neither you or I were actually there. It could be they got their thoughts and ideas from someone else or there could be 500 or so folks that also need to get the credit. This next man is a little more recent in our history and I have actually sat in a Sunday AM Bible Class and visualized what I needed to do to become a Christian. Jule Miller and those that helped him make the "Visualized Bible Study Series" need to be respected for their abilities, trials and tribulation they endured or may have gone through to help bring about the growth wave we had in the United States in the Lord's body during the 1950's, 60's, 70's, and into the early part of the 80's. From what I've heard from Tex Stevens has taken on the task of carrying out this incredible work for the Lord, this series are still being translated into different languages and is still being distributed all over the world. And that is truly great. Not having ever met Jule Miller, his wife, or their many children once again we see their accomplishment, so let God be the judge of their daily walk or Christianity. On a side note: I have met one of Jule's daughter-in-laws and her sister, they both seem to be outstanding Christian women who love children. One of Jule's children, a son, is a Children's Minister in Searcy, Arkansas near Harding Univ. Todd & Joy Miller, his wife are raising two children what a blessing it must be for them to have such caring Christian parents. Joy's sister, Andrea, has same love for children and this applies to her likewise. For a career, she surrounds herself sharing her heart to teach 2 yr. old children. From what I've seen and heard with my own eyes and ears, Jule Miller's relatives love all of God's children...the little one's plus also those of us who needed to hear the truth about Jesus. Ok I'll try to get back on track towards our original question.

Babe Ruth's bat, Hank Aaron's bat, Greg Lemmon bicycle, Lance Armstrong's bicycle, King James's authorized version of the Bible, or Jule Miller and Tex Steven's Visualized Bible Study Filmstrip and Videotape Series...these are just all tools to either help them or anyone of us to help perform/accomplish a task or job. A baseball bat or bicycles are 100% physical in the task there designed to perform. The collection or gathering together of God's word, and a Bible study series to help us gain knowledge, they can have spiritual and physical useful applications. You're maybe already thinking ahead and have figured out this next set of words. Ok, what good is it to have any one of these items, if it's not being used in its original intended purpose? Your answer would be worthless. It's only wood, the

baseball bat will rot away. A bicycle is metal, plastic, rubber, etc. and these items over time will also break down and rot away. Taken out from their original purposes only to have a conversation piece possibly leading to idleness or gossip about the glory days back when. The intended purpose for both of these was to exercise, so one doesn't get fat. (In these next few words, hopefully you're ready for them.) There's a lot more spiritual equipment available than mentioned above, as to own tools within our personal possession or those we have access to in a church library...by not using them are we slowly becoming spiritually fat?

Oh' some of us right now have dust on our Bible's, that is, if we can locate it somewhere in our living room or den shelves. Some of us are right now are saying, Thank heaven that's not me, I attend worship and bible class every Sunday. {Take few moments and try to figure out the missing component, if there is one.} Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, Greg Lemmon, Lance Armstrong, King James, and the last one mentioned Jule Miller what did they do? They worked their tools as for King James and Jule Miller, we have God to thank for all of their effort each day.

*Right now some of you are feeling really good but should you be that comfortable?* Evangelism tools have two intended purposes. Yes, the Bible you carry around with you to worship and Bible class just like any other tool/item is to provide spiritual nourishment. When you read it that's only 1/2 of it's specialized purpose, the other 1/2 is the exercise component. If it's not used daily go out to help seek and save the lost, you and your Christian friends might just be in God's eyes **dusty**. You've heard it preached many times, but did it ever really affect you or sink in? Read the last part of Matthew where Jesus says to "Go!" Right now, today is there a Christian exercise component in your daily life? Ever since the time expired, I've been upset with myself that I didn't bid \$570.00 for the laminator machine. Given another opportunity to purchase one, I'll go for it and get to work everyday.

Could it be that the majority of us in the Lord's body are preparing to hibernate? Are we falling asleep on the job and don't even realize it...towards saving the lost? Have you ever lost someone that you cared deeply for? When this was said, you may have thought about a person's name that you knew for days, months or years. God knows all...even how many red/white blood cells are in your parents body, and He even knew your name before you were a twinkle in your parents eyes. God knows all...and He is losing loved one's everyday. When are we going to wake up and realize this --- We Christians are indebted to help the lost, it's our job! Memorizing bible scriptures can be useful, but if you don't exercise what have you really learned? (Maybe you just got fat on His word and missed a few key verses about going into the world and teach...Sounds like He has told us **to get to work.**)

Work comes in all shapes and sizes. Getting married requires work. Plus having and raising a child or children requires lots of work too. Ask most parents and

they'd tell you about both the troubled times and moments that are truly priceless. The same is true with both our normal everyday jobs and if you take the time with the seriousness towards our spiritual jobs too. {Inviting someone to attend worship or taking a moment to hand out a Bible study these acts of love are priceless too.}

Where are you at spiritually speaking while reading these words and do you have the time to give something back to God? Maybe He has done something to you, so recently you like some of us have been down on your knees and have become humbled seeking His guidance. Money is **not** the issue here it's about will you take the time to serve? The lady whom you see at the dry cleaner's does she know/understand the truth? What about all of your neighbors...are you afraid they will reject your offer or invitation? (Think about this who are they rejecting is it you or is it they're saying no to God?) When you go dine out at a restaurant do you ask the wait staff, if they have any prayer concerns? You are fixing to say one, why not include their needs too? This simple act of kindness/love may will only take a few minutes of your time and just might open the door of opportunity for you to share the gospel forever saving one of God's children from the torture that awaits them because you failed to do your job. Ok, these are pretty harsh words and I need to back off a little bit. Not every personal contact lends itself to sharing the gospel with someone, but what if we could make an improvement towards our previous low batting average. Is it possible for us to drastically increase our efforts within a few seconds of time? If such a thing did exist, it wouldn't do any good unless Christians had it available to hand out. How much would you be willing to pay for something? By reading it from cover to cover yourself or giving/handing it out to someone helped it may help them understand God's instructions and for us. There are many of lost souls to save and the 7 Steps to Heaven Bible study is ready to go...so let's get to work! We have a great enjoyable/pleasant task set before us to plant seeds into the souls of many and let God give the increase by water them.

Always remembering to give our Lord the glory.

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