

The Price of Truth: When Faith Becomes an Industry

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Introduction

The Bible is often described as a divine gift — a sacred message from God to humanity, freely given to guide the soul toward truth. Yet in today's world, that same Word is printed, copyrighted, marketed, and sold like any other commercial product. Leather-bound editions, collector's sets, digital versions, and "exclusive study Bibles" line the shelves and screens of the faithful. This reality leads to an uncomfortable question: If God's truth is meant to be free, why does access to it often come with a price tag?



The Word as Gift

In its purest form, revelation was never meant to be monetized. When prophets spoke, they did not sell their scrolls. When Jesus taught, He charged no admission. The Word was breath — a living current meant to flow freely among people. The divine message was experience before text — lived, spoken, and remembered long before it was written. To hear it was grace; to share it was duty. Truth was a public inheritance, not a private possession. If the divine is limitless, then no one should profit from its transmission.



The Word as Product

Centuries later, with the invention of the printing press, faith entered the marketplace. Mass production brought accessibility — and with it, ownership. Publishers copyrighted translations, corporations built empires around devotion, and churches began to brand belief itself. Some justified this as necessity — to pay translators, preserve accuracy, and spread the Word efficiently. But over time, necessity turned into industry, and industry into control. What was once revelation became a product; what was once shared became sold. When the sacred becomes merchandise, the soul risks mistaking commerce for calling.



The Cost of Ownership

Can truth be copyrighted? Can divinity have an ISBN number? The irony is striking: the Bible — a text that condemns greed — is one of the most profitable books in history. Its sales sustain corporations, fund denominations, and fuel competition between "versions" of the same truth. And so, the Word of God — which once broke chains — is now printed with watermarks. This doesn't make the book evil. But it does remind us that religion, too, can be industrialized, and that those who manage faith often profit more than those who live it.



Faith and the Marketplace

The deeper tragedy is not the sale of books, but the mindset it breeds: Faith becomes something to consume, rather than to embody. Believers buy devotion in installments — sermons, merchandise, spiritual experiences — all pre-packaged for comfort. The marketplace thrives on dependency. When salvation becomes subscription, people stop seeking God directly and start seeking brands that claim to represent Him. In this, faith loses its innocence — not by corruption of message, but by dilution of motive.



Truth Beyond the Price Tag

Yet even now, truth remains free for those who truly seek it. One does not need to buy a book to know love, justice, or compassion. The spirit of scripture lives wherever awareness dwells. You can steal a Bible, but you cannot steal truth — because truth is not in ink, but in awakening. The challenge for our generation is not to burn books or boycott publishers, but to remember: The sacred does not belong to anyone. It belongs to everyone who dares to live it.



Conclusion

The commercialization of faith is a mirror to our time — showing how easily we can confuse possession with understanding. We cannot buy enlightenment, only borrow its reflection. We cannot own the divine, only walk with it. Perhaps the true act of worship today is not purchasing another translation, but living out the one truth all scriptures agree on: Love freely, as it was freely given. Because while the world may sell the Bible, the Word of God is still beyond price.



About the Author

Ninox Antolihao is a visionary thinker and creator based in the Philippines. Known as the mind behind Stone Grill Restaurant and several community and reflective projects, he bridges logic, intuition, and spirituality through his writings. Through his Reflections Series, including *The Paradox of God*, *The Paradox of Judas*, and *The Price of Truth*, Ninox invites readers to see that wisdom is not owned — it is awakened. He believes truth is not discovered through authority, but through honesty — the kind that questions everything, even itself.



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