

In a Word: Contentment – 1 Timothy 6:6

Introduction

- The bible says...

(6) Now godliness with contentment is great gain. (7) For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. (8) And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. (1 Timothy 6:6–8)

- If there is one personal characteristic American Christians (who are easily discontented) need to develop, it is that of contentment
- Contentment defined:
 - A state of happiness and satisfaction
 - To be happy with what you have, who you are, and where you are
 - It can also be a state of peacefulness, thankfulness, along with satisfaction
- Contentment and happiness may be very easy to attain if we have all we need, but what if we don't?
 - Could my desire to do more, have more and see more be holding back my spiritual growth?

I. Contentment is Learned

- a. Contentment is not something we're born with (it would seem), but it is learned and developed
 - i. It would seem that we are born selfish and greedy.
 - ii. The jury is still out in the physiological community ...
- b. Was it selfishness that caused man and woman to eat of the tree because they desired to be like God?

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

- i. If lust, desire, selfishness and greed are learned, then who taught it to Eve?
- c. We do know that Christians are warned by God not to be self-centered

(1) Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (2) You lust and do not have (discontentment). You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss (incorrectly), that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:1–3)

- d. So we must learn, be taught not to be greedy, and learn to be content...

(11) Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: (12) I know how to be abased (put down, humiliated), and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (13) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:11–13)

- i. We like to put verse 13 on little wall plaques, why not the preceding verses?
- e. The Apostle Paul had everything a man could look for in life
 - i. He was educated, privileged, prestige, wealth and power.
 - ii. But after he saw Jesus, his mind was changed, priorities were different...

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8)

- f. How many of us would, right now say, “I have enough, all I need, I am content.”
 - i. To be content as Paul was content...
- g. There is nothing wrong with wealth, however...
- h. We need balance in our lives (like a balanced diet)
 - i. A prayer for a balanced and content life...

(7) Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): (8) Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches— Feed me with the food allotted to me; (9) Lest I be full and deny You, And say, “Who is the LORD?” Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God. (Proverbs 30:7–9)

- i. I don’t think I’ve learned to be completely content, there are things that I’ve had all my life, things that I’m accustomed to that would be difficult to give up, to experience that loss.

II. Lack of Contentment, Lack of Peace

- a. The wise man said...

Better is a little (few possessions) with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble.

(Proverbs 15:16)

- b. The more I have, the more trouble I can expect
 - i. If I have 2 cars, I can expect twice as many repair bills
 - ii. If I have two bathrooms, I can expect twice as many drips
- c. We’re taught not to be satisfied, get more, go more, do more, see more
 - i. Our constitution states that we have the right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness
 - 1. At what cost do I pursue happiness? What does the bible say about being happy?
 - 2. The word “happy” or “happiness” appears very little, in some versions none
 - 3. Most in the KJV, but notice what is to make us happy...

- a. Serving the Lord brings happiness (foot washing)

(15) For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. (17) If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:15–17 KJV)

- b. Suffering for the Lord brings happiness...

(10) Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. (11) Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (James 5:10–11 KJV)

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; (1 Peter 3:14 KJV)

- ii. Many of the things that bring happiness to our lives are found in serving God, family, friends, relationships in the church, our labor which all can bring contentment.

- d. To be content is to be wise and suffer less frustration in life, experience more peace

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)

- i. No matter how hard you try, the world cannot give you the peace and contentment that can be had from God through Jesus Christ!

III. Times Not to Be Content

- a. The one thing we are not to be content with is the state of our spiritual growth

(13) Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended (attained); but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, (14) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13–14)

- b. It's true, we have desires for the good things in life, and would it not be good if we desired the spiritual things as well?

Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness. (Psalm 107:8–9)

- c. The person who is hungry and has a hardy spiritual appetite for a relationship with God is blessed

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

- d. We should not be content with the current spiritual condition of those outside the body of Christ including our family, friends, community and country.
- e. Romans 12:9-21 instructs us on how to behave as Christians, this passage tells us not to be content...
 - i. With things the way they are, hold on to what is good
 - ii. Serve the Lord with diligence and fervently
 - iii. With a little bit of prayer, but continue steadfastly
 - iv. With what you've done for others in the past, continue in hospitality
 - v. With what you know about the bible, don't be wise in your own opinion
 - vi. With your example to others, continue to improve your reputation as good
 - vii. With the chaos of life, pursue peace
 - viii. With the evil in the world, but fight it with the armor of God and sword of the Spirit

IV. What Should We Seek?

- a. So what are we to look for out of life?
 - i. What am I working for and towards?
 - ii. A better job? A bigger house? A newer car?
- b. For the believer, our goal is not for temporal things...

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19–20)

- c. Our encouragement and prayer today is that we all be more content.