

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 6:6-10** . . . But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. [7] For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. [8] If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. [9] But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. [10] For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

B. A few preliminary comments to help us better understand and apply today's teaching.

1. According to the context preceding these verses, there are those who use godliness and the church life to satisfy their self-serving desires, such as their desire to be important, or to be seen as having an advanced form of spirituality, or to be respected as knowledgeable in the scriptures and Bible doctrine, or to have a position of power and influence over others.
 - a. Because these kinds of Christians still value pride and self-centeredness, they are not content with the things that God intends to produce contentment in us – such as knowing God, growing in the knowledge of God and His ways, enjoying fellowship with God, and out of love for God, serving others.
 - b. They want more, or should I say, they think they have to have more in order to gain the kind of happiness, prominence, and respect they believe will give them that sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that they seek.
 - c. It does not appear to me that any of us perfectly fit this specific context that I have just described.
 - d. However, that does not mean that we are not being driven by desires like pride and self-centeredness to seek happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction in things outside of ourselves in an effort to gain the contentment we crave but have not found in God, himself, and in living a godly life. And therein lies the problem we face in relation to contentment.

2. In spite of what we are prone to believe, true, lasting contentment is not based on anything the world can give, or on the fulfillment of any physical desire, or on the gratification of any longing or wish, or on the meeting of a perceived need. Why? Because such pursuits, when satisfied, are only satisfied temporarily. Like hunger and thirst, once the sense of fulfillment or gratification wears off, and it will, discontentment returns.
3. The last preliminary point is this: true, lasting contentment does come to us spontaneously or automatically. It cannot be gained through prayer alone. It must be chosen and pursued, hand-in-hand with godliness, if we are to experience the great gain God promises.

C. Prayer

II. Godliness produces great gain when accompanied by contentment

- A. [6] But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.
 1. Notice, it is not one or the other – godliness or contentment, but godliness with contentment that brings about great gain.
 - a. Without question, godliness by itself produces benefits and blessing from God that cannot be gained apart from godliness. And likewise, contentment brings good into our lives.
 - b. However, it is when godliness is hand-in-hand with contentment that we experience the benefits and blessing that only come to those who link contentment with godliness.
 2. Now remember, the link between godliness and contentment is not automatic. **Vs 5-6** imply that we can have a measure of godliness without having contentment. And this is true, because sensible thinking, biblically based choices, and Christian living can bring about a measure of godliness in any believer's life.
 - a. We need look no further than **1 Timothy** for examples of church members who have a measure of godliness, yet are discontent and want something more – such as:
 - (1) Those who teach strange doctrines in order to gain a following and feel important (**1:3**);
 - (2) Those who incorporate myths and genealogies into their Bible doctrines because what the Bible says isn't enough for them (**1:4**);
 - (3) Those who want a leadership position, but ought not to be in leadership (**3:1-13**);

- (4) Those who forbid marriage and certain foods, because they want to look more spiritual than the rest (**4:3**);
 - (5) Those who have widows in their family, but don't care for them as they ought because they don't want to use their time and money that way (**5:8**).
 - b. To make this more applicable to ourselves, consider the following questions.
 - (1) Have you sincerely pursued godliness in your marriage, yet remain discontent and easily irritated because your spouse is not everything you had hoped he or she would be?
 - (2) Though you are responsible and work hard in doing your job, have you learned to remain peacefully content when the work is difficult, the boss demanding, or the decisions of upper management are seemingly unreasonable?
 - (3) Though you have sought a godly perspective in relation to ill-health, or a disability, or a wayward child who continues to make your life difficult, have you found contentment in any of these situations?
 - (4) Though you are working hard at trusting God implicitly, are you genuinely contented, and therefore at peace with God's dealings with you – even when it seems He is not fixing the problems in your life as you want or as soon as you want?
 - c. The point is, it is possible to attain a **measure of godliness** while still being discontent – a discontent that starts with what God is doing or allowing, and trickles down to the minor frustrations, irritations, and disappointments in life.
 - 3. The same is true for contentment. It is possible for sensible thinking, self-disciplined people to **learn to be content** in many areas of life even though they are not pursuing godliness.
 - a. However, to pursue contentment apart from pursuing godliness is to have a shallow, incomplete form of contentment.
 - b. And to pursue godliness without also pursuing contentment is to have an incomplete form of godliness.
- B. To help us with our understanding of **vs 6**, let me remind you what godliness is.
- 1. Godliness is God-likeness, or we can also say, Christ-likeness, in character, thought, attitude, word, and deed.
 - a. For example, **Philippians 2:5** exhorts us to take on the way of thinking and the attitudes of Christ Jesus.

- b. **Romans 8:29** reinforces becoming like Christ while emphasizing God’s participation in our becoming godly when it says that God predestined or pre-determined that we are to be conformed to the image of His Son – that is, become godly like Jesus.
 - c. Peter affirms that God makes Christian godliness possible in **2 Peter 1:3-4**, when he says that God’s divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. And God has granted to us precious and magnificent promises, so that by them we may become partakers of the divine nature – that is, God’s godliness.
 - d. Peter also emphasizes our need to pursue godliness in **1 Peter 1:14-16**, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, [15] but like the Holy One who called you, be (*or be becoming*) holy yourselves also in all your behavior; [16] because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
 - e. Paul affirms our need to be active in the pursuit of godliness when he tells Timothy to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (**1 Timothy 4:7**).
 - f. To sum up: godliness is Christ-likeness in character, thought, attitude, word, and deed. Godliness requires God’s help in various forms, and an intentional, persistent pursuit from us.
2. For the Christian, contentment coupled with godliness is being content with what God is doing, what He is allowing, what you have, and where you are. It is built on trust in God’s goodness, dependence on God’s faithfulness as your provider and protector, and confidence in God’s love, presence, and activity in your life. And it is supported by a meaningful, satisfying relationship with God.
- a. To be content is to be free of dissatisfaction, complaining, ungratefulness, fault finding, greed, covetousness, envy, ungodly jealousy, anxiety, the quest for power, a longing for riches, and the need of praise.
 - b. Those who have joined godliness with contentment are able to remain inwardly undisturbed, grateful, and patient with people and life when people are not behaving as they ought and life is not going as you want.
 - c. The reality is, you have to learn to be content in the face of loneliness, abandonment, mistreatment, false accusation, and injustice – because contentment does not come naturally.

- d. To this end, contentment is built on a faith in God, a balanced, realistic way of thinking, and attitudes that are independent of what is going on around you, and who is or isn't with you.
 3. To restate more definitively what I have already said, you cannot gain contentment without trusting God to be your primary source of security, well-being, provision, protection, and love.
 - a. You cannot gain contentment without being **grateful for** what you have, and **satisfied with** what you have, regardless of what you don't have.
 - b. You cannot gain contentment without trusting that what God is doing or allowing is for your good and for the good of those around you.
 - c. You cannot gain contentment without being willing to accept and patiently live with the fact that people will disappoint you, hurt you, fail you, unfairly criticize you, and even mistreat you.
 - d. And you cannot gain contentment without humility – for pride is a master that, when you become its slave, never ceases to demand more and more of what it needs to gratify itself.
 4. The word of God speaks to contentment in various places and in various ways. Today, we will look at three scriptures that affirm our need to trust God, and our need to actively pursue contentment.
 - a. **Matthew 6:33-34**, “But seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. [34] So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”
 - b. **Hebrews 13:5-6**, “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ [6] so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. what will man do to me?’”
 - c. **Philippians 4:11-13**, “**I have learned** to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [12] **I know how** to get along with humble means, and **I also know how** to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance **I have learned** the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. [13] **I can do** all things through Him who strengthens me.”
- C. Just to clarify, contentment is not overlooking or treating evil as if it is good. It is not pretending you don't see the wrong-doing of others. It is not acting as if mistreatment or injustice or the breaking of a

relationship isn't disappointing or even heart-breaking. It is not ignoring the suffering of sickness and loss. In other words, contentment does not obscure or deny reality, but neither is it dependent on anything outside us to exist in its fullest possible form within us.

III. Conclusion – Quotes

- A. "If we have not quiet in our minds, outward comfort will do no more for us than a golden slipper on a gouty foot." John Bunyan (*Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis characterized by recurrent attacks of a red, tender, hot and swollen joint. Pain typically comes on rapidly*).
- B. "Contentment is not escape from the battle, but rather an abiding peace and confidence in the midst of the battle." Warren W. Wiersbe
- C. "Contentment, then, is the product of a heart resting in God. It is the soul's enjoyment of that peace that passes all understanding. It is the outcome of my will being brought into subjection to the Divine will. It is the blessed assurance that God does all things well, and is, even now, making all things work together for my ultimate good." Arthur W. Pink