

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 6:6-11** . . . 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. [11] But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

B. Today, we will focus on two areas related to coupling the pursuit of contentment to your pursuit of godliness.

1. **First**, we will focus on the great gains that come from combining our pursuit of godliness with a pursuit of contentment, and the great losses that occur when we allow discontentment to be a deciding factor any of our choices and behavior.

2. **Second**, we will spend some time looking at how we can make progress in moving toward godly contentment.

C. In preparation for today's study, I want to remind you of a few truths from last Sunday.

1. True, lasting contentment is not based on anything outside of ourselves.

2. True, lasting contentment does not come to us spontaneously or automatically. It must be chosen and pursued.

3. Godliness with contentment begins with being grateful and 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, and confidence in God's love.

D. 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. The **great gain** of godliness coupled with contentment is experienced in at least three significant and obvious ways.

- a. **First**, combining contentment with godliness frees you from the kind of thinking and desires that motivate you to pursue happiness, gratification, and a sense of well-being in self-serving, self-destructive, and relationship destructive ways.
 - (1) In other words, you lose the motivation to live a double life – with one part of yourself seeking to please God and love those around, while another part of yourself is set on pleasing yourself by pursuing whatever you believe will gratify or relieve your discontentment.
 - (2) Therefore, the first great gain is to no longer driven by discontent into foolish, irrational, selfish, and self-gratifying choices and behavior.
 - b. **Second**, choosing to be content with who God is, what He is doing, and what He is allowing makes it much easier to live a godly life – because you no longer have to fight against your own selfish and sinful choices and behavior driven by discontentment. This in turn increases your intimacy with God and brings greater blessings from God. Surely, these gains **are great gains!**
 - c. **Third**, godliness accompanied by contentment produces an inward peace and an ongoing joy that are independent of your circumstances. This enables you to have patience without irritation, sorrow without despair, and suffering without self-pity. Can there be greater gains than these?
2. In contrast to the great gains from godliness accompanied by contentment, we suffer **great loss** when we harbor discontentment. The immediate context makes this clear in **vs 9-10**.
- a. [9] But those who **want to** get rich (*because they are discontent with what they have and think more wealth will bring greater happiness*) 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** (*a longing that is driven by discontentment with what we have*) have wandered away from the faith (*an immeasurable loss*) and pierced themselves with many griefs (*by their own choices they bring more troubles into their life – and in so doing make their life worse instead of better*).
 - b. **James 4:1-3** affirms the destructive power of discontentment by showing how it breeds conflict, damages or ends relationships, and promotes hostility. [1] What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures (*desires*

*that urge you to gratify them) that **wage war** in your members (the desires that breed discontent fight for attention)? [2] You lust and do not have; so you commit murder (your discontent results in damaged or broken relationships). You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel (your discontent results in angry, and even hostile arguments). You do not have because you do not ask (instead of turning to God, you choose to turn to things outside yourself to gratify your desires). [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures (you want God to make you happy and content by gratifying your desires for more).*

B. **Romans 1:18-32** reminds us that discontentment is not only tied to our physical desires and the things of this world, it is also tied to ingratitude toward God. Therefore, in order to better see the cost of discontentment, we will look at discontentment with God.

1. **Discontentment in relation to God** is in essence, unhappiness with, or dissatisfaction with and disapproval of what God is doing, what God is allowing, and what it seems God isn't doing but could do if He would.
2. For the Christian, discontentment always starts with God, because God is, ultimately, our provider, our protector, our healer, and the only one with sufficient wisdom and power to prevent or stop or correct anything that we think should not have happened or should not be happening to us – or to anyone else in the world.
 - a. Therefore, because of God's position and power, we hold Him ultimately responsible when bad things happen or when bad things continue on without any remedy in sight.
 - b. However, our unhappiness or dissatisfaction with God is not only of our own making, the devil is also involved.
 - (1) As you recall, he was put out of heaven because he was not content with the position God had given him. And after being put out of heaven, he began spreading his evil by actively promoting discontentment within the human realm.
 - (2) In other words, we are not **only** up against our own selfish and foolish discontentment with God and life, we are also up against the devil's efforts to tempt and influence us toward discontentment – just as he did with Eve, who, once she realized she could have more than God was making available, gave in to discontentment, took the forbidden fruit, and ate.

- (3) Adam and Eve are the first human examples of the great cost brought about by discontentment with God – for whatever they gained, their loss was far greater.
 - (4) Consider: they lost their life in the Garden, their firstborn son murdered their second born son, and their propensity for selfishness and sin has afflicted mankind ever since.
 - c. Therefore, I urge you to believe that regardless of where your dissatisfaction with God and disapproval of His ways originates, it always leads to bad outcomes.
3. The same is true regarding **discontentment in relation people**.
- a. But before going further, I want to remind you that godly contentment in relation to people does not mean you approve of their bad behavior, or that you cannot openly and clearly disapprove of what they are doing.
 - (1) Godly contentment does not mean that you don't feel the pain when mistreated or that your life is not more difficult because of other people's bad behavior.
 - (2) Godliness with contentment does not mean you have to be happy with shallow or damaged or broken relationships, or that you haven't lost something precious when a parent or spouse or child or friend turns against you.
 - (3) Godliness with contentment in relation to people means living with the disappointments and pain of people acting bad without losing your trust in God's goodness, your dependence on God's faithfulness, your commitment to godliness and love, the inward peace that comes from God and godly living, and the joy of the Lord that remains joy in spite of the circumstances.
 - b. However, this is supposed to be about the great cost or loss that comes to us, our character, our Christianity, and our relationships from discontentment in relation to people.
 - (1) Consider: discontentment with people drives such things as ungodly anger, nagging, sarcasm, abusive speech, undue criticism, efforts to control, refusal to get involved in conflict resolution, unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness, jealousy, hostility, shallow or damaged or broken relationships, adultery, divorce, and murder.
 - (2) If you consider the damage you have to do to your character, your ways of thinking, and your attitudes just to participate in these things, and if you consider the damage you do to

your relationships with those near and dear, then it becomes clear that you are inflicting yourself with a great loss.

- c. Sadly, discontentment doesn't stop with God or people. We can be discontent with life in general, or with specific areas of life. This kind of discontentment seems to result in such things as alcoholism, drug addiction, video gaming, constantly doing something on your cell phone, searching Amazon for the next good deal, and other such things as these.
4. The point of all this is, godliness when accompanied by contentment is great gain, and godliness with discontentment results in great loss.
 - a. The reality is, we have brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of it either. Therefore, let us pursue and nurture godly contentment so that we are satisfied with food, clothing, and shelter.
 - b. And should we lack any of these, let go even further and pursue the kind of contentment that is satisfied with God, himself, and God alone – so that regardless of what we have or don't have, we are at peace and have a joy that driven by our relationship with God, and not our circumstances.
 - c. Though you may not reach this level of contentment in this life, I urge you to press on, because whatever level of contentment you attain brings with it great gain.
- C. I said at the beginning of today's teaching that we would spend some time looking at how we can add contentment to our pursuit of godliness.
 1. To gain godly contentment you must work at being **grateful for** what you have, and **satisfied with** what you have, regardless of what you don't have.
 2. Therefore, nurturing a mindset of gratefulness is vital. And to do this, you must work at keeping a balanced perspective – which means seeing both the good and the bad, rather than becoming so focused on the bad that you overlook the good.
 - a. It is true, life can become so miserable and people so unloving that it can seem as if there is no good in your life.
 - b. Yet if you are alive, and if you belong to God, you at least have God as your loving Father, the constant presence of God, the work of God in bringing good out of every situation, the avenue of prayer and communion with God, and the promise of eternal life with God. What is better than this?

- (1) Added to these great goods is food, shelter, and clothing, transportation, an income producing job, people who love you – and I could go on. The point is, keep a balanced perspective so that you do not lose gratefulness for what you do have.
3. To gain godly contentment you must work at making choices and behaving in ways that help you act as if you are content with what you have. This in turn helps you learn to be contentment which in turn brings about true contentment.
 - a. However, you cannot learn to be content with what you have without turning away from those things and situations that feed your desire for more.
 - b. This requires turning a deaf ear to the next thing that is popular in society. It requires putting a stop to envy and covetousness. And it requires thinking biblically – for example, daily reminding yourself that where your treasure is, there your heart is, and that you want God to be your treasure, not the next possession or experience you can have.
 4. To gain godly contentment you must work at trusting that what God is doing or allowing is for your good and for the good of those around you. This requires a daily decision to believe God is good, to rest in His goodness, and when tempted to distrust God, a reaffirming of your commitment to trust Him – not just in word, but also in deed.
 5. To gain godly contentment you must work at being willing to accept and patiently live with people who disappoint you, hurt you, fail you, unfairly criticize you, and even mistreat you.
 - a. Of course, this does not mean approving or going along with their bad behavior. But it does mean maintaining your godliness, love, patience, compassion, mercy, inward peace and joy in the face of their bad behavior.
 6. To gain godly contentment you must work at humility – humility toward God, humility toward those around you, and humility in dealing with life's circumstances – because humility is built on a mindset that is committed to serving rather than being served, to loving rather than being loved, and to the good of God and others rather than the good of self over the good of God and others.
 7. Finally, to gain godly contentment requires much prayer, the personal application of Bible truths, honest self-evaluation, the pursuit of godliness in every area of life, unending perseverance, and probably for most of us, the help of other believers.