

# 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. Prayer

## II. The mindset, values, and humility required for godly contentment

A. [7] For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

1. This is not the only place in scripture that addresses the fact that we come into this world with nothing and we leave with nothing – which means there is probably more to this statement than a first or second reading reveals. Therefore, we will look at four other scripture portions with this focus in order to get a clearer picture of what God is conveying here in **1 Timothy 6**.

2. **Job 1:13-21**. In a short span of time, Job was told: (1) that the Sabeans had taken his oxen and donkeys and killed his farm workers, (2) that fire had come from heaven killing his sheep and the servants who cared for them, (3) that the Chaldeans had raided his camels and killed the servants who cared for them, (4) and that his children were at their oldest brother's house when a great wind caused the house to collapse, killing all of them. In response, Job stood up, tore his robe, shaved his head, then fell to the ground and worshiped God, saying, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

a. Job's response points to the mindset and the humility that is required to remain content with what God is or isn't doing,

especially when you or a loved one is bearing the cost or feeling the pain or enduring the hardship.

(1) Notice, the first thing Job does is acknowledges that it is not he, himself, or his is plight that matters most, but God who matters most.

(2) Job goes on to acknowledge that he came into life with nothing, he can't take anything with him when he leaves, and what he has or doesn't have is God's doing, not his.

(3) Finally, Job acknowledges that God is good!

- b. The reality is, the things of this world are of no value by comparison to a humble, intimate, and secure relationship with God – even when life is at its worst. Why? Because true safety, true security, true well-being comes from God, not riches, possessions, systems, or governments.
  - c. Therefore, the mindset and the humility that we need to develop in order to acquire godly contentment are built on the fact that (1) God is supreme – not us, (2) that God is perfectly good and seeks the good of all – while we are prone to selfishly seek our own good, and (3) that God owes us nothing while we owe God everything.
3. **Ecclesiastes 5:10-16.** While commenting on the folly of wanting to be rich, the writer of Ecclesiastes said, “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.” He went on to say that a rich person comes into this world, naked, and he leaves it in the same condition. Then he said, “He (*that is, a rich person*) will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.” And finally he said, “This also is a grievous evil – exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?”
- a. To toil for the wind is to toil for what is fleeting or temporary, that is, what is here today and gone tomorrow.
  - b. According to this context, there are two major problems with things that are fleeting or temporary.
    - (1) **First**, whatever contentment gained from them is also fleeting or temporary.
    - (2) **Second**, you cannot take it with you when you die. In other words, it does you no good in the life to come.
  - c. Only what lasts forever can satisfy forever. And among the things that last forever with the power to satisfy forever is God,

fellowship with God, the provision and protection of God, and the kingdom of God.

- d. The mindset required for contentment as promoted here in **Ecclesiastes 5** is that though earthly gains may satisfy for a time, they can never be the basis for godly contentment. Therefore, it is futile to seek contentment from the things in and of this world – for true contentment is only found in God.
4. **Deuteronomy 8:11-17.** Before they entered the Promised Land, God gave this warning to the Israelites: “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God” which will become evident by your not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes. “When you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,” saying in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’”
- a. God is warning us that the quest to gain contentment from worldly riches and possessions easily leads to pride – and pride is the enemy of God, godliness, and godly contentment. Humility is what is required to find contentment in God regardless of the circumstances.
  - b. According to this portion of scripture, what is required for a proper humility toward God is seeing God as our provider and protector so that we attribute all that we have and are to His activity on our behalf, rather than attributing any of it to ourselves as if we did it without God.
  - c. Is God your provider and protector in reality, or in word only? In other words, do you say He is yet look to riches, possessions, and other things the world offers to assure yourself that you have enough of what you want or believe you need?
  - d. The reality is, you cannot know true humility in relation to God being your provider and protector until you actually think and live as those who are depending on Him to be their provider and protector.
  - e. In essence, we are relatively rich Christians living in a land of plenty. How can we nurture the mindset, attitudes, and humility that enables us to genuinely depend on God for what we need, and gives heartfelt thanks to God for what we have?

- f. Though the answer to this question may not be the same for all of us, I can assure you that you are missing out on one of the better parts of knowing God if you have not made an honest effort to seek an answer and go in that direction. The final scripture we are going to look at provides part of the answer.
5. **Matthew 6:19-21.** Jesus gave this advice about dependable and lasting financial security: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; [21] **for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**”
- a. The mindset Jesus is promoting is a mindset built on what we value – as revealed by what we treasure – and in this context in relation to financial security.
    - (1) For example, do you treasure financial security because of the safe, contented feelings it provides when you look into the possible needs you may have in the future?
    - (2) Or, do you treasure the worry-free contentment that comes from feeling secure because you are seeking **first** God’s kingdom and His righteousness knowing that all the things you need will then be provided by Him (**Matthew 6:33**). *Seeking first doesn’t mean seeking exclusively, but rather as a priority, thus demonstrating your trust in Him to be your provider.*
    - (3) The two primary problems with earthly financial security are:
      - (a) It pulls you into a relationship with the world that stands in the way and works against your relationship with God.
      - (b) And it can be fleeting and undependable at times.
  - b. The reality is, your heart is fixed on what you value. What you value is what you treasure. What you treasure the most, you look to the most for security, well-being, happiness, fulfillment, and contentment. If you treasure anything more than you treasure God, you will look there rather than to God to satisfy your desires and give you a sense of contentment.
6. This brings us back to **vs 7**, “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.”

- a. Whatever is gained from the physical realm stays on earth when we die. It is temporary, and though it may be useful for life here, it cannot bring godly contentment into our life.
  - b. In addition, nothing from the earthly realm can do us any good in the next life – be it heaven or hell. This is supported by Jesus’ parable about the rich man and the poor, beggar Lazarus (**Luke 16:22-25**).
  - c. Therefore, I urge you to consider that coming into the world with nothing and leaving with nothing at least implies that the greatest gift of all is the gift of life, for being born into this world opens the door to knowing God, belonging to God, being loved by God, enjoying fellowship with God, and spending eternity with God.
  - d. When we pass from this life into the next, the only thing we can take with us is ourselves, and the depth and quality of our relationship with God.
- B. [8] If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.
- 1. The essential message here is about what we need – as represented by food and covering – be the covering clothes or shelter.
  - 2. However, what we need is not a universally fixed entity.
    - a. Small town, country life is different from big city life. Farming is different from factory work. Desert conditions are different from rain forest conditions. Life along the equator is different from life where Eskimos live.
    - b. Therefore, we need to be realistic and flexible when considering what we need and what we ought to be content with.
      - (1) In the same way, we need to be realistic and flexible when talking to those around us about what they need and what they ought to be content with.
      - (2) But we also need to be on guard against any and every temptation to want more than we need, or to be envious of those who have more.
- C. We will end today with two scriptures related to contentment
- 1. **Luke 3:11-14**, In response to those coming to be baptized, John said, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” [12] And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” [13] And John said to them, “Collect no more than what you

have been ordered to.” [14] Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And John said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and **be content** with your wages.”

2. **Romans 8:31-32, 35, 37-39**, If God is for us, who (*can successfully stand*) against us? [32] He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with [His own son] freely give us all things? [35] Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword (*all things that seem to indicate God is absent or doesn't care*)? [37] But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. [38] For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Are you trusting God to be your primary source of security, well-being, provision, protection, and love? Are you **grateful for** what you have, regardless of what you don't have? Do you humbly acknowledge that what you have you have because of God goodness?