

1 Timothy 6 Godliness with Contentment

1 Timothy 6: Introduction

- Contentment: satisfaction or ease of mind (from *Dictionary.com*)
- Did anyone have to teach you how to complain?
- Has anyone here ever had to teach their children to complain?
- Lesson: Discontent comes to us naturally; contentment does not.
- We have to train ourselves to be content, satisfied, at ease with our situation.

1 Timothy 6: Outline

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Counsel to Slaves 6:1-2

- Paul is not so much defending slavery as an institution, but dealing with the realities of his time and place.
- In the Roman world as many as a third to a half of the people in some places were slaves.
- Many of these slaves eventually received their freedom and became Roman citizens. (Felix in Acts 24 is an extreme case as he was a former slave who later became a governor.)
- The New Testament doesn't attack this cultural norm head on.
- Slavery was made illegal once most people accepted Christian values regarding our basic equality before God.
- For the present, we have this encouragement to be the best workers we can be wherever we are right now.
- Also see the study notes from Col 3:18 – 4:1.

The False Prosperity Gospel 6:3-10

- There is a religious "prosperity gospel" – a false view of the Christian faith that teaches the very thing Paul condemns in v. 5.
- There is also a secular false gospel that ignores the spiritual altogether and encourages us to find our happiness in wealth or material possessions.
- AKA: "He who dies with the most toys wins."
- Don't *buy into* this. (Groans allowed.)
- See Luke 16:13
- *"Many people give lip service to the maxim that 'money can't buy you happiness', but most give life-service to the hope that it just might, after all." (N.T. Wright)*
- The answer to greed is contentment.
- See the following:
 - Hebrews 13:5
 - Philippians 4:11-13
- Take note that it is not money in itself that is the problem. It is the love of money.
- Some people have the ability to gain plenty of earthly riches without succumbing to greed.

Counsel to Timothy 6:11-16

- 6:11 Six things to pursue instead of pride and the love of money:
 - *Righteousness* integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting
 - *Godliness* reverence, respect, piety
 - *Faith* belief, conviction, persuasion, also fidelity or faithfulness
 - *Love* this is “agape” love.
 - *Patience* cheerful endurance
 - *Gentleness* humility, mildness or meekness
- *“If your theology doesn’t change your behavior it will never change your destiny.” (Charles Spurgeon)*
- 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith.
- Living the Christian life takes effort. While Christ’s yoke is easy and His burden is light, it’s still a yoke – and a yoke implies that some kind of work is getting done.
- Paul here describes it as a fight. It’s a joyful victorious fight, but it still involves rejecting the values of this world and a willingness to identify with Christ when that is not fun.
- 6:13-16 Keep this commandment.
- Timothy was not to allowed to give up until Jesus Christ appeared.
- Have you made that kind of commitment?
- You will never be able to do so in your own strength or ability.
- But by trusting in God to strengthen you when you are weary and ready to cave in, you can be as faithful as Timothy was.
- The Bible doesn’t give us any information about the death of Timothy.
- Tradition tells us that it took place in Ephesus.
- At an annual festival procession in honor of pagan gods, Timothy took the opportunity to preach Jesus to them.
- An angry mob fell on him in anger, and murdered him with stones and clubs.
- Timothy remained faithful to the very end.
- While we are on the subject, what would it take to get you to give up the fight of faith?
 - Discouragement?
 - Temptation?
 - A bad day at work?
 - Bad news about a family member or friend?
 - Peer pressure?
 - Or is your relationship with Jesus firm?
- 6:15-16 If we understand who Jesus really is we will be better equipped to fight the good fight of faith.
- He is not the baby in the manger any more.
- Let’s read 6:15-16 slowly and carefully one more time.

Counsel to the Rich 6:17-19

- In this present age Riches now provide no guarantee of riches in the age to come.
- Not to be haughty Pride is usually a very real temptation to those who are wealthy. It can be easy to think you deserve all you have.
- Not to trust in uncertain riches Riches give the illusion of certainty. Only Jesus provides a firm and lasting foundation.

- Let them do good, ... be rich in good works Rich people can often do more good than others because they have the means to do so.
- Be ready to give They may be able to give more than others – a very good investment.
- Be willing to share Those lacking in means can benefit from the wealthier brother or sister sharing what they have.
- Read 6:19 again to see the ultimate result.

Last Words on Gnosticism 6:20-21

- Knowledge in v.20 is *gnosis*, from which the *Gnostics* got their name.
- At this point this diverse group would have been in their very early stages.
- They practiced a strange, incongruous mix of:
 - Christianity
 - Jewish legalism
 - Greek philosophy
 - Eastern mysticism

- There is still a lot of nonsense out there that the Christian really needs to avoid.
- There are old temptations to fall back into.
- There are new winds of doctrine blowing through the church that we may find attractive.
- Don't let anything cause you to stray from a biblical faith or a life of devotion to Jesus.

Conclusions: Godliness with Contentment

- Contentment: satisfaction or ease of mind (from *Dictionary.com*)
- Contentment does not rule out improving your position; it does rule out anxiety over it.
- Four forms of contentment in this chapter:
 - Contentment with our work
 - Contentment with our income level
 - Contentment with a biblical life
 - Contentment with a biblical faith
- A final word to those who are poor:
- We can allow ourselves to make a distinction between the Lord's poor and the devil's poor.
- The devil's poor are those who are poor through their own laziness, foolishness or debauchery.
- This passage has little to say to them except "Repent and turn to Jesus."
- The Lord's poor try with all their might to be faithful and work hard – yet things still come out badly.
- To these we say the following:
 - Don't give up.
 - Be content – though this will not come naturally.
 - Stay faithful to Jesus.
 - Your rewards may not be seen in this present life but they will be obvious to all in the age to come.

Luke 16:13(NKJV)

“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Hebrews 13:5(NKJV)

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Philippians 4:11-13(NKJV)

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

I know how to be abased, 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.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.