



First Timothy

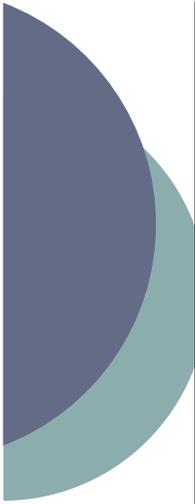
Contentment

Satisfied with Enough

I Timothy 6:6-8

Lesson Twenty-Nine

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum



First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

Contentment—I Timothy 6:6-8

Do you ever wish you had more stuff? That shouldn't make you feel guilty. As long as we don't wish for something that belongs to someone else (Old Testament word, "coveting") it is not wrong to wish for something. What gets us into trouble is feeling like we have to have extra things to be happy, or content.

Paul has just told Timothy that it is wrong to use false godliness to get money. Some might describe that with the old phrase "ill gotten gain." Timothy, nor any other minister, should expect to get rich from sharing God's word and God's love. In our Scripture verses today, Paul told Timothy what is true "great gain." Read I Timothy 6:6-8.

It might be good to understand at the beginning of our study that there is a difference in being content from the inside and getting stuff from the outside that makes us feel better for a while.

Paul used a word here that was very popular in his day. The men who did a lot of thinking and studying life, called philosophers, used the same word, "content." It meant not having to depend on the world outside. You can be happy or content in yourself. For these persons who spent a lot of time trying to understand humans and how we think and live, being happy was something that, if it didn't come from inside you, was just temporary and would soon be gone.

The thing that Paul lists as what we should truly want is godliness and contentment. Just being content, or satisfied with yourself was not enough for Paul. Paul took the idea further. He said that to be truly content, or satisfied, you should be godly. Does Paul expect us to be gods? No, absolutely not! But, he does encourage us to be godly. That means that we must try our best to live just like God would live on earth. Do we have any guidance as to how to do that, or an example of how that is done? Yes, absolutely. We have the perfect example. Jesus, God's Son, lived perfectly just as God wants us to live. You have to look no further than God's Word, the Bible. He had just said that godliness was not a way to make money. Here he said that godliness is the way to find contentment or live a comfortable life...a spiritual thing. To be really rich, live a godly life and you can be fully satisfied without a lot of money.

Paul goes on to say that we came into this world with nothing. Your parents may have had some things, but you didn't. He said you can't take anything with you when you leave this world. When we die, there is absolutely no way that we can take a suitcase with us. Is Paul saying that we should remain poor and without any possessions all our life? No. Is he saying that being rich is bad? No. What he's saying is that the presence, or absence, of riches isn't what gives life, nor does it make us happy or satisfied with our life. Wealth is a temporary thing and we should see it just like that.

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Then he said the most important thing. “If we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that’s enough.” (I Timothy 6:8 *The Message*) What is enough in God’s eyes? Whatever it takes to care for our basic needs in life is enough.

A philosopher named Epicurus, who lived 300 years before Paul, said, “To whom little is not enough, nothing is enough.” What a smart statement. He was saying the same thing that Paul was saying to Timothy. If you can’t be happy, or satisfied with the basic needs of life, then you won’t be satisfied with many more things. It is pretty much a fact of life that those who have a lot just want more. And, that is because they are focused on getting comfortable using outside things, not getting comfortable within themselves.

When you think about it, true happiness from outside ourselves, comes from relationships. You can have many, many things, but if you have no one with which to share them, you don’t truly enjoy them. If we don’t have friendship and love, we can never be truly content. You can be as rich as anyone, but that doesn’t make you less lonely. Paul, and all Christians, know that satisfaction isn’t in things. People in your life and God in your life make the difference.

Jesus had a lot to say about this. (See Matthew 6:24-34) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus ended a discussion of this very subject with “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (godliness) and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

When we die we take two things with us. We go ourselves to meet God. All that is with us is in us. The second thing that we take with us is our relationship with God. That relationship is the only one that goes into eternity. So, when we appear before God, we will say to God either, “You are in my heart.” or, “I had no relationship with you in my life, so you are not part of my eternity.”

This is an important lesson...not depending on stuff to make us happy. Getting, rather than giving, is the key to being comfortable with yourself. Do you want to be content in life? A good relationship with God, and being like Him with others, will guarantee that.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Lesson Goal: To show students the way to true contentment, satisfaction, happiness.

Scripture Memory: “**But Godliness with contentment is great gain. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.**” I Timothy 6:6, 8

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

Contentment—I Timothy 6:6-8

- >Who showed us how to live like God would live on earth?

- >He had just said that godliness was not a way to make _____.

- >To be really rich, live a godly life and you can be fully _____ without a lot of _____.

- >The presence, or absence, of riches isn't what gives _____, nor does it make us happy in life or _____ with our life.

- >What is enough in God's eyes?

- >Why do those who have a lot just want more?

- >What two things do we take with us when we die?

- >Do you want to be _____ in life? A good relationship with _____, and being like Him with _____, will guarantee that.

For Memory: “But Godliness with contentment is great gain. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.” I Timothy 6:6, 8

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.