

8/5/01

**Be Godly With Contentment**

**1Tim. 6:6-8**

The things that people do to obtain money and the things that are done through the power of money stagger the imagination.

1. Women sell their bodies.
2. Individuals kill for a few hundred dollars.
3. People marry to obtain wealth.
4. People sacrifice their families for a lucrative job.

Money is a needful commodity but one that has destroyed many a person.

The sixth and last division of the epistle deals with the personal counsel to the minister focusing on the gospel message of godliness and contentment of material gain. 1Tim. 6:3-19

Reflect on the progression of the epistle as Paul has been communicating with Timothy.

- I. Chapter one dealt with the proclamation of truth in order to prevent and stop false doctrine.
- II. Chapter two dealt with the preparation for the proclamation of the truth, prayer and holy living.

- III. Chapter three dealt with the qualifications for the church offices of bishops and deacons.
- IV. Chapter four dealt with the perversion of truth through deceptive doctrine.
- V. Chapter five dealt with the practical counsel regarding various church members. 5:1-6:2
- VI. Chapter six deals with personal counsel to the minister regarding the true profit of godliness in contrast to material riches. 6:3-19

Paul is going to describe the godly, who stand in contrast to the ungodly teachers just described and give the proper view of godliness in relationship to material gain by three principles.

- I. The principle of godliness is based on attitude. Vs. 6
  - II. The principle of godliness is based on fundamental evidence, giving proper perspective. Vs. 7
  - III. The principle of godliness is to be lived out in life with contentment. Vs. 8
- I. The principle of godliness is based on attitude.**  
\* “Now godliness with contentment is great gain”. Vs. 6

- A.** The foundation of godliness is based on the attitude of who we are not what we do.
- 1.** The godly believer stands in sharp contrast to the ungodly false teachers.  
Vs. 3-5
  - 2.** The godly believer does not do things to be godly but he yields and depends on Christ to be made godly.
    - a.** He is identified with consenting to the healthy words of Jesus in contrast to the false teachers.
    - b.** He has a character in line with the doctrine according to godliness in contrast to the false teachers.
    - c.** He has the mind of Christ confirming what Jesus taught in the “beatitudes” and “the relation between the vine and the branches”. Math. 5:1-12, Jn. 15:3-4
  - 3.** The word godliness “eusebeia” is a key word in the epistle which means piety and holiness of the inner life not mere outward formality.
    - a.** The word appears fifteen times in the New Testament.
    - b.** Ten of the fifteen appear in the Pastoral Epistles, eight in First Timothy, once in Second Timothy and once in Titus. 1Tim. 2:2, 3:16, 4:7, 8, 6:3, 5, 6, 11

- c.** This godliness is made possible only through the “the mystery of godliness” Jesus Christ who was made flesh.
  - 4.** The godly believer is a son or daughter of God and thereby has a compelling conviction to honor God.
    - a.** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” Jn. 1:12
    - b.** My attitude of who I am will manifest what I do and how I live!
- B.** The godliness in a person’s life is affirmed and confirmed by contentment.
- 1.** The word contentment “autarkeia” means to be self-sufficient, having no need or dependency from external aid.  
\* The word was a favorite of the Stoics to represent the virtue of being self-sufficient having power over his own will and desires etc.
  - 2.** The word is used by Paul to describe the self-sufficiency of the believer by the sufficiency of Who enables and empowers the believer to live out life in whatever economic situation they find themselves in without murmuring or forgetting God.

- a. The word appears only one other time in the New Testament and it is used to describe God's sufficient grace in the life of the believers to give financially because they are self-sufficient by the stewardship of their financial affairs. 2Cor. 9:8
  - b. The verb form is used by Paul to declare his contentment in whatever situation God allow him to be in. Phil. 4:11, 12-19
  - 3. The godly believer does not think that godliness is a means or the process to reach the goal of material gain, to enrich oneself. Vs. 5b
- C. The quality of godliness with contentment is great gain.
- 1. Godliness with contentment is of greater value than riches with ungodliness.
    - a. The word gain “porismos” means profit or acquisition.
    - b. The material gain of a person does not affect their godliness but in fact it can be a liability. 1Tim. 6:9-10
  - 2. Godliness without contentment is a contradiction to the doctrine according to godliness. 1Tim. 6:3c
    - a) A lack of contentment financially accuses God of being unjust and unfair.

- b) A lack of contentment financially reveals one's idol and treasure. Matt. 6:21
- 3 Riches are not evidence of godliness nor should the evidence of riches conclude that a person is not godly.
  - a) One can be rich and be godly.
  - b) One can be poor and be ungodly.
  - c) One's attitude reveals one's perspective of true value.
- 3. When contentment begins to be lost, so will godliness which becomes our greatest loss.
  - a. When good things increase, those that consumed them increase. Eccl. 5:11a-b
  - b. “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in **exchange** for his soul?” Matt. 16:26

### Illustration

There is an old Persian fable of a hen, a mouse, and a rabbit who lived together in a little house, They were happy and content because they shared all the work. The rabbit cooked the meals. The chicken carried in the firewood. The mouse brought the water from the nearby brook, each did his work faithfully and contentedly.

But one day while the hen was going to the forest for wood a busybody crow asked her what

she was doing. When told, the crow complained that the hen was doing the hardest part of the work and that the rabbit and mouse were making an easy-mark of her. Try as she would, the thought kept rankling in the hen's mind, and when she returned home with her load of wood and her still heavier load of discontent, she cackled: "I do the hardest work ever. We ought to change our jobs."

Discontent spread, as you know, and immediately the rabbit and the mouse also thought they had been doing the hardest work. They agreed to change jobs: the mouse would cook, the rabbit would gather the firewood.

As the rabbit hopped into the woods, a big fox trailed him, caught him, and ate him. The chicken put the pail into the creek, but the current pulled the pail into the creek, down under the chicken with it. The mouse wondered why they did not come back, but not for long. While he was sitting on the edge of the big pot of soup, he lost his balance and fell in. Through discontent all three not only lost their happiness but their very lives. #747

### **Application**

1. My attitude towards godliness will be in direct proportion to my relationship and my walking in the light of Christ. 1Jn. 1:7

\* But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the

blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

2. My attitude of contentment which affirms and confirms godliness in my life should never be confuse with complacency or laziness. 2Thes. 3:7-8

- \* For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you
- a. Complacency is a comfortable life-style without taking full advantage of the opportunities available to better oneself or be a good steward of God, being lazy and indifferent.
- b. Contentment is a satisfaction and gratefulness to God for what He has provided and being a steward to live within one's means, without murmuring or complaining.
- c. My attitude of contentment should not be to exalt poverty nor is Paul saying that being economically poor guarantees godliness, for some of the most ungodly individuals are poor ones because they live in a constant attitude of covetousness and jealousy.

***The principle of godliness is based on my attitude!***

## II. The principle of godliness is based on fundamental evidence, giving proper perspective.

\* “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out”. Vs. 7

- A. The first fundamental evidence that should give me perspective about the true value of material gain is the fact that when I was born I didn't bring anything with me.
1. The creation of my person was a sovereign act of God through the instrument of my parents. Gen. 1:28, Ps. 139:13-16
  2. The entrance of my life to this world was in complete nakedness. Job. 1:21
  3. The acquirement of all things through life is in relation and connection to other people, therefore I owe in part what I have to others which is part of the grace and goodness of God.
  4. Jesus spoke more about money and hell more than heaven itself and he declared, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matt. 6:19-21

- B. The second fundamental evidence that should give me perspective about the true value of material gain is the fact that I can not take anything with me when I die.
1. Things are temporal at best, either through their loss, decay or by my death.
    - a. There is a severe evil *which* I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt. But those riches perish through misfortune; When he begets a son, *there is* nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand. Eccl. 5:13-15
    - b. Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not descend after him. Ps. 49:16-17
  2. The equal state of a person's ability to retain material gain is marked by the brief transitory state of this life as he or she begins with nothing and ends with the same, nothing.

- \* The phrases “brought nothing into” and “carry nothing out” contain the same verbal root.
- a. Things are of value only in this world not the next.
- b. Things are not to be the goal of my life or the source of my anxiety. Phil 4:6-7
- c. Those on a quest to be rich hurt and ruin their lives. 1Tim. 6:9
- d. The love of God is to motivate my life not the love of money. 1Tim. 6:10
- e. The rich are to not to trust in their riches and always remember to be benevolent storing up riches in heaven. 1Tim. 6:17-19

### **Illustration**

Alexander the Great, we are told, being upon his deathbed, commanded that, when he was carried out forth to the grave, his hands should not be wrapped, as was usual, in the grave cloths, but should be left outside the brier, so that they were empty; that there was nothing in them; He was born to one empire, and the conqueror of another; the possessor while he lived, of two worlds, of the East, and the West, and of the treasures of both, yet now when he was dead could retain not even the smallest portion of these treasures. The poorest beggar and he were at length upon equal term.

#7033

### **Application**

1. As Christians we are to be unconcerned with the goal of amassing things to have a sense of importance or worth as the man who build bigger barns for his riches while ignoring the spiritual riches. Lk. 12:15-21  
\* Individuals attempt at times to cover up their ungodliness with material things as Aninias and Saphira. Acts 5:1-11
2. As you accumulate material possessions you realize that someone is going to benefit from all your labors and there is no guarantee that they are going to appreciate nor be a steward of them. Ecccl. 2:18-21  
\* I have never seen a Hurst towing a U-haul at any funeral!
3. As you obtain more things in life you will discover that it does not quench the desire for more but in fact intensifies it. Prov. 27:20  
\* “Hell and destruction are never full neither are the eyes ever satisfied.”

*The principle of godliness is based on fundamental evidence, giving proper perspective, all enter this world naked and leave taking nothing!*

**III. The principle of godliness is to be lived out in life with contentment.**

\* “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content”. Vs. 8

- A.** The advantage of having the right attitude and proper perspective about the value of material possessions in contrast to godliness is that I can be content having food.
1. The food may not be the most expensive.
  2. The food may not be as good as my neighbors.
  3. The food may not be what I think I deserve.
  4. The food is just what God has provided in His grace and mercy.  
\* Both words are in the plural, appearing only here!
  5. The prayer of contentment. Prov. 8-9  
\* Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches--Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.
  6. An old Roman proverb said, “Money is like sea water, the more you drink the thirstier you get. (Barclay)
- B.** The advantage of having the right attitude and proper perspective about the value of

material possessions in contrast to godliness is that I can be content having clothing.

1. The clothing may not be the latest fashion.
  2. The clothes may not be the name brand.
  3. The clothes may not be abundant in quantity.
  4. The clothes I possess are just what God has provided.  
\* This form of speech is called “synecdoche” when a part is used to represent the whole, food and clothing include the essential things to maintain and support life.
  5. The person who is living for things and possession will not be satisfied. Eccl. 5:10
- C.** The advantage of having the right attitude and proper perspective about the value of material possessions in contrast to godliness is that I can live content.
1. The word is the verb form of the noun form in verse six.
    - a. Notice the tense is the future “we shall be content”.
    - b. Jesus will be faithful, so I must be a steward of my resources that He provides!
  2. This contentment is for the present and the future, a desire that arises from the

reasoning faculties of verse seven not emotions!

3. The word teaches and implies element of stewardship at whatever level we find ourselves in order to be self-sufficient with what God has provided. Phil. 4:11
4. The word teaches and implies that God is ever faithful to provide the most basic things of life, even to the non-believer, for the rain falls on the just and the unjust. Math. 5:45
5. The word teaches that no man can serve two masters and implies that God is in control of my life if I am His child and he knows what I have need of for I am of more value to Him than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Math. 6:24-32
6. The word teaches and implies that the priority of the godly believer is the Kingdom of God not things. Math. 6:33-34

### **Illustration**

Our forefathers did without sugar until the 13th century; without coal fires until the 14th century; without battered bread until the 15th century; without potatoes until the 16th century; without coffee until the 17th century; without pudding until the 18th century; without eggs,

matches, and electricity until the 19th century; without canned goods until the 20th century. #746

\* One of the richest men in the world, oil tycoon Paul Getty, was being interviewed in London. "If you retired now," asked a reporter, "would you say your holdings would be worth a billion dollars?" Getty paced up and down the room, mentally adding. "I suppose so," he said. "But remember, a billion doesn't go as far as it used to." #906

### **Application**

1. There are body needs that God has placed in us called homeostasis, which is the ability or tendency of an organism or a cell to maintain internal equilibrium by adjusting its physiological processes such as our air drive, thirst drive hunger drive and our sex drive which are all legitimate in their God given design in order to be content.
  - a. I need to distinguish between my needs and my greeds!
  - b. I need to spend less than I make!
2. There are emotional needs of the soul that God has designed us with such as the need to love and be loved, laughter, etc.
3. There are Spiritual needs of our spirit that God has created us with to be fulfilled in our relationship with God alone.
  - a. My daily feeding in the word.
  - b. My daily communion in prayer.
  - c. My being used by Him to reach others.

- d. My giving to Him a portion of all He has given to me.
- 4. The make up of man is an inferior trinity, made up of body, soul and spirit but the problem arises when we attempt to satisfy the need with the wrong fulfillment.
  - a. If someone tries to satisfy your thirst drive by a spiritual sermon on your need of God, it will not do, in fact it will frustrate and anger you.
  - b. If you try to satisfy your spiritual need of God apart from Christ by some physical ritual, work or some emotional experience that moves you and seems to satisfy for the moment, you will again thirst spiritually. Jn. 7:37-39

*The principle of godliness is to be lived out in life being content with the basic needs of life!*

### **Conclusion**

Paul has described the godly, who stand in contrast to the ungodly teachers and gave the proper view of godliness in relationship to material gain.

- I. The principle of godliness is based on attitude!
- II. The principle of godliness is based on fundamental evidence of birth and death, giving proper perspective!
- III. The principle of godliness is to be lived out in life with contentment!