



“CONTENTMENT VS. CRAVING”

1 Timothy 6:6-10

Theme: *Godliness is an inestimable & incomparable treasure.*

Introduction: Men struggle with the love of money. People will work crazy hours to gain it. Others will cheat, lie, and steal to have it. Still, some have vast amounts of money – accumulating it because their security is in it. Others, although they make plenty of it, they’ll spend it right away in indulgence, leisure, or comfort. While the Bible never condemns wealth, and states that riches are bestowed by God, loving the gift more than the giver is sin.

What is the greatest gift you have ever received from the Lord? Is it not that inestimable gift found in Christ Jesus – that “pearl of great price” valued above all things? Is it not the powerful grace that enables you to increasingly find conformity to the perfections of Jesus Christ – that to which the believer has been eternally predestined?

Our text today informs us that **“Godliness is an inestimable and incomparable treasure.”** There are three emphases found in these verses that guide our thinking about the distinctions between contentment and craving:

- I. **The Contentment in Godliness – 6:6-8**
 - II. **The Corruption of Greed – 6:9**
 - III. **The Compounding of Grief – 6:10**
- I. **THE CONTENTMENT IN GODLINESS – 6:6-8**
 - A. **The Treasure in Godliness – v. 6**
 1. Having exposed the true motivation of false teachers for their religious zeal, Paul now seeks to show the genuine motivation behind those who are true to Christ and His Word.
 2. He declares: Paul - **“But, godliness actually is a means of great gain ...”**
 3. The term **“but”** shows that the godliness to which he refers in this verse is contrasting the **“godliness”** [εὐσέβεια] pursued by the false teachers.
 4. Whereas their **“godliness”** is a means to a financial benefit, true **“godliness”** is a means to God’s benefit and glory – the **“great gain”** he pursues – ***Philippians 3:7-10.***

5. Hence, the believer committed to the glory of Christ values the increasing conformity to Christ as a means by which Christ is honored.
6. Thus, he is not yearning for more “stuff,” but is characterized as possessing **“contentment”** [αὐτάρκεια] – a term that literally means “self-sufficiency” or the perspective that nothing else is needed to be adequate.
7. A genuine **“godliness”** sees God and His work in our lives as absolutely trustworthy – He is trusted to provide for us everything we need to fulfill His purposes in our lives.
8. The greatest delight is in the riches that are in Christ Jesus – cp. ***Ephesians 3:8; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 11:26.***

B. The Temporality of Possessions – v. 7

1. Paul provides an example of why coveting more wealth is folly when compared to that which we gain in the person of Christ Jesus – **“For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.”**
2. Some of the wealthiest people in history are also of the most hollow – “John D. Rockefeller commented, ‘The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money.’”¹
3. Various places in Scripture, saints who are oriented to the actual meaning of life deflate the value of possessions by certifying how temporal they are – cp. ***Job 1:21; Ecclesiastes 5:15.***
4. Jesus declared our actual treasure is what is gained in heaven – cp. ***Matthew 6:19-20.***
5. Jim Eliot, a missionary slaughtered by hostiles in the jungles of Ecuador declared: “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

C. The Thankfulness for Provisions – v. 8

1. When a believer possesses an eternal perspective on treasure, he can trust the Lord to provide what is needed – **“If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”**
2. When conformity to Christ is something we trust God to achieve in our lives, we trust Him to provide everything – ***Matthew 6:33.***
3. The Lord provides the basic necessities of life – and when materialism has NOT captured our hearts, we are without dissatisfaction for what we do not have, but possess gratitude for God’s faithfulness to meet our needs.
4. Here are some principles to guide us in keeping wealth in proper

¹ MacArthur, p. 252.

perspective:

- a) SOVEREIGNTY – realize that everything belongs to God who distributes it as He wills – 1 Chronicles 29:11-12.
- b) SENTIMENT – appreciate the Lord and love Him more than the things He gives – Matthew 6:19-21.
- c) SENSIBILITY – discern difference between a need to which you look to the Lord to supply and a desire against which one must guard himself of covetousness – James 4:3.
- d) STEWARDSHIP – see possessions as trusts to display our faithfulness to the Lord who gave them – 1 Peter 4:10.
- e) SPENDING – spend less than you make - Proverbs 21:20.
- f) SACRIFICE – give to the Lord to a degree that it keeps you from being able to do something else of lesser value or importance – 2 Corinthians 9:7.

II. THE CORRUPTION OF GREED – 6:9

A. The Inordinate Desire of Avarice

1. There is another contrast provided – *“But, those who want to get rich ...”*
2. This describes the person who makes a definitive, deliberate decision to make wealth that after which one dedicates their lives, ambitions, and efforts.
3. This isn’t a person who knows the continued blessing of the Lord, using good business sense is prospered by the Lord to when they are wealthy –
4. This is the person who allows their desire for wealth to outstrip the glory of God and it becomes an idol to them; serving as the motivation for all they do.
5. The word *“want”* here is [βούλομαι] – meaning their desire causes them to plan life around it as a constant preoccupation – identifying it as the great purpose of life.
6. The present tense, middle voice indicates that this is what constantly motivates their efforts, it is insatiable.
7. This is what the false teachers worked for – their priority was to make money through their faith.

B. The Inevitable Distraction of Avarice

1. When gaining wealth motivates a person, their greed becomes a trap that they fall into and cannot see anything other than the financial gains.

2. Paul says that the *“fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires ...”*
3. There are four distractions that greed produce:
 - a) *“temptations” – [πειρασμός] – enticements to do what is wrong.*
 - b) *“snares” – [παγίς] – something that causes one to be unexpectedly brought under control of what is hostile.*
 - c) *“foolish desires” – [άνόητος] – unintelligent or dull-witted; essentially referring to desires that exclude the will of God.*
 - d) *“harmful desires” – [βλαβερός] – instead of being advantaged by the wealth they pursue, they are ensnared with desires that cause suffering – anxieties, stresses, anger, envy, discontentment, despair, and even suicide.*
4. Contentment is elusive and impossible as one greedy craving leads to another – as a person cannot find satisfaction in something that was not created to fulfill them.

C. The Inescapable Devastation of Avarice

1. The result of such idolatrous abandonment of the One who gives us possessions and we serve the possessions themselves, is One is they *“plunge men into ruin and destruction.”*
2. *“Plunge” [βυθίζω] – means to “sink,” to go beneath the water, describing disastrous and dire consequences that are inescapable – you drown by being dragged to the bottom.*
3. The “water” in which you sink is described as *“ruin and destruction.”*
 - a) *“ruin” [ὄλεθρος] – although a fairly broad term for ruin, it often refers to the devastation of one’s body – [2 Thessalonians 1:9](#).*
 - b) *“destruction” [ἀπώλεια] – This term refers to the devastation brought to one’s soul – cp. [Hebrews 10:39](#).*
4. The sin of greed and its attending desires cause a person to be immersed in disaster from which no recovery is found.

III. THE COMPOUNDING OF GRIEF – 6:10

A. The Proceeds from Avarice

1. A general principle is found here – often misquoted – *“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil ...”*
2. *“love of money” [φιλαργυρία] – refers to an affection for silver – and often describes a miser to sees every dollar as independently worth is affections.*

3. **“root”** [ρίζα] – the underground portion of a plant – that source portion of fruit that grows below the surface and cannot be seen, and is very difficult to extract.
4. Such people serve the “almighty dollar” and will cheat, lie, steal, distort justice, withhold, exploit, hoard, and other sins to either gain, or conserve money.
5. **“all sorts of evil”** [κακός] – describes what is socially, morally, or ethically reprehensible ... just bad behavior.
6. Literally, this sentence reads: *“a root for all evil is the love of money.”*
7. Thus, evil of various kinds is the dividend of one’s love for money.

B. The Penalties for Avarice

1. The penalties for such unethical and immoral shenanigans are two-fold: **“... and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”**
2. **“wandered”** [ἀποπλανάω] – is a person who loses their bearings and gets themselves lost, their moral compass breaks, and instead of serving Christ, they **“wander away from the faith.”** – cp. [2 Timothy 4:10](#).
 - a) *This does not mean a person loses their salvation.*
 - b) *It means that if money can replace Christ, one never had Christ – cp. [1 John 2:19](#).*
3. Likely without intention, such people who long for wealth **“Pierce themselves with many griefs.”**
4. **“pierce themselves”** [περιπειρώ] – refers to impaling something on a pike - causing incomparable grief.
5. Loss of friendships, marriages, family, jobs, peace of mind, satisfaction, hope, and perhaps even of one’s very life – they have **“many griefs”** [ὀδύνη] – misery, distress, and mental pain.

So What?

1. Do I consider conformity to Christ [godliness] to be the greatest gain I know?
2. For what am I presently living that is temporal ... that is, what I cannot take with me past the grave?
3. In what ways am I demonstrating to God that I am content?
4. Which of the guiding principles ought to be strengthened most in my

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life? (Sovereignty, Sentiment, Sensibility, Stewardship, Spending, and Sacrifice)