



First Baptist Church Selmer

"ORDER IN THE... CHURCH!" • GODLY CONTENTMENT •
1 TIMOTHY 6:3-10; PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13 • 5/19/2024

MAIN POINT

The importance of church membership leads to a healthy church by holding each member to a higher level of accountability in attendance, giving, prayer, and service.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Name some local or national organizations that people in your group are members of.

What makes an organization worth joining?

Do you think church membership is important? Why or why not?

Naturally, most people are hesitant to accept or join something that they don't fully understand. We are constantly bombarded with infomercials, advertisements, lightning deals, and causes to join. When you couple a natural hesitancy of people with technological advances of communication of information directly in your hands, we can easily sign up for things so people will leave us alone or we simply hit the ignore button.

But what about the church? Church membership is a Biblical truth communicated throughout the New Testament. Most of Paul's letters are written to local churches communicating what and how the church is supposed to function. Even the three Pastoral Epistles of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus communicate how to lead local churches.

FBC Selmer is no different. Our church is made up of church members who have committed themselves to our local church body. With it comes a higher spiritual accountability to attend, give, pray, and serve while also providing the individual members with leadership, support, growth, and opportunity to exercise their spiritual gifts.

If you are interested in becoming a member of FBC Selmer, please speak to one of our pastors to help you along the way.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5.

3 "If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain." (ESV)

How does Paul describe a person who *"teaches a different doctrine"*?

Why is teaching sound doctrine vital for the growth and unity of the local church?

Why is it important that all church members be unified in their beliefs?

A local church is made up of a body of members who are united in a common mission. If that mission is anything other than the Great Commission, then that particular church is just another organization, not a God-honoring, Christ-exalting, Holy Spirit-filled church. The local church should be a place of unity, not one riddled with division. When the main mission is lost, all types of teaching and controversy are sure to follow.

In the church, what danger is a focus on financial gain over godly teaching?

How and why might a church leader be tempted to ignore or misinterpret certain biblical commands to use the church as a means for financial gain?

Give some examples.

Why can godliness never be a means to financial gain?

Paul is building toward a strong message and contrast between contentment and materialism. Our nature is to look out for ourselves. To gain what we can. Whether pastor

or church member or master or slave, God's commands and principles remain. They should never be watered down to suit our fleshly desires.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10.

6 "But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (ESV)

How does godliness relate to contentment?

Why is it important to surround yourself with others who are pursuing godliness as well?

The word "godliness" suggests an attitude focused on God and doing what pleases Him. It depicts a reverence that recognizes that we live each moment before God. The more godly we become the more content we will be. Contentment isn't based on what we have, it's based on who we are. Without a desire to be more and more like the One who created us, we won't experience contentment.

When we struggle to be content, what are we saying about our view of God and our relationship with Him?

What do you think is the "great gain in godliness with contentment" (v. 6)?

How can a desire for money affect people spiritually? In what ways can it cause them to wander away from the faith (v. 10)?

Notice the progression in verse 9 (from temptation to snare to senseless and harmful desires to ruin and destruction). Everyone is tempted, and the temptations in and of themselves are not sins. However, the danger often comes in focusing on these temptations more than God and the opportunity He always provides for a way to stand up under them (see 1 Cor. 10:13). In regards to money, He may do so through an opportunity to generously steward and give away the very things threatening to ensnare us. Otherwise, individuals trapped by their longings for riches become full of senseless

and harmful desires for that which we cannot take into eternity. When life is built on the illusion that wealth can bring contentment, it only plunges us into ruin and destruction.

How can your commitment to a local church help you keep a proper perspective on what is most important?

Money is not evil in and of itself. If we as believers follow the many biblical principles of godliness and stewardship, God will enable us to act as His hands and feet on earth, glorifying His name and accomplishing much good for His kingdom through generosity and eternal investments. However, when we love money, we take our eyes off the One who is of infinitely greater worth. Jesus made it clear that we can either love God or we can love money, but we cannot love both (see Matt. 6:24).

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13 AND 4:19.

11 "Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

19 "And my God will supply every need of yours according to the riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (ESV)

How does Paul's view of contentment compare with the modern world's view of contentment?

Why does God want His children to be content? What is He trying to teach us?

Paul stated that he was content no matter what his circumstances. The word "contentment" Paul used in this passage is a term that describes an inner spirit of freedom and discipline, the ability to conquer circumstances and situations rather than be conquered by them. Because of his faith and trust in Christ, Paul was able to live triumphantly above changing circumstances. In order to find contentment in Christ, we must learn to trust God to meet our needs in the way He knows is best for us.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

We have seen contentment doesn't come from something but from someone. How might this realization change the way you pursue contentment?

How can your group encourage each other to keep the big picture in focus?

What steps could you take this week to deepen your joy in Christ rather than your possessions and money?

PRAYER

Pray that God would help us to see past the lies of the world that tempt us to seek satisfaction in temporary things.

COMMENTARY

| 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-10

6:6. In contrast to false teachers who were motivated by selfish greed (vv. 3-5), Paul urged believers to seek godliness with contentment. The Greek word translated as “*contentment*” refers to self-sufficiency. In Greek philosophy, the word denoted a wise man’s independence of circumstances. It meant to become independent of outside support and to find all you need in yourself. To Paul, however, contentment was not found in himself but in Jesus Christ. Christian contentment is Christ-sufficiency, not self-sufficiency. Paul said to the Philippians, “*In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content*” (Phil. 4:12, HCSB). How so? Paul said he was “*able to do all things through Him*” (v. 13) because Christ had strengthened him.

6:7. Paul then referred to a true fact related to human birth and death—for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. The Greek sentence begins with nothing for emphasis. We were born into this world penniless, and when we die, we are penniless once again. (Job 1:21) Our entrance into life is identical to our exit from life. Material gain is only the traveling baggage of time, not the luggage of eternity. Jesus said, “*Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (Matt. 6:19-20).

6:8. Paul said, if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. Necessities are essential to our existence; luxuries aren't. Food and clothing meet our basic needs. The Greek word translated "*clothing*" also means "house," so shelter likely is included in the necessities.

Many Christians are in financial bondage. It's because they did not learn to be content with the basic needs of life—food and clothing. They mistakenly added to the list of necessities a newer car, a bigger house, luxury items, and the newest gadget to come on the market. This passage calls us back to simpler living with God at the center of life. Real spiritual contentment occurs when you are Christ-sufficient.

6:9. "*Those who desire to be rich*" describes people motivated by money and possessions. The Bible has many warnings against covetousness (see Ex. 20:17; Ps. 49:10-20; Prov. 28:20; 30:7-9; Eccl. 5:10; Luke 12:13-21). The Bible also tells of many who came to grief because of it (Adam and Eve, Achan, Judas, and Ananias and Sapphira.)

People who walk the path of greed, who want to be rich, walk into peril. First, they fall into temptation, such as temptation to steal or lie or cheat. The snare that entraps them often is moral compromise. Second, when desire for riches goes unchecked, people fall into many senseless and harmful desires, such as lust for power and prestige. Money becomes an addiction—more money only inflames desire for more money. Greed is senseless (not rationally defensible) and harmful (brings bondage). Finally, greedy people, whether poor or rich, plunge themselves into ruin and destruction. The imagery is of people who are sinking and then drowning. Greed destroys marriages and causes men and women to jeopardize health and emotional well-being. Jesus warned about the eternal destruction that comes to those controlled by greed (see Luke 16:14-31). It was the rich man's preoccupation with the world's wealth that caused him to neglect his soul.

6:10. Ruin and destruction come because the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. This may be the most misquoted verse in the Bible. Paul did not say that money is the problem; the problem is the love of money. The Bible has much to say about money, primarily with regards to our stewardship of it. Jesus spoke much about money, because it is how we view and use money that tells where our devotion is. It is our attitude toward money that gets us into trouble.

| PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

4:11. "*Learned*" (Greek perfect tense) implies a lesson resulting in better knowledge. "*Content*" (literally "self-reliant") is self-sufficiency that grows out of trust in Christ, not ourselves.

4:12. "*I know*" results from evaluating various circumstances. The difficult circumstances are "*have a little*", "*hungry*," and "*need*." The contrasting good "*are a lot... well fed... abundance*." Together these taught Paul how to be content.

4:13. "*All things*" refers to the economic fluctuations of life (v. 12). "*Through Him who strengthens me*" teaches that Christ empowers believers to live in God's will. Paradoxically, Paul was strong when he was weak; independent only when dependent. Such is the life of a disciple.