

1 Timothy 6:6-16. ⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴ to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord.

Godliness with Contentment is Great Gain.

- 1. Flee from the Love of Money**
- 2. Treasure What God has placed in your hands.**
- 3. Pursue righteousness**

What does it mean to be content? It has been noted that in America, we've been taught to believe that contentment is linked to our accomplishments or constantly getting more. We think, "I'll be happy when... I build the new house, when I get the promotion I have been waiting for, or when we get the new truck, or the new wardrobe, the new household item, or when we remodel the bathroom, and so on. And certainly, our society as a whole and those who market and sell such things and services have only reinforced this thinking. For this is the picture that advertisers and salespeople pitch love to paint, and it comes complete with the tantalizing image of people enjoying their products as they appeal for you to join them. You too will be happy. You too will be content when you have that item, or when you obtain this goal, or when you buy this thing.

The main problem with this type of thinking is that the horizon of satisfaction is always moving, and since there is this always increasing desire to acquire more or have one more thing, we'll never really experience contentment by these standards. Picture a horse with blinders chasing after a carrot that is always just out of reach. And so instead of chasing after a moving horizon, instead of chasing that unattainable goal, let us remember to pause and give thanks for how the Lord has provided for our

bodies and souls right here and now. Look around and see how God has blessed you right now in this very moment. ***This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.***

In a world that is so often searching for more, the apostle Paul delivers this formula for contentment and satisfaction, godliness with contentment if of great gain. The apostle Paul would later share this same thought with chains still dangling from his wrists he would not so much as whisper this secret but would proudly declare the secret, that key, which brings blessing for us still today, ***“I have learned the secret of being content in every situation, whether well fed or hungry whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*** In Christ and his promises, in the LORD, there is contentment like none other. Therefore, Paul commends this same type of advice to young Pastor Timothy and the rest of us as well. . ***6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.***

As those who are richly and daily blessed in Christ, let us: **Treasure what we have been given. Flee from the love of money. And let us pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.**

It is simple yet powerful advice - and maybe even life-changing and soul preserving advice. Count your blessings! We often focus on what we do not have. Instead, what a blessing it is to count our blessings (as if we could). What a blessing it is to take inventory of all the way God has blessed us over our years of life! Let take some time to take a look back and down at this moment and look around and count your blessings and recall how much the Lord has done for you and how he has provided. Take off the blinders, look down, look around and then take a look up knowing that God has shown mercy on you and has stored up for you treasures in heaven.

It is a struggle to do this. It is a constant struggle as we have sinful hearts and minds that conform and re-conform so easily to the ways of this world. Therefore, God reminds us again and again about the dangers of desire, of coveting, of greed, and the sinful activity that spins out from the sinner's heart. Last week we were warned about how the love of money has the power to twist our hearts toward greed. We talked about the improper and dishonest dealings hatched from sinful hearts being pulled toward the god of money, and the Lord called out to us with words of warning. ***You cannot serve two masters... you cannot serve both God and Money.***

Again, it is important to keep in mind it is not so much the money itself that is evil, but it is that desire, that love of money, that greed that is at the root of the problem. It has been said that *money is a great servant but a terrible master, and “if you set your heart on money, money will break your heart”*. Paul here goes even a step further and reminds us that there is more at stake than our hearts and our daily happiness but also our eternal soul. ***9 People who want to get rich fall into***

temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. We might think of examples here, people in our personal life or in the public eye, who we have seen fall into ruin and disgrace because they were consumed by this desire for more. But let's be careful not to let ourselves off the hook too soon. Instead, let us pause to consider how money and the pursuit of possessions has its hooks in us too.

With hands full of God's blessing we greedily reach for more, often without a word of thanks to the LORD who so graciously provided. With hands full of the blessings that God gives for our daily life, clothing, food, and eternal salvation, we reach for more and our grasp loosens on that which our God has so graciously and freely given. We itch for more to the point where we become anxious with God, we are easily lured by the siren's song of material things that we look over with longing eyes at the path that appears lush and green and we forget about the traps and snares that lie underneath. Our Good Shepherd warns us about these traps, for contentment simply cannot be gained on that path of false promises, on worldly wealth that will one day be left behind. And yet our eyes linger, and hearts and hands follow and our grasp on that which is truly important loosens as our steps tread dangerously close to the path that leads towards destruction.

But God in his goodness reaches out. His saving hand, his saving word, grabs hold of us and we are reminded that he guides us, he preserves us. His word shakes us out from that daze of desire so that we may look around and see how he has blessed us. He takes off the blinders and helps us to look around and to rejoice in what is found. He wakes us from the death of sin to life in him, so that we may see, we may give thanks, we may live in joyful service to our God. He is the one who has opened his hand and filled our hands, our arms, our lives, our closets, our pantries, our garages, our sheds with so many good things. We came into this world with nothing, and God has graciously provided from zero and nothing to a lifetime of blessings that daily surrounds us. Look down dear friends, look around, and see how he has dressed you daily with his blessing. And instead of grumbling and complaining or itching for more, let us see the benefit, the blessing of contentment. Take a moment the next time that you say the common table prayer, to consider the rather uncommon and simply incredible grace that God has shown to you. Gaze around the table and count your blessings, if you can. Consider his gifts of food and clothing, house and home, and family.

And today as you approach this table and are fed this supper, ponder his gift of a church home, a church family, and lay hold on the gift of eternal life which has been given to you. This is his body given for you that gives to you the free gift of eternal life. In the waters of Baptism, you are declared to be a child of God. You are cared for not only in this life but also in the life to come. Whether well fed or hungry, whether in

plenty or want, each of us has been given the peace and confidence that we are loved by God. Even though we so often have loved other things, God put us first. He sent his own Son, who suffered in our place. Stripped down to next to nothing, the Son of God stood before Pilate and made the good confession. His kingdom was not of this world, but he came to establish a kingdom that would last forever. Through his word of truth, we are saved for we belong to him - our Redeemer and our Eternal King. Through his word of truth, we are given the gift of faith and we believe that heaven and all its lasting treasure are ours. The Almighty God who provides for us, sent his son to forgive us our sins, and he will one day come again to bring us to our lasting home in heaven.

And so may it be that our lips are daily filled with his praise. Instead of grumbling and complaining, instead of searching vainly to find satisfaction in the things of this world that do not endure, let us confess the everlasting praise of our God. Let us sing the praise of our God who provides for our daily needs. Let us give thanks each day to God who has filled our lives with blessings. Let us use the blessings that he has given us to care for each other. And all the while let us confess the name of Jesus who invites us to come to his table and to hear his Word and to be his guest and to enjoy the gifts that have no end. Gifts that we don't endlessly chase, but gifts that have already been placed in our hand.

The pursuit of wealth as a source of contentment is an ever-moving horizon, but for those who are in Christ Jesus each day is a day that comes and goes with his blessing. And there will come a day when the sun will cease to shine and Christ will be our Light, and our LORD will usher us to his side for an eternal day. And sinners, who complained, and grumbled, who struggled with discontent and a lack of trust, will one day know perfect contentment as we will stand side to side with the massive family of believers and face to face with our God, our creator, our provider, our Redeemer, our Brother, our LORD and Savior, our Shepherd and Friend.

Dear fellow children of God let us fight the good fight of faith. Let us fight off the sin of greed that so easily entangles and be daily blessed with the tremendous peace and perspective that God gives to those who are his. ***Godliness with contentment is great gain.*** Daily take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. What a blessing it is to look around and see the gifts that God has so graciously put into our hands of faith knowing that one day we will look up and see his face. To God our Father and to Jesus Christ be glory, now and forever. Amen.