

Getting Things

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1Tim. 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1Tim. 6:7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

1Tim. 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

1Tim. 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The spiritual lesson taught here is not only not popular with mankind, but it is also not believed by the natural man. This truth is played out every day in America. The way we see it played out is that Americans are out there every day hustling to make another dollar cutting ethical corners and sacrificing a lot of things including peace and contentment to get it.

I have been saying for several years now that America has lost its moral compass. For many of those who have lost their moral compass, they have sold it for another 30 pieces of silver, because money is to them the route to happiness and contentment. They couldn't be further from the truth! But that fairy tale has currency in the American emotion market! So much of mankind buys in to that fantasy and as a result the deep deep truth of what the Lord tells us here by the pen of Paul is lost in the loud clamor of the money market where men sell their souls for a bowl of lentil soup because they think to hit the jackpot and find a haven of happiness that is lined with material property, dollars and gold.

Now before we go any further, I want us all to be aware that we are going to be looking at how these verses can apply to believers. The verses talk about men in general, and sometimes we preachers like to go afield chasing rabbits using these verses to talk about how a lot of rich people get themselves swallowed up by the pursuit of riches and bring on themselves a lot of troubles. But, what I want us to look at today is how this same kind of thing can get a hold on believers...even believers who are not even rich. This is what should be important to us.

If you ask the average American about what the "American Dream" is to him, he will tell you something about, say, owning his own home, having a new car, and having a good-paying job. But, if you condense down what any of our fellow Americans are saying about their vision of the American Dream, it is that they are looking for success because most of them believe that the kind of success they envision will give them contentment. Now, as much being successful can create a kind of feeling of happiness, and maybe a kind of temporal and fleshly contentment, it is not the solution for contentment of the lasting kind. And that is where our text verses pick up.

I. (Read **V. 6** again) - Our first verse that we're considering today gives us the golden key from God as to where true and meaningful contentment is found. But even as believers look at this verse, they sometimes misunderstand it to say that godliness is great gain. Let me say, though that the verse does not say that godliness is great gain...although to the soul of a born-again believer, it is. But, what this verse does say is that any person who is satisfied with being like the Lord and being content with that **HAS** great gain.

❖ Somebody might look at that verse and argue that it doesn't say that, but I would argue back that it does! Godliness, purely and simply is being holy like God, being at peace like God, and feeling complete with being like God. And of course, we know what contentment is! So, there it is! Godliness **WITH contentment** is GREAT GAIN!

❖ Now, I think we know that there are a lot of professing Christians out there in our communities who are not just content with imitating the Lord in how they live and do. I think we know that there are a lot of folks who are on the money train and sadly, don't know how to get off. But, I believe a lot of our Christian brothers and sisters already sense that being in love with money is not the route to contentment, peace, and happiness. So, let's go on to the next verse.

II. V. 7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

❖ Now, let me ask all of you a question: what does this statement have to do with verse 6 that I have just been talking about?

❖ Why is this verse in there? If there is no relevance to what Paul wrote in verse 6, why is it here?

❖ Well, truth is, there is relevance, because **he is writing about contentment in verse 6** and behind the thought is the fact that **Paul knows about some Christians who have no contentment although they are chasing after material gain...money**. To show us that there is a connection between his mention about contentment and his mention of not being able to get out of this world with anything, let's **go back to verse 5**. Here, Paul is writing about religious teachers who are teaching false doctrine and one thing they teach is totally counter to the true gospel teachings of the Lord – that something is found in **verse 5** (read it) - Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, **supposing that gain is godliness**: from such withdraw thyself.

➤ I want to pause right here for just a moment and say something about this scriptural statement.

Already in Paul's day, we find that there was what today is called the "**Prosperity Gospel**." Now, today, we have a lot of so-called Christian preachers declaring that if you are a believer, and you are doing everything right, God will make you rich. That's essentially what those teachers in Paul's day were teaching. And it was just as accursed in that day as it is in this one. As Paul warned those believers back then to withdraw from such liars, we should do the same today! I believe that false gospel has led a lot of professed Christians down the road to bankruptcy or to condemnation...or both!

❖ Now, back to our train of thought. Paul has made a **connection between the error of pursuing after material gain in order to get contentment and the absence of true contentment**. So, he tells these believers where true contentment lies. And the way he shows that what he is teaching is the truth is by presenting a **spiritual reality in verse 6**. What is the spiritual reality?

❖ That **anything that survives beyond this life is where genuine value lies**, and **anything that can't be carried beyond the grave is of no real, lasting, final value**.

➤ And again, we have a principle here that natural man does not believe, and

I must say sadly, a lot of believers overlook or don't ever come to the knowledge of, and get themselves into spiritual and temporal trouble because they fail to grasp this great reality.

III. Now, let's move on to the next verse: V. **8** And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

❖ Probably when a lot of folks read this, they wish that Paul hadn't written it. Worse yet, he starts it with "And!" That makes it one of those scriptural charges that is like the last hit of a hammer on a nail that is driven into a piece of wood! It's a use of the word which almost make you see the word "**furthermore**" after it. As it should! Because **it is a furthermore**.

➤ It's like Paul and the Holy Spirit didn't think it was enough to say that godliness with contentment is great gain. It's as though they felt that believers should be given that big furthermore we see here.

➤ The other thing this verse does is narrow down the things that should even be considered as needed in order to give us contentment! Just food and clothes. And I might add that he didn't say the food had to come from Harris-Teeter or Whole Foods Market, nor the clothes from de la Renta or Armani in New York City!!

❖ Now, before we move on, let me ask each of you a question. Just answer this to yourself. How many things do you have that you were pretty sure you needed in order to have contentment in your life?

IV. Well, with Paul's very limited list of things needed to be content...if we are following the Lord's guidance...let's move on to the threats that have been stated here in our text.

- ❖ The threat is listed in two parts, one part in **verse 9**, the other in **verse 10 – V. 9** But they that will be rich **fall into temptation and a snare**, and *into many foolish and hurtful lusts*, which drown men in destruction and perdition.
 - I want us to notice first that this threat exists for people who have this will that is driven to be rich.
 - It does not say that all men who are driven to be rich will be overcome with this threat, but it implies “all” – what are the threats?
- ❖ First, falling into temptation and a snare – I don’t know if you have all noticed this, but temptations are the little paths that lead to a snare.
 - Illustrate using how you set snares for rabbits when you were a teenager – that little path which you knew the rabbits traveled would be the temptation, and the snare lay there in that path just waiting to catch that rabbit.
 - Explain how a snare takes away all options for something or someone who is caught in one.
 - Talk about how pursuing the money train invariably leads to complications in life. Those complications generate temptations; those temptations lead to a snare in which those who get caught are left without options and become the total victims to their own pursuits. Which usually means they are the total slaves to something or someone in the money world.
- ❖ Second, those who will be rich fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.
 - Wealth in any form opens new doors to things that please the senses...wealth allows its owner to desire things he has never had the liberty to obtain before, and allows him to satisfy those lusts by getting that stuff. The ultimate end of this kind of self-fulfillment is that those who go there don’t keep their heads above water. So they drown in ruin and the judgment and sentence of God to eternal damnation.

V. My last item is this: what do believers need to take away from all this?

1. Don’t think for a minute that you can pursue money as one of the big objectives and escape falling into temptations and snares
2. Don’t imagine that you will not fall victim to foolish and hurtful lusts if wealth is your big game – you will
3. Don’t imagine that just saying, “I don’t want to be rich, I just want enough to pay my bills” means that you will not be roped into pursuing the money train. Let me just rehearse for you the path by which millions of Americans have fallen for that notion just during our lifetimes:
 - a. Young couples dream of having a new home and car and living in a good neighborhood, so they get a bank loan and buy a house; then another and buy a car. So, all goes well until the cost of a new baby comes along. So, to help pay the bills, the couple gets themselves a credit card, buy stuff with it, and make minimum payments.
 - b. Before long, they want a new television, and some new living room furniture, but the credit card is maxxed out and the bank won’t make a loan for it. They talk about saving their money ‘til they can pay cash, but find out pretty quick they can’t save hardly anything because their life style demands every penny they make.
 - 1) Let me make an observation here about lifestyle in America. It is the overpowering vision of what kind of lifestyle one wants that has led millions of Americans to spiritual and often temporal poverty. Now, on to more about this story of the young couple.
 - c. So, they are offered another credit card, they get one, they buy their TV and their furniture, and before long that card is maxxed out. By this time, both are working, but they are having to pay a day care to take care of the baby while Mom works and she spends every cent she makes paying for car payments, gas, and daycare. Now things are getting complicated.
 - d. The couple begins to juggle their credit card payments and their house payment and run late on them sometimes, and the interest mounts up.

- e. So, dad takes another job, which barely keeps their heads above water. But at work, he meets a guy who says, “hey, do you wanna make a few bucks on the side? I’ve got this small business, and all you would have to do is make some deliveries for me and I will pay you \$50 a pop to do it.” So, dad takes him up on it.
- f. As dad delivers his packages, after a while, he suspects that those packages contain something he doesn’t want to know about, but hey, he’s making \$100-\$200 a night spending about 30 minutes to an hour doing it. This is called “falling into temptation and a snare.”
- g. Now mom and dad are doing good, making that extra \$500-\$1,000 per week, so they begin to have some friends over on Saturday or Sunday, and they get to have small parties. They can afford some really good wine or other adult beverages for those parties and they toast their success and their friends. Pretty soon one of those friends suggests that a nice closed party like this should have even more opportunity for fun, so he breaks out a little bag of something that looks like grass and they get started. At this stage we can call this “falling into foolish and hurtful lusts.”
- h. Well, you know what the rest of the story will be like. But let’s review: this all started when a young couple innocently, and justly, wanted only enough money to pay their bills. But, in their passion for getting more stuff, the bills piled up and suddenly it took more money to pay the bills and to have more stuff. So, they began to love getting more money...essentially the same as loving money...and so...everything gets sacrificed in order to make those extra bucks...down goes the lawfulness, down go the morals, down goes the home life, down go the business ethics
- i. Remember that I began this by warning us that we should not think that we will stay in safe territory by saying (and even believing), that we just want enough to pay the bills. We need to understand what this couple did not; that the love of wealth...getting more stuff...will be sure to put paying the bills out of reach unless we force the bills to stay within the range of what money we have.
- j. Remember also, that we live in a credit society and the entire system is set up to accommodate Satan presenting any one of us with a temptation that will turn into a snare and that has the potential to drown us in woes.