

4

Godly Contentment

WHAT'S
SOMETHING
YOU'VE
ENJOYED
COLLECTING?

The POINT ➤

Godliness with contentment
is great gain.

➤ 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-11,17-19

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. ⁸ If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. ⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

¹⁸ Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life.

¹⁷ Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy.



FOR LEADERS (15 minutes)

THE POINT // GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CREATION

People are God's most loved creation and have been given responsibility for overseeing His creation. As we steward it for His purposes, we reflect God's character and authority.

Message to Leaders

Part of our call—as people created in God's image, and more specifically as those who live by faith in Jesus—is to steward God's creation well. God is the owner of all things, and everything He entrusts to us is to be used for His purposes and not for our own selfish desires. We experience true contentment when we see our own possessions as ultimately belonging to God and live trusting He will provide for us exactly what we need.

› Engage Option 1

Ask students to form groups of three. Have each group discuss ways they are using their possessions for God's kingdom, and how they could be doing this more. Say, **"If we see everything we have as being owned by God, we can find contentment in advancing His kingdom through the means He has given us."**

› Engage Option 2

Decorate the room with collectibles (e.g., cards, toys, etc.). Say, **"It's easy to become so focused on our possessions that we lose sight of what really matters. Godly contentment is found in Jesus, not material things."**

› Engage Option 3

Search the Internet for "Hoarder Denise's House Tour | Hoarding: Buried Alive." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"We should not let our lives be controlled by the things of this world. Instead, we should be characterized by godly contentment."**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure it is appropriate for your church and ministry.



For **free online training** on how to lead a group visit **MinistryGrid.com/web/BibleStudiesForLife**
For **free Midweek Options** for your group, visit **lifeway.com/BSFLsimplicityFall19**

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

ITEM 4: Consider beginning your session by using the Session 4 poster to introduce students to the main idea.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT // GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN.



THE SETTING

Ephesus, which means “desirable,” was a center for business, education, and politics, and it was certainly a desirable place to live. Paul established the church in this great city on his second missionary journey. After his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul visited Ephesus again and left Timothy in charge to deal with problems in the church, including false doctrines and the need for good leaders, as well as materialism. Later, Paul wrote a letter to Timothy to help him carry out his responsibility.

FACT:

In 2013, Kevin Silva was recognized by Guinness World Records for having the world’s biggest collection of Batman memorabilia with over 2,501 items.²

Through the years, I’ve collected many things including baseball cards. When I turned 10, my dad gave me one of his pocket knives, and that was the beginning of my knife collection. Collecting can be a good hobby, whether it’s comic books, action figures, or something else entirely. Organizing and displaying the things we value can be quite enjoyable, and of course, there’s the thrill of the hunt. But for some people, collecting isn’t just a hobby; it’s an obsession. Psychologists have identified a common trait among hoarders—anxiety.¹

We’ve all experienced a feeling of security from something we’ve owned, even if that sense of security was short-lived. However, seeking security and contentment from material possessions is worthless. Even trying to find security and contentment in people is ultimately impossible, because people will let us down at one time or another.

We don’t get our contentment from people or things, no matter how many things or relationships we have. God offers us an easier (and better) approach. When we devote ourselves to knowing and loving Jesus and when we live as He lived, we’ll find peace and contentment.



IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN.

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-8

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-8

Earlier in chapter 6, Paul spoke against false doctrine and human greed. False teachers were twisting God's truth to mislead people into believing godliness would result in material gain. They were not motivated by a desire to please God—instead, they were motivated by a desire to gain the riches of this world. This isn't godliness; it's greed.

Unfortunately, many people buy into this false teaching today. Over two-thirds of American churchgoers believe God wants them to prosper financially.³ Most churches teach the doctrine of grace—God gives us gifts we don't deserve, and ultimately, salvation through Jesus. However, we often believe that in response to our acts of service, devotion, and giving, God owes us some form of material reward.

Though this is certainly a sinful attitude, many who truly desire to honor God fall prey to this thinking.

- I've prayed with married couples who want children, and they fully believe God will give them what they desire as a response to their devotion to Him.
- I've worked with jobless believers who presumed God would immediately provide a great job, so they could maintain their lifestyle as a reward for their faith.
- I've walked beside high school athletes who were injured and expected God to provide a quick and full recovery in response to their choosing to live for Him.

Though God may certainly do any of these things, our reward for a life of faithfulness isn't necessarily earthly or material, and it's important we understand this—greed and godliness can never dwell in the same heart. Paul gave the answer in verse 6. True gain comes when godliness is married to contentment—being totally satisfied with whatever God provides. God has promised to take care of His children, so we can trust what He provides is fully sufficient.

When it's all said and done, we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out. Therefore, we should be thankful for the simple things like food and clothing. When we are not content with simply having our daily needs met, we become selfish, indulgent, and materialistic—discontent! And the only thing that will fix this attitude is learning to love and trust God.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 30)

- 1 Why does contentment sometimes seem so elusive?
- 2 When has a desire for a specific possession led you to feel discontent?



1 TIMOTHY 6:9-11

*But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. **1 TIMOTHY 6:9-11***

When I was in college, every now and then (okay, maybe it was more frequently than I'd like to admit), I'd put off a big paper until the night before it was due. I'd stay up way too late to get it done, and inevitably, I'd crave some junk food to keep me motivated—and a certain fast food taco joint happened to be open all night. So in the middle of the night, I'd hop on my bike, pedal across campus, and pick up a burrito—all because of a craving.

Leader: Ask students when a craving or desire led them to go out of their way.

What we crave can have a lot of power over us. In fact, when we really desire something, we're often willing to go to great lengths to get it. Paul warned about a certain craving—the craving for riches. When we crave a snack, it's only a big deal if we give into that craving over and over again, and it affects our health. Usually it's okay. However, when we desire riches, it will lead us to ruin and destruction. Craving riches is not just foolish—it's harmful.

It's important we understand it's not possessing riches that's dangerous—it's merely desiring them. When we allow ourselves to hunger after material possessions, we set a trap for our heart which will ultimately keep us from experiencing contentment in God. Our sinful human nature will always crave the things of this world, and they can never satisfy.

All kinds of evil grow out of a love for money. It will cause us to experience grief, and worst of all, if the desire for riches goes unchecked, it will cause us to wander away from the faith. Those who love money may not outwardly deny their faith, but if their hearts are set on possessions and not on God, there's no living faith inside.

Paul gave Timothy a better way—"flee from these things." This is good advice, but by itself, it is not enough. It is one thing to flee, but it's equally important to fill our lives with attitudes and actions that replace the harmful ones:

- **Righteousness:** Right attitudes and actions in relation to God and others.
- **Godliness:** Living to reflect God's character.
- **Faith:** Living in dependence upon God and being satisfied with what He provides.
- **Love:** The deep-seated desire for the good of others, even to the point of sacrificing.
- **Endurance:** Remaining faithful, even through difficulties.
- **Gentleness:** Dealing kindly and patiently with others at all times.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 31)

- 3** What "traps" can an unhealthy pursuit of wealth create?
- 4** How can we recognize when money is becoming an idol?
- 5** How does pursuing healthy traits free us from the love of money?



1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

*Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life. **1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19***

Paul's warning about the love of money applies to us all—rich, poor, and in-between. In verse 17, Paul issued a warning to those who have riches. Any riches we possess in this present age are temporary, and they won't transfer to the age to come. Paul's instructions were to guide the rich in how they should live with their temporary, current riches.

- **Don't be arrogant:** Riches can easily cause people to believe they are better than others, simply because they have more. However, we must recognize all we have is from God, and that's a humbling thought.
- **Don't place your hope in wealth (which is uncertain):** Money can give us a false sense of identity and security. All material things are temporary, and to place our hope in wealth will leave us disappointed and hopeless.
- **Hope in God:** When our hope is in God, we have immeasurable riches, but of a different type. God richly provides us with things to enjoy, not that we can just exist, but that we would experience an abundant life (John 10:10). God is not opposed to owning riches—He is opposed to riches owning us.
- **Do what is good:** Want to be rich? Be rich in doing good works. Give. Be generous. Share. We enjoy our riches rightly when we delight in using what God gives to bless others. When we do this, we are storing up treasure for ourselves as a good foundation for the coming age.

There may be times when we find all sorts of excuses for not giving, either to the church, to the needy, or even to a server at a restaurant. It may be because things are tight and we don't think we have enough, because we've overspent and have little extra, or simply because we're selfish or indulgent. No matter the case, we're called to use what God gives to bless others—to generously share in order to reflect the goodness of God. And when we don't, regardless of the reason, we make ourselves slaves to our possessions.

The way to break free is simple—choose to give. The only cure for greed is generosity. At times, particularly early on, it may be difficult to give. However, as we experience the blessing of giving, we'll find God transforms our hearts, making us cheerful givers. Then we can truly experience godly contentment.

The only cure for greed is generosity. #BSFLsimplicity



DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 31)

- 6** How do we maintain a healthy balance between valuing money and contentment?
- 7** What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven?
- 8** What truths about God help you put your hope in Him, rather than your possessions?



LIVE IT OUT (10 minutes)

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LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CREATION

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Part of our call—as people created in God's image, and more specifically as those who live by faith in Jesus—is to steward God's creation well. God is the owner of all things, and everything He entrusts to us is to be used for His purposes and not for our own selfish desires. We experience true contentment when we see our own possessions as ultimately belonging to God and live trusting He will provide for us exactly what we need.

>CHRIST

A relationship with Christ always results in transformation. This means, because of our salvation, our love for temporary, worldly things is replaced by a love for Jesus.

9 How does your life demonstrate you love Jesus and not money or material things?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

10 How will you replace worldly desires with healthy, spiritual ones?



LIVE IT OUT

THE POINT // GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN.

> COMMUNITY

The love of money is marked by selfish pursuits. However, Jesus taught that to love Him is to love others, even as we love ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). The church is to be characterized by the love we show each other.

11 How has someone in your church family loved you in a real way that required them to sacrifice something?

12 What need are you aware of that would require sacrifice of you? How will you meet it?



> CULTURE

Our culture is characterized by the love of money and other material things. Paul said this is a trap that plunges people into destruction.

13 What sort of “destruction” do people experience as a result of this perspective?

NOW	IN THE FUTURE	FOR ETERNITY

14 How will you help those who love money recognize this truth and the hope found in Jesus?