

Biblical Principles of Money (Part 4) – 1 Tim 6:6-8

1 Tim 6:6-8; We're in the middle of a series on money, based on our ministry year theme,

Built to Last; Jesus said in Mt 7:24 that everyone who hears and does what he says . .

Will be like a wise man who built his house [his life] on the rock; Referring to the rock-solid truths of God's Word; It will last; It will stand the test of time . . .

Shine the light of Christ, and weather the storms of life

And so far, we've covered 9 principles; The last 4, from last week alone

Principle #6 – I should use my money to influence people for Christ

Principle #7 – How I handle a little shows how I would handle a lot

Which means the time is *now* to make changes

Principle #8 – God rewards my faithful stewardship

Not necessarily with more money, but more responsibility; More *kingdom* responsibility

Principle #9 – I can't (and won't) serve God if money is my idol

Can't b/c God won't accept it, and won't b/c that's human nature

➤ Which brings us to Part 4, and the passage here in 1 Tim 6:6-8 (Summary)

The Apostle Paul is writing, and just finished rebuking the mindset of some, that

godliness is a means of gain; A means of getting money

It's called the prosperity gospel, and it's a heresy that continues to plague the church today; If you live right and have faith, money cometh (Titus 1:11; 2 Pet 2:3)

And while Paul acknowledges that some people *perpetuate* such a thing, and *imagine* it to be true, he says in v6 – *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.

The principle being . . .

Principle #10 – Contentment is the key to the fullness of God's blessing (v6-8)

That's the principle here; And I want to spend our entire time focusing on it

Contentment is the key to the fullness of God's blessing

What else could *great gain* mean there in v6? *Godliness with contentment is great gain*

It can't mean financial gain, b/c that's the very idea he's *opposing* in v5

Nor do the warnings about money in the *following* verses allow it

So *great gain* has to mean something *other* than money here, and something far *better*

And the only thing that fits, is the fullness of God's blessing

Like life to the full and the rewards of eternity; Or the fruit of the Spirit as we *walk* in him; Or the blessings of faith that we have in Christ

That's great gain – the fullness of God's blessing both now and yet to come

➤ And the key to experiencing it, is contentment – being *okay* with your lot in life; Being *satisfied* with what you have; Giving up your desire for more . . .

When what you have is just fine; As opposed to a restless longing for more and more

When you're content, you're at peace w/ what God has given u – whether a little or a lot

➤ And I don't think you need to be told that it's never more tested and never more needed than in the area of money

That elusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, that we spend our lives *pursuing*

But what you may *not* understand, is that if you fail to get a handle on that pursuit, if you fail to die to your incessant desire for more and more . . .

You'll fail to experience the fullness of God's blessing in your life

It's counter-cultural to the max, but true

Pursuing your own blessing through the accumulation of money, will cause you to miss out on the very things you're longing for; Like security; And joy; And peace

Fail to be content, and you'll fail to experience God's best in those areas; It's key

➤ That's not to say that godliness is moot; The Bible is filled with exhortations and encouragement that way

It's just that contentment is the focus here; Godliness *with* contentment is great gain

For instance, how many times have you yearned for something, only to experience it after you've given it up?

After you've said – “Okay God, I'm good. I don't need it; I don't even want it.”

“I'll stick with this job for the rest of my life if you want,” Only to get a phone call for an interview

“I'll stay in this house, no problem;” Only to receive a windfall that matches your need for something bigger or better

Godliness is important, for sure; But godliness alone will not unlock the treasure trove of God's blessing; Only godliness with *contentment*

Giving up your desire for more, when what you have is just fine; *That's* the key

➤ Now, at this point you might be thinking – “Okay, I've got *that*; But does that mean *ambition* is wrong? You know, bettering my life . . .

And the lives of those who depend on me? If I need to be content, is that *wrong*?”

And the answer is no; Absolutely not; Ambition is *not* wrong

In fact, it's part of being made in God's image – the most ambitious being in the universe; And Scripture gives us example after example . . .

Of those who were *used* by God, b/c they had it

But here's the caveat; If it's ambition for yourself, to advance *your* thing and *your* stuff – that's another story; Or if it's driven by *discontentment*, then it *is* wrong

But short of that, it's good; And needed; And one of the ways God enables us to make the most of our gifts, and bless others, and glorify him

So contentment and ambition are not mutually exclusive

➤ But there *is* a fine line, that can easily be crossed into sin; And it most often comes down to our motives

Why do you do the things you do? *Why* do you want to make more money?

Is it b/c you want more toys to play with? Or more ways to bless others?

Is it an *unholy* longing in your soul you're trying to fill? Or a God-honoring responsibility? Or opportunity? It's a fine line

And if you want to experience the fullness of God's blessing, it's important that your contentment equals your ambition; It's key; And that's just the 1st reason

There are at *least* 3 more in Scripture; The first of which is found right here in this passage

1. We were made for less (1 Tim 6:7-8)

V7-8 – After just saying that *godliness with contentment is great gain*, he says in v7 . . .
[7] for [or b/c; indicating this is one of the *reasons* we should be content] *we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. [8] But if we have food and clothing* [if we have the *basics* of life], *with these we will be content.*

Contentment with the basics is the key to God's blessing, b/c a lack of more is the default of our lives; It's how we were made
A lack of material possessions is the state in which we *started* our lives, and it's the state in which we will *end* our lives; You can't take it w/ you
Just like you didn't bring it with you
All of which is Paul's way of saying – that possessing less, instead of more, is how we were made; We were *made* for less

And the sooner we accept that, and get comfortable with it, and *agree* with God's design that way – the sooner we'll experience the fullness of his blessing

2. Money doesn't satisfy (Eccl 5:10)

Eccl 5:10 – *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*
Money doesn't satisfy; It's like drinking salt water – it may *temporarily* relieve, but in the end it leaves you wanting and sick
Making it all for naught; An exercise in futility – *vanity*; Useless in the grand scheme of things*****

Meanwhile, the blessings of God are like rivers of *living* water – *never* leaving us wanting
And giving us *everything* we need for life and godliness; And satisfying *forever*
And just waiting to be *tapped*, with the key of contentment

Don't waste your life learning that the hard way; Trust God's Word, and heed it now
Money doesn't satisfy, and contentment does

3. More isn't necessarily better (Prov 15:16; Ps 37:16)

Have you ever heard the little saying – "I've been rich and I've been poor; rich is better"?
It's clever, but not necessarily true
Prov 15:16 – *Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure and trouble with it.*
Apart from God, more isn't necessarily better, b/c it's often accompanied by trouble

Or how about **Ps 37:16** – *Better is the little that the righteous has, than the abundance of many wicked.*
More isn't necessarily better; And we should be content with less (**Summary**)

➤ But it begs the question – how? *How* are we to be content? (**How To Be Content**)
Especially in such a materialistic, money-driven culture; Where the weeds of greed threaten the soil of our heart every single day; How do we do it?

And the answer I think, comes down to 7 things – 7 ways to be content; The first 2 of which, are found in Phil 4:10-13

The Apostle Paul is writing here as well, and says in v10 . . .

[10] *I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me.* [He was writing to the church in Philippi, saying he was glad to receive their help again] *You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.*
[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.*

The first step toward contentment, is to . . .

1. Realize that it's learned (Phil 4:11-12)

Paul says in v11b – *I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content*
And in again v12b – *I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.* The secret, being contentment; It's learned

And notice, that contentment is just as much an issue with abundance, as it is with need
Just b/c you *have* plenty, doesn't mean you're content; Am I right?
It may be *harder* when we don't have much, but it's still not easy when we do

B/c it doesn't come naturally; We have to *learn* contentment

Most often by doing without in the life of hard knocks, while trusting God that it's all you need; That's the first step toward contentment

2. Understand that it's possible (Phil 4:13)

That's the idea of Paul's statement in v13 – *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* Referring to Jesus
And though we over-use and abuse that verse, by applying it to anything from running a marathon to getting through our work week . . .
The point *Paul* is making, is that we can be content, no matter *what* the situation
I can do *all* things through Christ; Why? B/c he strengthens me; He helps me

I don't know what your current situation is, or how hard your struggle . . .

I don't know if you're fighting the siren call of more stuff b/c you have the money to buy it, or if you're fighting feelings of anger b/c you don't; I don't know
What I do know, is that contentment is possible, and God is faithful

3. Stop comparing yourself to others (Ex 20:17)

Especially those who have *more* than you do
Stop lining up your things next to theirs; Stop thinking about what *they* have and you don't; Stop wishing you lived *their* life instead of yours

It's called coveting; And God says, don't; Don't do it; Don't go there

Ex 20:17 – *You shall not covet your neighbor's house, or your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.* It's the 10th Commandment

Take your eyes off of others, and put them on Jesus; Get them off the things of this earth, and onto the things above
Mind your *own* business; Tend your *own* garden; Water your *own* grass
And stop looking over the fence at your neighbor's

B/c there are few things more detrimental to a life of contentment, than comparing yourself to others (**Summary**); That's #3

➤ #4, comes from the 3rd chapter of Philippians; **Phil 3:7-8**

After saying that he had it all – status, pedigree, position, purpose, and perfection . . .

Paul says in v7 – *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

[8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him

Contentment is the key to the fullness of God's blessing, and the 4th key to contentment is to . . .

4. Let go of what you've lost (Phil 3:7)

Just let it go; "Let it go, and you'll rise like the break of dawn;" Thank you Disney

B/c though their message is different, the words apply; Look at v7 again

Whatever gain I had [Paul says], I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

IOW in choosing to follow Christ, he let go of all he had lost

For the sake of Jesus, and his kingdom, and the call on his life – Paul gave it all up and didn't look back; He let it go

➤ And then, in v8, he took it one step further – *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*

IOW don't just let go of what's gone, but . . .

5. Hold loosely to what you have (Phil 3:8a)

Count that as loss too; Count *that* as gone, just like the stuff that is

Why? B/c it *pales* in comparison to the surpassing worth of what you *can't* lose – your relationship with Jesus; The one who's closer than a brother

And loves you more than life itself

If you want to be content – hold loosely to what you have, b/c of what you can't lose

6. Consider your stuff trash (Phil 3:8b)

I know, I know – strong word; And an even stronger concept

But that's exactly what Paul says in v8b – *For his sake [for the sake of Jesus] I have suffered the loss of all things [including the stuff and status he still has] and count them as rubbish;* Trash; Dung; Worthless

Consider your stuff trash

That doesn't mean *treat* it like trash; Our responsibility to be good stewards remains

Nor is this a call to asceticism and austerity – where we throw it all away and intentionally deprive ourselves in a misguided effort to be holy

We're not to *treat* our stuff like trash, nor *throw* it in the trash

Rather, we should *consider* it trash, and be the best garbage men in the business; With the best garbage dumps around

IOW the things and money that God has entrusted to our care, should gleam like the polished glass in a China display; But never, should we *value* them like China

B/c compared to the maker and giver, and what he may require of us, for *his* sake – they're trash

It's the 6th way toward a life of contentment

7. Keep your eyes on the prize (Phil 3:13-14)

After saying that he counts his stuff as rubbish in order to know Jesus and be like him,

Paul says in v12 . . .

[12] Not that I have already obtained this [this Christlikeness I so desire] or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

[13] Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own [I'm not there yet].

But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

You want to be content with the things of this world? Keep your eyes on the next

Fix your gaze on what's to come; Focus on eternity and the hope of glory

Long for the mind-blowing rewards of heaven; Lean toward the finish line of life

And above all else – *yearn* for that glorious, glorious prize of being called home (**Sum**)

It's the key to contentment, and contentment is the key to the fullness of God's blessing; Don't miss out

Prayer – Oh God, would you help us in these things? We are so restless sometimes;

Remind us that we were made for less, and money doesn't satisfy; Forgive us for constantly comparing and holding too tightly; Indeed, give us one pure and holy passion, give us one magnificent obsession, give us one glorious ambition for our lives – to know and follow hard after you; No matter how much or how little, we have

It's why we give; And couldn't be happier in doing so