

Contentment in an Age of Consumerism

Heb. 13:5-6 “Keep your lives free from **the love of** money, and be **satisfied/content** with what you have. God has said, ‘I will never leave you; I will never run away from you.’ Duet. 31:6.

So we can feel sure and say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. People can do nothing to me.’ Psa. 118:6.

Consumerism: “The preoccupation with and an inclination toward the buying of consumer goods.”

Research is teaching that our addiction towards consumerism is robbing us of the contentment we are seeking by the very products we are purchasing.

We are often overwhelmed with a feeling of: “I just have to have that...”

Consumerism is convincing many folks that happiness is based on how much stuff we have.

Several years ago a popular bumper sticker read:

“He who dies with the most toys – wins.”

- This sells us on the idea that bigger & more is better/success.
- This concept clutters our landscape with all the neon signs and overpowering billboards and pop up media messages on our devices that **“What we need to be happy is MORE.”**
- Some stats tell us that consumerism motivates the average American family to spend 115% of their income, leaving the nation buried in a pile of debt and bankruptcies.
- From the spiritual perspective that I deal with as a pastor; I am seeing that the consumer tendency in our culture is having some devastating effects:
 - Marriages are in trouble because of the financial strain due to consumerism and the desire to have more of what they see everybody having. **Impulse buying.**
 - Believers are discontent with church life if the church doesn’t provide the services that they enjoy from a business perspective.
 - There is a general discontent and **“ME mentality”** that has crept in from the world affecting the way believers are thinking and approaching life.
 - No longer are believers seeking how they can serve others as Jesus did, but how can everyone and everything serve their interests and needs.
 - There is a disconnect that the Christian faith is no longer viewed as a life of service but a consumer mentality of how can others serve my needs and wants?
 - Some present becoming a Christian as “joining the get a blessing club.”

God has called His people to be a contented people.

What does that mean?

Contentment = “Satisfied, not inclined to complain or desire something else; freedom from worry or unsatisfied desires, be sufficient.”

“The difference between the contented person and the discontented person is not how many possessions they own, but whether or not they enjoy what they have.”

Contentment does not mean to maintain the status quo or to settle for second best, or to turn down opportunities to better ourselves and our lifestyles.

- We are called to press on, to rise up to our potential, and to accomplish great things for the glory of the Lord.

The Bible teaches contentment for the true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Prov. 15:16 “Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.”

Phil. 4:11-13 “I have learned to be content/satisfied with what I have and with whatever happens. I know how to live when I am poor and when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of how to live through any kind of situation – when I have enough to eat or when I am hungry, when I have everything I need or when I have nothing. **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**”

I know you’re smart enough to see through the advertising and promotion of various products as a scheme to separate you from your money into the pockets of the merchant; BUT – are you spiritually committed and strong enough to say NO to your flesh and spend your resources for the Kingdom of God which offers Eternal value for your dollars, time and talents?

I. **Never Measure Your Worth by Your Wealth** – V5a

1. The money factor. The Bible has a lot to say about money. There are over 2,000 verses that deal with money:
 - Money is fundamental to life: Ecc. 10:19 “People enjoy eating, and wine makes life happier. But money solves a lot of problems.”
 - Money is neither good nor bad in itself – its the purpose and motive of how its used. “It’s the love of money that is the root/source/cause of evil.”
 - Money is entrusted to us by God: Prov. 3:9 “Honor the Lord with your wealth and the first part of your harvest.”
 - Money is inseparably connected to our spiritual growth: Matt 6:21 “Your heart will be where your treasure is.”

- Money makes a great servant but a terrible master: Ecc. 5:10 “Whoever loves money never has enough money: whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.”
Prov. 22:7 “The rich rules over the poor and the borrower is servant to the lender.”
- Money must be given in order to achieve financial peace and divine blessings: Mal. 3: 8-10 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob ME. But you ask, How are we robbing You?
In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

2. Keep your life free from the love of money: v. 5

- It has been said that you write your autobiography in your checkbook!
- Lydia was a wealthy businesswoman who supported the gospel work of Paul; Jesus had women followers who financially supported His ministry – Luke 8: 2, 3.
 - YOUR LOVE OF MONEY IS THE MEASURE OF
YOUR WORTH BY POSSESSIONS –
BUT YOUR WORTH IS MEASURED BY THE VALUE GOD PLACES
ON YOUR LIFE AS HIS CHILD!

II. Enjoy what you have and where you are today: v. “...be satisfied/content with what you have.”

1. 1Tim. 6:6-10 “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

**“The happiest people don’t necessarily have the best of everything;
they just make the best of everything!”**

2. The Danger of Discontentment:

A. Discontentment leads to covetousness- which comes in two forms:

1. Jealousy of others – jealousy is called a spirit in the Bible, not a good spirit.

Jealous = “Hostility toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage.”

2. Resentment toward others – Covetousness comes from the Greek word meaning – “**Grasping for more.**”

- Christian family author, Tim Kimmel says covetousness is “Material Inebriation. An addiction to things that don’t last and a craving for things that don’t really matter.”

Discontentment complains: “If only...

- If only I had a better job... if only I had a job... a more understanding boss... enough or more money... a bigger house... a slimmer waist... a better education... a better husband/wife... a husband/wife... a lifestyle that produced...
- If only I hadn’t dropped out of school... been forced to have to marry... had an abortion... started drinking or using drugs... been fired... run up so many debts... neglected my wife... quit my job... sold that stock too early...
- If only I’d been born into a better family... lived with people that didn’t judge me... been ashamed of my handicaps...
- If only, if only, if only...

III. **Derive your happiness from your relationship to Jesus, not your life situation!**

V. 6 “God has said, ‘I will never leave you; I will never run away from you.’
So we can feel sure and say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
People can do nothing to me.’”

Paul shares his secret of the sufficiency of Christ –

Phil. 4:11 “For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”

- **You and I are being given the opportunities to learn to be content by the circumstances we find ourselves in.**

Joy is mentioned 16 times in Philippians and Jesus is mentioned 50 times while Paul is in prison suffering for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- He was suffering for doing the right thing.
- We also will get our chance to show how much we love the Lord by suffering for His cause. It’s called carrying our cross daily.

Jesus is our:

- Purpose for life – Phil. 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
- Pattern for life - Phil. 2:2 “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”
- Passion for life - Phil. 3:10 “I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”
- Prize for life – Phil. 3:14 “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”
- Power for life – Phil. 4:13 “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”

Jesus Himself said these words:

Luke 12:15 “He said to them, **Take heed**, and **beware** of covetousness; for a man’s life does not consist of the abundance of the things he possesses.”

ERV - **“Watch out, be on your guard against** all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”