

Series: the god of Money  
“How to Learn Contentment”  
Philippians 4:10 – 13, 1 Timothy 6:6 - 10

Philippians 4:10 How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me.

11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.

12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.

13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”

1 Timothy 6:6 Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.

7 After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it.

8 So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

9 But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

**Big Idea: I should not let myself be deceived by the myth of the greener grass.**

I am using the expression “greener grass” as a synonym for “more stuff”

Erma Bombek wrote a book with a humorous title *The Grass is Always Greener, Over the Septic Tank*

It's been said that “every person lives in one of two tents: contentment or discontent.”

In 1965 the rock band, The Rolling Stones, released a song – (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction. It was written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. It became the Rolling Stones first number one hit in the United States.

In this world there are many people that seem to get no satisfaction out of life. They seem to be unhappy, unfulfilled and unsatisfied. They walk around in a season of discontent. They lack fulfillment in their lives. Like this little poem says:

As a rule, Man's a fool  
When it's hot, He wants it cool.  
And when it's cool, He wants it hot,  
Always wanting What is not.

No one had more reason to be discontent than St. Paul. He was often in prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Still, he wrote that he learned contentment. So then, contentment is an acquired discipline. How did he learn it, how can we learn it? Why should we learn it?

**1. True wealth is found in godliness coupled with contentment. It's a choice! - 1 Timothy 6:6**

There was a 92-year-old lady, petite, poised and proud, who was fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied. Her husband of 70 years had recently passed away, so she had to move to a nursing home.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I went up to her and told her what her room looked like.

"I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just seen a puppy.

"But you haven't even seen the room yet," I said.

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged. It's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it."

Recognizing that I was hearing something profound, I asked her to continue. "I make a decision every morning when I wake up," she said. "I have a choice – I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or I can get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.

Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away just for this time in my life. Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories."

She, like Paul, had learned the secret of true contentment.

Some people are like thermometers and some are like thermostats. Paul was a thermostat. Which one are you?

How could Paul say that he was "content whatever the circumstances?" It's because he knew that circumstances are always changing. If we expect everything to stay the same, we will be disappointed and discontentment will take up residence in our lives.

Paul chose to be content "in any and every situation." This is a sweeping statement that covers every condition of life.

The phrase, “to learn” means to discover by experience, to enter into a new condition. We could translate it this way: “I have come to learn.” How do we do this? What’s the secret Paul is referring to? How can we become satisfied in every situation?

I think we could state the secret this way: “God has so ordered the world and your personal circumstances that no matter what situation you are in right now, if you know Christ, you have everything you truly need to be content.”

Tough times teach us what really matters and what we really need. Let me remind you of some of Paul’s circumstances. In

1 Corinthians 4:11 “To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless.”

What he went through makes my misery seem like a walk in the park.

And yet, somehow he could say in

2 Corinthians 6:10: “Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.”

Check out 2 Cor. 11:23 – 33 if you really want to be amazed!

Contentment does not emerge out of what we do; it grows out of what we go through. Like the Andre’ Crouch song Through It All says, “Through it all, through it all I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God, Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon His Word.”

Paul was a contented Christian. Are you?

Our deepest satisfaction can only come from God, not from a change in our circumstances

Paul had learned the secret of accepting all things and doing all things.

Have you ever asked someone how they’re doing, only to be told with great discomfort, “OK, under the circumstances.”

By God’s grace we must grow so we are above, not under the circumstances

## **2. All grass, no matter how green, is left behind in the end.**

1 Timothy 6:7 After all, we didn’t bring anything with us when we came into the world, and we certainly cannot carry anything with us when we die.

Did you ever see a uHaul trailer behind a hearse? You did now! 😊

Job 1:21 Job stood up and tore his robe in grief. Then he shaved his head and fell to the ground before God. 21He said, “I came naked from my mother’s womb, and I will be stripped of everything when I die. The LORD gave me everything I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!”

22 In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job 2:9 “His wife said to him, “Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die.”

10 But Job replied, “You speak foolishness! Why should we accept or expect only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?” So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.”

### 3. Not much is really needed for life’s journey.

1 Timothy 6:8 So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

Matthew 6:25 “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?”

It’s really all about your **PERSPECTIVE**. Here’s another great look at it:

One day, the father of a very wealthy suburban family took his son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live.

They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

"It was great, Dad.

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So, tell me, what you learned from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered:

"I saw that we have one dog and they had four.

We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end.

We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night.

Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon.

We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight.

We have servants, who serve us, but they serve others.

We buy our food, but they grow theirs.

We have walls around our property to protect us; they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless.

Then his son added, "Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are.!!!"

It doesn’t take much looking around to realize that we are abundantly blessed. In reality, God has so blessed us that we can say with the Psalmist:

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Psalm 16:6).

My share in life, Your boundary lines mark out pleasant places for me. Indeed, my inheritance is something beautiful.”

We are blessed! How are you doing? Can you say like Dave Ramsey says?  
“Better than I deserve!”

#### **4. The desire for “more” / greener grass, is a temptation and trap which catches many.**

1 Timothy 6:9 “But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction.”

Ever heard of Bernie Maddoff? In the Wolf of Wall Street, Leonard DiCaprio played the true story of a guy named Jordan Belfort who in the early 1990’s as a 20 year old started his own investment company and made millions by defrauding rich investors out of millions! How about Jeffrey Epstein?

#### **5. Money seems to be the greenest grass of all, but the love of it is the root cause of all kinds of evil.**

1 Timothy 6:10a “For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil...”

People lie, steal, cheat, even commit murder for money. Many families after a funeral of the father or mother or last surviving elderly parent have fractured in fights over money!

#### **6. The desire for more money causes some to wander away from the faith.**

1 Timothy 6:10b “...some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”

Matthew 13:20 “But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”

#### **7. Be thankful, knowing that in Christ we have all we need and more.**

Romans 8:32 “Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else?”

Hebrews 13:5 “Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never forsake you.”