

1st Timothy, Chapter 6 Questions for Discussion Contentment

con·tent·ment

[kuhn-**tent**-muhnt]

noun

The state of being contented; satisfaction; ease of mind.
(Dictionary.com)

The dictionary definition of “contentment”, above, says that it means “satisfaction”, or “ease of mind”. And 1st Timothy 6:6 says “*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*” So, to put this in my own words, Paul is telling Timothy (and thus, all other Pastors) that being Godly and also being satisfied with the life we are living, is our happiness.

“*Godliness with contentment is great gain*”. Being Godly, and being satisfied with life, no matter how difficult or challenging, is the key to happiness for the leader of the church. Yes, of course this applies to all believers in Jesus....but mostly, I think, Paul is calling out those who are specifically called to lead churches.

So let’s start this chapter: Paul starts out Chapter 6 by continuing his theme from Chapter 5 – Who to Honor:

6:1&2 “*Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. 2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.*”

1. :1-2 Who else are Timothy’s congregation supposed to honor? What if the “master” is a fellow-believer? Should the “slave” continue to serve as a slave? Shouldn’t he bring his case to the “master” who is also a believer, and demand his freedom and rights as a human being?

Paul doesn't address any "rights" here. He simply says if anyone is living his/her life as a slave, he should be sure to honor the master he is serving. And if that master is a fellow-believer, all the more so. There is no hint here that Paul was advising slaves to rebel against their lot in life...or to raise up support for having human rights. Why not? Because Paul's has a greater purpose than human rights!

Now in our world, that is practically a sacrilege – to think that there would be a greater purpose than human rights. But there is a greater purpose – it's taking the Gospel message to the humans in this world. They desperately need the Gospel message much more than they need human rights.

And Paul is telling all Christian slaves who would hear his letter that it was more important to "walk the talk" as Christians than to demand their rights as humans. He is telling them to love their masters and thus show the world the love of Christ, rather than rebel against their masters and show the world they are no different than the hopeless masses of people without Christ.

I see an unwritten message here – one which was first spoken by Jesus to his disciples just before His crucifixion, and then is repeated over and over again in the New Testament: "By this will all men know you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." (John 13:35) And "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends". (John 15:13)

It's more important, apparently, in God's way of thinking, to sometimes die to your own needs and wants and rights, than to fight for your own needs and wants and rights. That's what Jesus did. And that's what He asks His followers to do...not only slaves, but also leaders in His church.

But, you might think, not sticking up for my rights, and not looking out for myself.....that would be a horrible life! No, it's not. It's Godly, and it's the path to ease of mind...to "contentment".

6:3 "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,"

2. :3 What if someone in the church is teaching something other than what Paul has just said? What if someone is teaching a doctrine that says each man should look out for himself and do whatever it takes, even rebellion, to get himself the status he deserves?

If someone is teaching something other than sacrificial love between Christians, then he is wrong, and is going against the teaching of Christ. Period.

3. :3 My NKJV says that the right doctrine is the same as Godliness. Fill in the blank: It matters what you _____. So therefore....it isn't OK to just believe whatever you want to believe, is it?

"It matters what you believe." And no, it isn't OK to just believe anything. What you believe has to be based on what's true...and there is no guideline for what's true other than the Bible.

You can't ever say, "I don't know what the Bible says, I just know what I believe."

Knowing scripture, and letting the Words of God define your belief is Godly, and leads to ease of mind...or "contentment."

6:4&5 "...he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself."

4. :4-5 So, this person who might just be teaching bad doctrine in any area of life...what is this person really like? And what does that tell us about how to view this person? Should we even give our listening ear to anything this person has to say?

Run away from the person teaching anything contrary to the truth. He/she will cause arguments, will love the envy and strife which bubbles up around him/her, and will be proud and self-serving.

Run away.

6:6-10 "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

5. :6-10 What happens when Godliness isn't enough?

Greed takes over. But when Godliness is enough, that leads to ease of mind – to "contentment".

If you are in a painful or difficult situation, just ask yourself: Am I being Godly? Am I reacting like Jesus did? If the answer is yes, then relax. Godliness is enough.

6:11-14 "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing..."

6. :11-14 The man of God needs to flee what? And tightly hold on to what? And actively do what?

Flee bad doctrine and self-promotion. Hold on to Godliness. Actively fight to live by faith and speak of faith to all within your hearing.

6:15&16 "...which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen."

7. :15&16 Why do you think Paul just seems to burst forth with love and wonder for Jesus right here?

Because He is the reason we can live in this seemingly insane way in this desperately mean and cruel world.

6:17-19 "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

8. :17-19 What is Paul's advice for rich people?

Don't trust in your riches for anything in life. Give. Share. Your true riches are in heaven.

6:20&21 "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— ²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen."

9. :20&21 Timothy is told to "guard" that which was committed to his trust. What was committed to his trust? How should he guard it?

The Gospel was committed to Timothy. The truth of the Word of God was committed to Timothy. How to guard this precious commodity? Avoid non-truth and the people which promote it. Don't get all tangled up in what is not true.

Keep it simple. Live Godly. Ease your mind and be content.