

1 Timothy 6:6-8 Commentary

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GODLINESS AND PASTORAL CARE
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Another Overview Chart - [1 Timothy](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

THE PASTOR'S PRIMER: PAUL'S PRACTICAL PASTORAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE LOCAL CHURCH				
1 Timothy 1	1 Timothy 2-3	1 Timothy 4	1 Timothy 5	1 Timothy 6
TIMOTHY'S CHARGE...	TIMOTHY'S INSTRUCTIONS...			
Concerning Sound Doctrine	Concerning Prayer & Church	Concerning Last Days Apostasy	Concerning Widows & Elders	Concerning Conflict & Contentment
Danger of False Doctrine	Public Worship Church Officers	Antidote for Apostasy	Pastoral Duties Toward Others	Instructions for the Man of God
Warning	Worship	Wisdom	Widows	Wealth
Written in Macedonia Circa 62-64AD				

1 Timothy 6:6: But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [estin \(3SPA\)](#) [de porismos megas e eusebeia meta autarkeias](#):

BGT στιν δ πορισμ ς μ γας ε σ βεια μετ α ταρκειας·

Amplified: [And it is, indeed, a source of immense profit, for] godliness accompanied with contentment (that contentment which is a sense of inward sufficiency) is great and abundant gain. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

CSB But godliness with contentment is a great gain.

ESV: Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment,

KJV: But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Moffatt: And so it is—provided it goes with a contented spirit;

NET: Now godliness combined with contentment brings great profit.

NIV But godliness with contentment is great gain.

NLT: Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NRS Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment;

RSV There is great gain in godliness with contentment;

Phillips: There is a real profit, of course, but it comes only to those who live contentedly as God would have them live. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TLB: Do you want to be truly rich? You already are if you are happy and good.

Weymouth: And godliness is gain, when associated with contentment;

Wuest: But godly piety associated with an inward self-sufficiency which is its natural accompaniment is great gain;

Young's Literal: but it is great gain -- the piety with contentment;

- **godliness:** 1Ti 4:8 Ps 37:16 84:11 Pr 3:13-18 8:18-21 15:16 16:8 Mt 6:32,33 Lk 12:31,32 Ro 5:3-5 8:28 2Co 4:17,18 5:1 Php 1:21 Heb 13:5
- **contentment:** 1Ti 6:8 Ex 2:21 Lk 3:14 Php 4:11-13
- 1 Timothy 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Related Resource: Christian Contentment
- See also 1 Timothy 6 Commentary

RELATION OF GODLINESS AND CONTENTMENT

But (de) is a **contrast** which should as always prompt the inquisitive reader to pause and ponder the text asking what is being contrasted, why is it being contrasted, etc. As you develop the skill of intelligently **interrogate** the text, you will begin to experience the joy of self (Spirit illuminated) discovery of truths that heretofore you had not seen. And you will be amazed at how much your observations will help you to "comment on the commentaries!" (**See related resource: inductive Bible study**) In the present **context** the contrast is the false conclusion of the false teachers that godliness was associated with financial gain instead of spiritual gain as Paul explains in this passage.

The rich are not always godly
but the godly are always rich!

Hiebert says the false teachers "are capable of erroneously "supposing that godliness is a way of gain." They conceived of their show of godliness as a profitable commercial investment, a lucrative business, advancing one's worldly interests. The error of the false teachers leads Paul into a discussion of the relation between godliness and wealth. Paul repudiates the perverted concept that godliness is a means of advancing one's material interests, but he knows that there is a sense in which it is a great gain, even in this life. "**But**" introduces the contrast between the erroneous view of the false teachers and the Christian view. (Borrow [First Timothy-Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

Jamieson explains the contrast with the previous verse noting that...Though they (the false teachers alluded to in the preceding passages) err in this, there is a sense in which "piety is" not merely gain, but "great means of gain": not the gaining which they pursue, and which makes men to be discontented with their present possessions, and to use religion as "a cloak of covetousness" (1Th 2:5) and means of earthly gain, but the present and eternal gain which piety, whose accompaniment is contentment, secures to the soul. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

John MacArthur explains the "**but**" this way...The NASB translation reflects an adversative (expressing contrast) sense of the word. Paul's meaning then is "**But** as over against the false understanding of godliness displayed by the false teachers, true godliness does result in great gain." The apostle's point is that true godliness is profitable, but not as some think. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

[The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) says: Paul is picking up on the words "godliness" and "gain." Paul shifted their meaning in a characteristically pauline fashion from the erroneous to the truthful.

Guthrie says: Because money was a chief concern of the false teachers the apostle proceeds to deal with some of its dangers and lays down principles of universal significance. (Borrow [The pastoral epistles : an introduction and commentary](#))

GODLINESS IS GREAT GAIN

Godliness ([eusebeia](#)) *actually is a means of great* (mega) **gain** (porismos) **when accompanied by contentment** ([autarkeia](#)) - **GWN** paraphrases it "A godly life brings huge profits to people who are content with what they have." **Great gain** was what the false teachers saw in godliness (but in truth they had no concept of genuine godliness), seeing it as a means of financial **gain** (cf men like Balaam 2Pe 2:15 and Simon the sorcerer - Acts 8:18-23). Paul counters their false teaching and false assumption by saying "Yes, they are correct there is gain, but not the kind of gain they pursue, for it is better" First, it is better because it is quantitatively "**great**". Furthermore, it is better because it leads to spiritual **gain**, specifically the priceless jewel of Christian contentment!

Lenski translates 1Ti 6:6 as "Now the godliness (I have in mind) together with contentment actually is a great means of gain." The (DEFINITE GREEK) article is pointed (**ED**: THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IN GREEK PRECEDES "GODLINESS" EMPHASIZING A PARTICULAR TYPE OF GODLINESS): not the **godliness** that the mercenary false teachers have in mind but "**the godliness**" which Paul has in mind. Part of it is "**contentment**," hence it is always, "**together with**" or "accompanied by" **contentment**, the condition of being satisfied with what one has and not looking elsewhere. (See [Interpretation of St Paul's Epistle to Timothy](#))

Hendriksen adds that "The truly godly person is not interested in becoming rich. He possesses inner resources which furnish riches far beyond that which earth can offer." (Borrow [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

John MacArthur - Godliness is a right attitude and response toward the true Creator God; a preoccupation from the heart with holy and sacred realities. It is respect for what is due to God, and is thus the highest of all virtues. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

[The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) says: This word "CONTENTMENT" communicates "self-sufficiency," yet the sufficiency of oneself is due to the sufficiency of God.

Hiebert - A state of contentment makes one independent of outward circumstances, satisfied with one's inner resources, enabling one to maintain a spiritual equilibrium in the midst of favorable as well as unfavorable circumstances. It is not a stoical indifference to or contempt for material needs. The Christian can be self-sufficient because his sufficiency is rooted and grounded in God's all-sufficiency and rests with assurance upon God's providential care. Such contentment naturally belongs to true godliness. "S. Paul knows that man is only satisfied in God; and therefore devotion to God is the first condition of this true satisfaction, and contentedness with an earthly lot the second" (Liddon, quoted in Brown). Such godliness is a very different thing from the mercenary concept of the false teachers. It is truly "great gain." It not only brings satisfaction amid one's earthly lot but fills the soul with positive good. "Godliness makes us content, and to be content is the highest good" (Van Oosterzee). (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

ISBE - Godliness, as denoting character and conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart, is the summing up of genuine religion. There can be no true religion without it -- only a dead "form;" (2Pe 3:5-note;). ([The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:1915 edition](#))

Godliness is not "letting go and letting God." There is no such thing as drifting into godliness. In fact the "stream of tendency" is against us! It is vital to remember that growth in **godliness** calls for strenuous involvement on our part. Beloved, how are you doing in your growth in godliness? Are you making every effort, every day, to exercise self-discipline? At this point, beware of the trap of falling into "self-effort" or legalism, whether subtle or overt. Our old flesh nature inherited from Adam is "anti-God" and as believers our only hope for growing in godliness is by continual dependence on the Holy Spirit, who enables us (Php 2:13-note), to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12-note). **For more discussion of what I refer to as a "sacred synergism"** CLICK "Sacred Synergism".

Godliness is a practical awareness of God in every aspect of life. **Godliness** is not *talking* godly but *living* godly. **Godliness** reflects

an attitude centered on living out one's life in God's presence with a desire motivated by love for Him and empowered by His Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29) to be pleasing to Him in all things. **Godliness** refers to having the proper attitude and conduct before God in everything. **Godliness** is that inner attitude of reverence which seeks to please God in every thought, word or deed. **Godliness** desires to be rightly related to both God and men, and brings the sanctifying presence of God into every relationship of one's life. **Godliness** is living one's life with a "Coram Deo" mindset, ever as before the face of God. **Godliness** is a practical awareness of God in every area of life—a God-consciousness. The godly man or woman lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others (see below for relationship with contentment). The godly individual seeks to do the will of God making the kind of decisions that are right and noble, not taking the "easy" path simply to avoid either pain or trial. That's Biblical godliness!

Why is truth that manifests itself in **godliness** so important? The renowned nineteenth-century Scottish preacher **Alexander Maclaren** answers this question writing that "The world takes its notions of God, most of all, from the people who say that they belong to God's family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us; they only hear about Jesus Christ."

The apostle **Paul** explains that whatever it takes it's worth it "for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness** (eusébeia) is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (1Ti 4:8-note) Every saint should meditate on the "trustworthy statement" (cf 1Ti 4:9-note) that a "daily investment" in godliness (whatever the cost in self-discipline and self-denial enabled by grace and the Holy Spirit) will yield profits not only in the present but all eternity!

The apostle **Peter** says "Now for this very reason also, applying **all diligence**, in your faith (faith is the foundation) supply moral excellence and in your moral excellence, knowledge and in your knowledge, self-control and in your self-control, perseverance and in your perseverance, **godliness** (eusebeia) and in your **godliness** (eusebeia), brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love." (2Pe 1:5-note; 2Pe 1:6-7-note)

C H Spurgeon in his sermon on a "form of godliness" (2Ti 3:5-note) (Read this pithy sermon "The Form of Godliness without the Power) offers several descriptions of true godliness, first asking...

What is that power? God Himself is the power of godliness, The Holy Spirit is the life and force of it (cp Jn 6:63).

Godliness is the power which brings a man to God, and binds him to Him.

Godliness is that which creates repentance towards God, and faith in Him.

Godliness is the result of a great change of heart in reference to God and his character.

Godliness looks towards God, and mourns its distance from Him; godliness hastens to draw nigh, and rests not till it is at home with God.

Godliness makes a man like God. Godliness leads a man to love God, and to serve God; it brings the fear of God before his eyes, and the love of God into his heart.

Godliness leads to consecration, to sanctification, to concentration.

The godly man seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33-note), and expects other things to be added to him.

Godliness makes a man commune with God, and gives him a partnership with God in his glorious designs; and so it prepares him to dwell with God for ever.

Many who have the **form of godliness** are strangers to this power, and so are in religion worldly, in prayer mechanical, in public one thing, and in private another. True godliness lies in spiritual power, and as they are without this, they are dead while they live. (Excerpt from **The Form of Godliness without the Power**)

GODLINESS IS ULTIMATELY GOD-LIKENESS

Jerry Bridges author of a book I highly recommend (it's not that long) on the [The Practice of Godliness \(read some of the reviews!\)](#) (see also [Study Guide](#)) said...Godliness... is devotion to God which results in a life that is pleasing to him....It is impossible to practice godliness without a constant, consistent and balanced intake of the Word of God in our lives....The truly godly person is not interested in becoming rich. He possesses inner resources which furnish riches far beyond that which earth can offer....The words 'godly' and 'godliness' actually appear only a few times in the New Testament; yet the entire book is a book on godliness....There is no higher compliment that can be paid to a Christian than to call him godly. **Godliness** is no optional spiritual luxury for a few quaint Christians of a bygone era or for some group of super-saints of today. It is both the privilege and duty of every Christian to pursue godliness, to train himself to be godly, to study diligently the practice of godliness. We don't need any

special talent or equipment. God has given to each one of us "everything we need for life and godliness" (2Pe 1:3-note). The most ordinary Christian has all that he needs, and the most talented Christian must use those same means in the practice of godliness....[Enoch](#) walked with God (Ge 5:21, 22, 23, 24, He 11:5-note); he enjoyed a relationship with God; and he pleased God. We could accurately say he was devoted to God. This is the meaning of godliness. The New Testament word for godliness, in its original meaning, conveys the idea of a personal attitude toward God that results in actions that are pleasing to God. This personal attitude toward God is what we call devotion to God. But it is always devotion in action. It is not just a warm, emotional feeling about God, the kind of feeling we may get while singing some grand old hymn of praise or some modern-day chorus of worship. Neither is devotion to God merely a time of private Bible reading and prayer, a practice we sometimes call "devotions." Although this practice is vitally important to a godly person, we must not think of it as defining devotion for us. ([The Practice of Godliness](#))

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "Godliness" combined with that inner God-given sufficiency which does not depend on material circumstances (the opposite of the false teacher's greed) is indeed of great gain.

Barnes says: This word, as now used, refers to a state of mind; a calm and satisfied feeling; a freedom from murmuring and complaining. The idea is, that "piety, connected with a contented mind--or a mind acquiescing in the allotments of life--is to be regarded as the real gain."

Lenski says: As this godliness is a different matter from that of the mercenary false teachers, so it is also "a means of gain" in a far different sense. For the true godliness is profitable for everything, having promise for the life now and for the one to come, 1Ti 4:8

CONTENTMENT

When accompanied by contentment ([autarkeia](#)) - **NJB** paraphrases it "Religion, of course, does bring large profits, but only to those who are content with what they have." The **Amplified** version says **contentment** as "a sense of inward sufficiency." "Yes" it is *inward* and "yes" it is *sufficiency*, but it is not *sufficiency* as the world defines *sufficiency* - *self sufficiency*! It is in fact total renunciation of *self-sufficiency* and a firm reliance and trust on Christ's sufficiency, via the Spirit of Christ Who indwells every believer.

CONTENTMENT IS NOT SELF SUFFICIENCY BUT "SAVIOR SUFFICIENCY"

Furthermore, real sufficiency is "**SPIRIT SUFFICIENCY**", the sufficiency on and of the "Spirit of Christ" (Ro 8:9, 1Pe 1:11) -- Filled with the Spirit, filled with His power, controlled by Him, walking in Him. None of us will ever get this perfect in this life, but sanctification includes growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ and thus learning to lean on the sufficiency of Christ in us, His Spirit in us being the empowering Agent He sent us when He returned to His Father after the Resurrection. (Lk 24:49, Jn 14:16-17, 15:26, 16:13)

Hiebert writes that "**Contentment**" is literally "self-sufficiency." A state of contentment makes one independent of outward circumstances, satisfied with one's inner resources, enabling one to maintain a spiritual equilibrium in the midst of favorable as well as unfavorable circumstances. It is not a stoical indifference to or contempt for material needs. The Christian can be self-sufficient because his sufficiency is rooted and grounded in God's all-sufficiency and rests with assurance upon God's providential care. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

White feels that "**contentment**" is not a strong enough translation of 1Ti 6:6 explaining that "Autarkeia is more profound, and denotes independence of, and indifference to, any lot; as man's finding not only his resources in himself, but being indifferent to everything else besides. This was St. Paul's condition when he had learnt to be autarkes, Phil 4:11" (EGT, 4:142).

The richest person is the one who doesn't need anything else...

He is richest who desires the least.

-- John MacArthur

John MacArthur - True **godliness** produces **contentment** and spiritual riches. People are truly rich when they are content with what they have. The richest person is the one who doesn't need anything else. When asked the secret of contentment, the Greek philosopher Epicurus replied, "Add not to a man's possessions but take away from his desires" (cited in William Barclay [Commentary](#)). He is richest who desires the least. Proverbs 30:8-9 puts it this way: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, lest I be full and deny Thee and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or lest I be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God." A godly person is motivated not by the love of money but by the love of God. He seeks the true riches of spiritual contentment that come from complete trust in an all-sufficient God....No amount of money will make up for a lack of contentment. John D. Rockefeller once said, "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness." Cornelius Vanderbilt added, "The care of millions is too great a load ... there is no pleasure in it." Millionaire John Jacob Astor described

himself as “the most miserable man on earth.” Despite his wealth, Henry Ford once remarked, “I was happier doing mechanic’s work.” And John D. Rockefeller commented, “The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money.” Love of money and contentment are mutually exclusive. As a Roman proverb put it, money is like sea water, the more you drink the thirstier you get (Barclay, The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, 132). Ecclesiastes 5:10 sums it up, “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money.” (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

Brian Bell - **Contentment** is “not “Winnie the Pooh in the 100 acre wood, after polishing off a whole jar of honey, and then plops himself down against a tree for a sticky, satisfying nap.” (Swindoll) The great gain of godliness with contentment is an attitude of mind, independent of externals, and dependent only on God. Godliness with contentment is independent of one’s bankbook and possessions. It is recognizing the sufficiency of what we have. It is the attitude of the first line of Psalm 23 “The Lord is my shepherd I shall not be in want (lack)” If a person is content you won’t hear them always saying, “Someday I will _____” (have a new house, or be a such & such, etc.) If a person is content they won’t be eaten up with envy over someone else’s achievements or ministry’s growth. If a person is content they are truly grateful for what they have. {a thankless person makes a poor Christian!} If our contentment lies in wealth or any other earthly possession, we’re in for a big disappointment. Why? Because we came into this world carrying nothing, wearing nothing, & owning nothing. So Job said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return.” (Job 1:21 - see [song below](#))

Wiersbe says: The word contentment means “an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances.” Paul used this same word later. “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11). True contentment comes from godliness in the heart, not wealth in the hand. A person who depends on material things for peace and assurance will never be satisfied, for material things have a way of losing their appeal. It is the wealthy people, not the poor people, who go to psychiatrists and who are more apt to try to commit suicide. (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Contented - Adjective. Satisfied; quiet; easy in mind; not complaining, opposing or demanding more. The good man is contented with his lot. It is our duty to be contented with the dispensations of **providence**. **Contentedly** - adverb. In a contented manner; quietly; without concern. **Contentedness** - Noun. State of resting in mind; quiet; satisfaction of mind with any condition or event. (From [1828 Noah Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language](#) is highly recommended because it is far more “Biblically based” than modern version!)

Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines **contentment** as “freedom from anxiety or worry (1Ti 6:6). The idea of **contentment** comes from a Greek word that means “independence” or “self-sufficiency.” But the apostle Paul used the word in a Christian sense to show that real satisfaction or **sufficiency** comes from God: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13-note).

Godliness (piety) ([2150](#))(**eusebeia** from **eu** = well + **sebomai** = reverence. Sebomai is in turn derived from “seb” which refers to sacred awe or reverence exhibited especially in actions) most literally means “well worship”. It describes reverence or awe that is well directed. **Eusebeia** is true religion that displays itself in reverence before what is majestic and divine in worship and in a life of active obedience which befits that reverence. **Eusébeia** is that piety which is characterized by a Godward attitude and does that which is well-pleasing to Him. **Eusebeia** is “;true religion;” or “;true worship;” and describes the person who gives God His rightful place by worshiping Him properly. Genuine worship is more than ;relevant; programs or catchy choruses — it reflects right reverence for God (godliness).

Eusebeia -15x in 15v in the NAS = Acts 3:12; 1Ti 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 4:8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2Ti 3:5; Titus 1:1; 2 Pet 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11

Marvin Vincent writes that **eusebeia** “is from **eu**, well, and **sebomai**, to worship, so that the radical idea is worship rightly directed. Worship, however, is to be understood in its etymological sense, **worth-ship**, or **reverence paid to worth**, whether in God or man...In classical Greek the word is not confined to religion, but means also piety in the fulfilment of human relations.... Even in classical Greek, however, it is a standing word for piety in the religious sense, showing itself in right reverence; and is opposed to ungodliness, and profaneness.” Vincent goes on to quote a secular definition of **eusébeia** which is defined as “The recognition of dependence upon the gods, the confession of human dependence, the tribute of homage which man renders in the certainty that he needs their favor — all this is **eusébeia**, manifest in conduct and conversation, in sacrifice and prayer.” Vincent adds that this secular “definition may be almost literally transferred to the Christian word. It embraces the confession of the one living and true God, and life corresponding to this knowledge.” (Bolding added)(Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. 1, Page 3-677)

Eusebeia does not imply an inward, inherent holiness but is more accurately an externalized piety. Wuest adds that **eusébeia** is “a holy reverence or respect for God, piety towards God. **The word does not refer to a person’s character as such, but to his attitude towards God.**” (Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New

Testament)

Gain (4200) (**porismos** from **porizo** = to get, gain, acquire) is a noun which signifies a means of livelihood a means of earning a living, a providing, a procuring, an acquisition. It describes a means of making money, of gaining a profit or of acquiring wealth (the sense intended by the false teachers Paul describes in 1Ti 6:5). Probably in a wordplay, Paul immediately uses **porismos** again in 1Ti 6:6 (only other NT use) in a figurative sense, describing one's advantage or profit, not from a material but from a spiritual standpoint.

Thayer writes that **porismos** is derived from the verb "porizo - to cause a thing to get on well, to carry forward, to convey, to acquire; middle to bring about or procure for oneself, to gain; from poros (cf. poreuo)."

There are 2 literal uses in the apocryphal (none in the non-apocryphal) Septuagint - Wisdom of Solomon 13:19 ("profit in business"), and Wisdom of Solomon 14:2 ("the urge for profits")

Contentment (841)(**autarkeia** from **autos** = himself + **arkeo** = to suffice) is defined by BDAG from an external (objective) and internal (subjective) aspect - "external, state of having what is adequate, sufficiency, a competence...it is 'sufficient supply'; of God's allocation" and "internal, state of being content w. one's circumstances, contentment, self-sufficiency, a favorite virtue of the Cynics and Stoics." In the "external" sense **autarkeia** is the "ability to supply the necessities of life without help from others." (Friberg). In the "internal" sense **autarkeia** is "a state of mind satisfied with its lot contentment, satisfaction." (Friberg)

Thayer says **autarkeia** is "a perfect condition of life, in which no aid or support is needed...a sufficiency of the necessities of life: (2Co 9:8); subjectively, a mind contented with its lot, contentment:"

Barclay comments on **autarkeia** - The word which is here used for **contentment** is the word **autarkeia**. **Autarkeia** was one of the great watchwords of the Stoic philosophers. By it they meant an entire and complete self-sufficiency. They meant a frame of mind which was completely independent of all outward and external things, and which carried the secret of happiness within itself. Content never comes from the possession of external things. As George Herbert wrote: "For he that needs five thousand pounds to live is full as poor as he that needs but five." **Contentment** comes from an inward attitude to life. In the third part of Henry the Sixth, Shakespeare draws a picture of the king wandering in the country places unknown. He meets two gamekeepers and tells them that he is a king. One of them asks him: "But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?" And the king gives a great answer: "My crown is in my heart, not on my head; Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones, Nor to be seen; my crown is call'd **content**-- A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy." pp. 148-49 "For my own part, humanly speaking, I wish for nothing. A great soul in a small house is the idea which has touched me more than any other."

Benjamin Franklin said: A little house well filled, a little field well tilled, and a little wife well willed, are great riches. There are three faithful friends--an old wife, an old dog, and ready money.

CONTENTMENT COMES FROM DEPENDENCE NOT FROM INDEPENDENCE!

In secular Greek the idea of **autarkeia** is sufficiency in oneself, self-sufficiency, independence. **John MacArthur** explains that **autarkeia**...

was used by the Cynic and Stoic philosophers to describe the person who was unflappable, unmoved by outside circumstances, and who properly reacted to his environment (cf. Geoffrey B. Wilson, The Pastoral Epistles [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982], 85). To be content means to be satisfied and sufficient, and to seek nothing more than what one has. (1Timothy Commentary)

Autarkeia meant **independence** from people and circumstances. They viewed such independence as essential to true happiness. But the believer's sufficiency does not come from **independence** from circumstances but rather from **dependence** on God. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, "My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19-note). ([2Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press)

There is one use of **autarkeia** in the non-canonical work...

Psalms of Solomon 5:16 (English of the Septuagint) Happy is the one whom God remembers with a moderate sufficiency; for if a man is excessively rich, he sins.

BDAG says the idea of **autarkeia** in this passage is "sufficient citation of Biblical references."

CONTENTMENT

Internal satisfaction which does not demand
changes in external circumstances!
-Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Contentment "is that disposition of mind in which one is, through **grace**, independent of outward circumstances (Phil 4:11; 1Ti 6:6, 8 [Cp "definition of blessed = makarios]), so as not to be moved by envy (James 3:16), anxiety (Mt 6:24, 34), and discontent (1Cor. 10:10)." (The New Unger Bible Dictionary)

Contentment means "To be free from care because of satisfaction with what is already one's own." (James Orr - ISBE)

Contentment is "The acceptance of 'things as they are' as the wise and loving **providence** of a God who knows what is good for us, who so loves us as always to seek our good" (Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible).

J C Connell writes that **autarkeia** "denotes freedom from reliance upon others, whether other persons or other things; hence the satisfaction of one's needs (2Cor. 9:8) or the control of one's desires (1Ti 6:6, 8). It is not a passive acceptance of the status quo, but the positive assurance that God has supplied one's needs, and the consequent release from unnecessary desire. The Christian can be 'self-contained' because he has been satisfied by the grace of God (2Cor 12:9-note). The Christian spirit of contentment follows the fundamental commandment of Ex. 20:17 against covetousness, the precept of Pr 15:17; 17:1, the exhortations of the prophets against avarice (e.g. Mic 2:2) and supremely the example and teaching of Jesus, who rebuked the discontent which grasps at material possessions to the neglect of God (Lk. 12:13-21) and who commended such confidence in our Father in heaven as will dispel all anxiety concerning physical supplies (Mt. 6:25-32). In the OT the phrase '**be content**' (from Hebrew yā'al indicates pleasure or willingness to do a certain action, usually one which has been requested by another person, e.g. Ex. 2:21; Jdg. 17:11; 2Ki. 5:23, (New Bible Dictionary)

Easton's Dictionary says that **contentment** is "a state of mind in which one's desires are confined to his lot whatever it may be (1Ti 6:6; 2Cor. 9:8). It is opposed to envy (James 3:16), avarice (Heb 13:5), ambition (Pr. 13:10), anxiety (Mt. 6:25, 34), and repining (1 Cor. 10:10). It arises from the inward disposition, and is the offspring of humility, and of an intelligent consideration of the rectitude and benignity of divine **providence** (Ps. 96:1, 2; 145), the greatness of the divine promises (2Pet. 1:4), and our own unworthiness (Ge. 32:10); as well as from the view the Gospel opens up to us of rest and peace hereafter (Ro. 5:2).

There is a popular Christian song which while not using the word **contentment** clearly expresses an **attitude of contentment** in the lyrics - you've heard the song but perhaps you never considered it to be a song about contentment. Play the song and listen carefully to the words to see if you don't agree that [BLESSED BE YOUR NAME \(play\)](#) is a veritable anthem of **contentment**...

Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name

When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name

I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say

Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name

When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name

On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name

I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say

Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name

Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name

You give and take away
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, blessed be Your name
[\(Another version with lyrics and vocal\)](#)

CONTENTMENT:
NOT PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE OF STATUS QUO
BUT POSITIVE ASSURANCE IN GOD'S SUPPLY

THE POWER FOR CONTENTMENT

The only other NT use of **autarkeia** is in 2Corinthians 9:8 and this use helps us understand how we as believers can experience "sufficiency or "contentment". Paul writes a verse filled with "**all**" (pun intended) we need...

God is (present tense = continuously) **able** (verb **dunateo** related to **dunatos** = He has the inherent ability and supernatural power to accomplish and) to make **all** grace abound (**perisseuo** = to be in abundance, to surpass your need, to be more than enough) to you, **so that** (term of purpose, aim or goal - always pause to ponder, and **interrogate** asking "What is the purpose") **always** (present tense = continuously) having **all sufficiency** (**autarkeia**) in **everything**, you may have an abundance for **every good deed** - (2 Corinthians 9:8+)

Comment: "God is able" is a repeated phrase in Scripture (Mt 3:9, Lk 3:8, Ro 11:23-note, 2Co 9:8, Heb 11:19-note, cp "He is able" - Da 4:37-note, 2Ti 1:12-note, Heb 2:18-note, Heb 7:25-note, cp Eph 3:20-note, Jude 1:24, cp Acts 20:32-note, James 4:12, Ro 14:4) Observe the repeated use (5x) of the Greek adjective "**pas**" ("always" is pantote a derivative of "pas" = at all times!) which means (at all times - pantote) **all without exception!**

Repeated use of this word was Paul's attempt to try to explain the **magnanimity of God's generosity**, which is off the scale so to speak and has no limits! While this verse is in the context of **generous giving**, it is applicable in principle to all our needs ("all sufficiency in everything"). **How can a believer be content in any circumstance?** God generously gives His abounding grace to supply for our need. In First Peter we see while God does allow "multicolored" trials ("various trials" 1Peter 1:6-note) in our lives, He also provides "multicolored" grace ("manifold grace" 1Pe 4:10-note) that is just right for the trial, allowing us to go through the trial without loss of contentment. The point is that we cannot just "grit our teeth" so to speak and say "I'm going to be content no matter what happens." We must learn to renounce our self reliance and choose to rely on the truth that His "grace is sufficient for (us), for His power is perfected in (our) weakness" and "when I am weak, then I am strong." (2Cor 12:9-note, 2Cor 12:10-note). Earlier in the second letter to the Corinthians Paul had reminded them "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (cp Jn 6:63)." (2Cor 3:5, 6-note)

In summary, our **contentment** is dependent on God's grace, God's power, God's adequacy, and God's Spirit. However, as explained in the following passage, this contentment requires matriculation through God's school of real life circumstances. (See also F B Meyer - 2 Corinthians 9:8 Grace Abounding)

Technical Note: The phrase "always having all sufficiency in everything" in Greek actually reads "**en panti pantote pasan**" so that literally in English it reads "**in everything always all sufficiency having**"

THE PROCESS TOWARD CONTENTMENT

Paul explains "Not that I speak from want; for **I have learned to be content (autarkes)** in **whatever circumstances** I am. I know how to get along with humble means ("how to be abased" = tapeinoo), and I also know how to live in prosperity ("how to abound" = perisseuo); in any and every circumstance **I have learned the secret** (All one word in Greek = mueo) of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Phil 4:11, 12-note, Phil 4:13-note)

So if you are like me and have not yet "mastered" the art of **contentment**, Paul explains that contentment is something that **must be learned**. As **Thomas Watson** puts it "it is not enough for Christians to *hear* their duty, but they must *learn* their duty. It is one thing to *hear* and another thing to *learn*; as it is one thing to eat and another thing to digest. St Paul was a practitioner. Christians *hear* much, but it is to be feared, *learn* little. There were four sorts of grounds in the parable, (Lk 8:5) and but one good ground: an emblem of this truth, many *hearers*, but few *learners*." (From [The Art of Divine Contentment - highly recommended reading](#)) In fact, I would posit that while will be **learning the secret** of contentment for the rest of our lives, as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should be able to say more and more confidently that indeed we "**can do all things through Him Who** (continually) **strengthens**" us. Note that "**strengthen**" is the Greek verb **endunamoo** in the **present tense** which in this context signifies that Jesus (the Spirit of Christ, Ro 8:9-note), continually gives us **dunamis**, the inherent power to accomplish a task, in this case **to be content** and to do so in dependence on His strength which continually enables us to do what we could never accomplish in our fleshly strength! As an aside, I fear many saints quote Phil 4:13 out of **context** and completely miss Paul's intended meaning! The reason Paul could make such a wonderful statement on His sufficiency in Christ was based on the **secret** he had **learned** in Phil 4:11,12! This is just another example of learning to read the text in **context**, one of the critical components of **inductive Bible study**.

THOUGHT - Only genuine believers can be truly, fully content, for in the final analysis, contentment is not a natural attainment but a supernatural gift from our heavenly Father to His children! To say it another way, a believer's degree of contentment in this world is a reflection of their degree of contentment regarding the world to come! The more the invisible, eternal things above grip our heart, the less will be the power of the visible, temporal things of the world to cause us discontent.

Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs explains Phil 4:11 this way - The word rendered '**content**' here has great elegance and fullness of meaning in the original. In the strict sense it is only attributed to God, Who has styled Himself 'God all-sufficient', in that He rests fully satisfied in and with Himself alone. But He is pleased freely to communicate His fullness to the creature, so that from God in Christ the saints receive '**grace upon grace**' (John 1:16) . As a result, there is in them the same grace that is in Christ, according to their measure. In this sense, Paul says, I have a **self-sufficiency**, which is what the word means. But has Paul got a **self-sufficiency**? you will say. How are we sufficient of ourselves! Our Apostle affirms in another case, 'That we are not sufficient (adequate) of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves' (2Corinthians 3:5-note). Therefore his meaning must be, I find a sufficiency of satisfaction in my own heart, through the grace of Christ that is in me. Though I have not outward comforts and worldly conveniences to supply my necessities, yet **I have a sufficient portion between Christ and my soul abundantly to satisfy me in every condition**. (From the introduction to [The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment - 1651](#) - for instruction on Contentment this work is a Christian Classic and is Recommended Reading -- but you won't be able to "speed read" it.) ([Read some of the reviews to help motivate you to read this book](#))

Charles Pfeiffer agrees adding that "The secret of **contentment** lies in the Christian's fellowship and union with God (**Ed**: through our covenant relationship with Christ - see "**in Christ**").(Phil 4:11-13)(The Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia)

CONTENTMENT
AND
A HUMBLE WALK

John Owen...The soul that sets up its rest, and makes it its great concernment to walk humbly with God, is brought to His foot, bent to His will, is ready for His disposal; and whatever God does in the world with himself, his, or others, he hath peace and quietness in it. His own will is gone, the will of God is his choice; his great concernment lies not in anything that can perish, that can be lost. When a man shall see, in the worst state and condition, that his great concernment is safe; that though all is lost, God, who is all, is not lost; that this can never be taken from him;—it fills his heart with delight. Is he in prosperity? he fears not the loss of that which he most values. Is he in adversity? yet he can walk with God still; which is his all. He can therefore glory in tribulations, rejoice in afflictions;—his treasure, his concernment is secure. ([from sermon entitled Of Walking Humbly With God](#))

O Lord, give me the grace to be
Content with what You give to me.
No, more than that, let me rejoice
In all You send, for it's Your choice!

Related Resources:

- Click for more discussion of godliness
- [What does it mean that godliness with contentment is great gain \(1 Timothy 6:6\)?](#)
- [Is cleanliness next to godliness?](#)
- [What does it mean to have a form of godliness but deny its power in 2 Timothy 3:5?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about being a godly woman?](#)
- [Practical Godliness](#) - A W Pink
- See [Monergism Contentment](#)
- [The Exercise and Profit of Godliness](#) - J C Philpot
- [The Godly Man's Picture](#) (or [book](#)) - Thomas Watson
- [The Great Gain of Godliness](#) - Thomas Watson
- [The Power of Godliness](#) - James Smith - **Excerpt:** "Godliness has been represented as devotion. But devotion is but a part of godliness — and a very small part of it too. Godliness embraces God's work in the man, and the man's work for God. It is God-likeness. The godly man has the image of God impressed on his heart. He is new-created, that he may bear the likeness of Jesus. He is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. The moral perfections of God are stamped on his. Justice, truth, holiness, mercy, and love, are his characteristics: and in proportion to the depth and power of the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart — do these things appear in his life. To be perfectly like God, in his moral excellencies, is the abiding desire of his soul. For this he labors. For this he prays. At this he aims. And looking forward to his future destination, he says, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with your likeness." He loves holiness above all things else, and so far as he is godly — he has no sympathy with sin. In Godliness there is power. Viewed as **the work of the Holy Spirit in a man** (ED: DON'T MISS THIS - THE SPIRIT IS THE POWER FOR TRUE GODLINESS!) it is a powerful work."
- American Tract Society [Godly](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Godly, Godliness](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Godliness](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Godliness](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Godliness](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Godliness](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Godliness](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Godliness, Godly](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Godliness](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Godliness; Godly](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Godliness](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Godliness](#)
- King James Dictionary [Godly Godliness](#)

GODLINESS, n. from godly. Piety belief in God, and reverence for His character and laws. A religious life a careful observance of the laws of God and performance of religious duties ([ENABLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT](#)), proceeding from love (Gal 5:22+) and reverence for the divine character and commands. Christian obedience. Godliness is profitable unto all things. 1 Timothy 4:8+ .

PONDER THESE QUOTES RELATED TO CONTENTMENT

All the world lives in two tents—content and discontent.

Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure. Anon.

Contentment is wanting what you have, not having everything you want.

The richest person is the one who is contented with what he has.

Many Christians find it difficult to be content because we typically focus, not on what we do have, but on what we lack!

Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have.

When you can think of yesterday without regret and tomorrow without fear, you are near contentment.

A Christian is one who does not need to consult his bank balance to see how wealthy he is.

A contented person is one who enjoys the scenery along the detour.

Let your riches consist, not in the largeness of your possessions, but in the fewness of your wants. - Anonymous

It isn't what we have, but what we enjoy that makes for a rich life, and the wise person understands that contentment is not having everything we want, but enjoying everything we have.

Contentment comes not so much from great wealth as from few wants.

A contented spirit is a fruit of divine grace. - George Barlow

Contentment with what we have is absolutely vital to our spiritual health. -Jerry Bridges

It is the best riches not to desire riches. -Thomas Brooks

If we have not quiet in our minds, outward comfort will do no more for us than a golden slipper on a gouty foot. - John Bunyan

Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition. (**Ed**: A corollary is that this contentment is firmly rooted in a steadfast faith in the **providence** of God - trusting that whatever happens in my life is "filtered through the omnipotent, omniscient, loving fingers" of my Father!) (See also Jeremiah's Burroughs' classic work [The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment](#)) -Jeremiah Burroughs - Comment: Consider reading this book with Christian blogger [Tim Challis reading thru Burroughs book](#)

Being "contented" ought to mean in English, as it does in French, being pleased. Being content with an attic ought not to mean being unable to move from it and resigned to living in it: it ought to mean appreciating all there is in such a position. -G. K. Chesterton

True contentment is the power of getting out of any situation all that there is in it. - G. K. Chesterton

O what a happy soul am I!
Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be;
How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't!
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, and I won't.
- Fanny Crosby

I am always content with what happens, for what God chooses is better than what I choose. Epictetus'

Contentment does not depend on what we have; it depends on who we are. It is a spiritual attainment, not something that results from purchasing power. As someone has said, "Contentment is a state of heart rather than a statement of account." - Theodore Epp

Contentment is the direct fruit of having no higher ambition than to belong to the Lord, at His disposal. - Sinclair Ferguson

If we noticed little pleasures,
As we notice little pains—
If we quite forgot our losses
And remembered all our gains.
If we looked for people's virtues
And their faults refused to see.
What a comfortable, happy, cheerful place
This world would be!
--Forbes Magazine of Business

Content (ment) makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor. - Benjamin Franklin

Better a little fire to warm us than a great one to burn us. - Thomas Fuller

Contentment consists not in adding more fuel, but in taking away some fire; not in multiplying wealth, but in subtracting men's desires. - Thomas Fuller

Be happy with what you have and are, be generous with both, and you won't have to hunt for happiness. William E Gladstone

Contentment is realizing that God has already given me everything I need for my present happiness. - Bill Gothard

Contentment is understanding that if I am not satisfied with what I have, I will never be satisfied with what I want. - Bill Gothard

Happy is the person who has learned the **secret of being content** with whatever life brings him, and has learned to rejoice in the simple and beautiful things around him. - Billy Graham

Some one hundred years ago it was determined that the average American had about 70 wants, things he desired to have. A similar survey was taken of his grandson and he had nearly 500 wants on his list and today, I'm sure that number is even higher. Why? Because people are not content in what they have! - Joe Guglielmo - [Philippians 4:11-20 The Content Life](#)

The holy person is the only contented man in the world. - William Gurnall

He is much happier that is always content, though he has ever so little, than he that is always coveting, though he has ever so much. - Matthew Henry

That condition of life is best for every man which is best for his soul, and keeps him most clear of the cares and snares of the world. - Matthew Henry

Contentment is internal satisfaction which does not demand changes in external circumstances. - Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Christ is enough to satisfy the hearts of all who confide in Him and who leave everything in His hands. Such need never be cast down by seeming misfortunes. A Christian asked another how he was getting along. Dolefully his friend replied, "Oh, fairly well, under the circumstances." "I am sorry," exclaimed the other, "that you are under the circumstances. The Lord would have us living above all circumstances, where He Himself can satisfy our hearts and meet our every need for time and eternity." -- H. A. Ironside

Is your place a small place?
Tend it with care!
He set you there.
Is your place a large place?
Guard it with care!
He set you there.
Whatever your place, it is
Not yours alone, but His,
Who set you there.
--John Oxenham

The only person in this world who enjoys complete contentment is the person who knows that the only worthwhile and satisfying life is to be a means, however humble, to God's chief end his own glory and praise. - J. I. Packer

All the misfortunes of men spring from their not knowing how to live quietly at home in their own rooms. -Blaise Pascal

Contentment does not come naturally but only supernaturally as one learns that this life is no longer me living it, but Christ living in and through me. - Preceptaustin

Contentment is an embracing of the **providence** of God. -George SeEVERS

If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled. -C. H. Spurgeon

Small shoes are apt to pinch, but not if you have a small foot; if we have little means it will be well to have little desires. Poverty is no shame, but being discontented with it is. - Spurgeon

It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy that brings happiness. - Spurgeon

Even crumbs are bread...A crust is hard fare, but none at all is harder. - Spurgeon

A little sprig of the herb called content put into the poorest soup will make it taste as rich as the Lord Mayor's turtle. - Spurgeon

I have heard of some good old woman in a cottage, who had nothing but a piece of bread and a little water, and lifting up her hands, she said, as a blessing, "What! all this, and Christ too?" - Spurgeon

Remember that a man's contentment is in his mind, not in the extent of his possessions. Alexander, with all the world at his feet, cries for another world to conquer.- Spurgeon

To many men it is given to have all that heart can wish, and yet not to have what their heart does wish. They have everything except contentment. - Spurgeon

The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One - AW Tozer

There is no better antidote against coveting that which is another's than being content with that which is our own. -Thomas Watson

Immoderate care (anxiety) takes the heart off from better things; and usually while we are thinking how we shall live, we forget how to die. - Thomas Watson

Discontent keeps a man from enjoying what he doth possess. A drop or two of vinegar will sour a whole glass of wine. - Thomas Watson

The fewer desires, the more peace.-Joseph Wilson

Sermons by Charles Simeon that discuss contentment -

(1) [**Contentment Illustrated in the Shunamite - 2Kings 4:13**](#)

Excerpt: [Nothing will so soon or so effectually deliver us from worldly desires, as the acquisition and experience of heavenly joys. Our Lord told the Samaritan woman that "whosoever should drink of Jacob's well, would thirst again; but that whosoever should drink of the water that he would give, should never thirst." And so we find it invariably. "By the cross of Christ, the world will become crucified unto us, and we unto the world." Let us then "set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth:" so shall we both advance our happiness here, and secure a more exalted happiness in the realms above

(2) [**Contentment - Philippians 4:11-12**](#)

Excerpt: How am I to "learn" this lesson? (CONTENTMENT) I ANSWER,

1. Apply to God for the influences of his Holy Spirit—It is, as I have said, the knowledge of Christ crucified, and that alone, that can ever fill the soul and render it superior to all earthly things. But who can give you that knowledge? It is the office of "the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ, and to reveal them unto us." None but he can "open the eyes of our understanding;" none but he can "guide us into all truth;" nor can any but he renew our souls after the Divine image — — — Pray then to God for the gift of his Holy Spirit: and, if you yourselves would not mock your child with giving him a stone when he asked for bread, much less will God mock you, by refusing to impart to you this gift, in which all good things for time and for eternity are contained.]

2. Contemplate the fulness which is treasured up for you in Christ Jesus—"It has pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fulness dwell:" and for you is it treasured there, that "you may receive out of it" according to your necessities. Hence then, if you have believed in Christ, you are authorized to say, "All things are mine, since I am Christ's." And if all things are yours, whether "things present, or things to come," what can you lack? or what ground can you have for discontent? Only get clear views of Christ as your righteousness and strength, and you will be at no loss for the attainment which your soul desires — — —

3. Survey the glory that is reserved for you in heaven—[What does it matter to a traveler, if his accommodations, where he stops but a few minutes, be not exactly such as he could wish? Can they carry me forward to my destined home? will be his main inquiry: and if he find that he can attain his wishes in this respect, he will not lay to heart the little inconveniences which he is to sustain for so short a time. The comforts which he shall enjoy at home occupy his mind; and the very discomforts of the way endear to him the end, and make him look forward to it with augmented zest. Let it then be thus with you, my brethren: ye are only pilgrims and sojourners here: and, if you dwell with blessed anticipations on your eternal rest, you will

become indifferent to the accommodations of the way; and, according to the grace given to you, will be enabled to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Having tasted of redeeming love, they are become comparatively indifferent to every thing else. Whatever they possess, they account on undeserved mercy: whatever they want, they regard as scarcely worthy of a thought. They know that "all things shall eventually work together for their good." "They are hid, in the secret of their Saviour's presence, from the strife of tongues: and whilst the minds of others are agitated with violent and malignant passions, theirs are "kept in perfect peace." This, then, I would earnestly recommend to you: Let your first concern be about your own souls. Seek for reconciliation with your offended God; and endeavor to walk in the light of his countenance. Then, whatever others may do, you may look forward to better times, when all troubles shall have fled away, and your happiness be unalloyed in the bosom of your God.

(3) [Contentment Recommended - Ecclesiastes 7:10](#)

Excerpt: Having tasted of redeeming love, they are become comparatively indifferent to every thing else. Whatever they possess, they account on undeserved mercy: whatever they want, they regard as scarcely worthy of a thought. They know that "all things shall eventually work together for their good." "They are hid, in the secret of their Saviour's presence, from the strife of tongues: and whilst the minds of others are agitated with violent and malignant passions, theirs are "kept in perfect peace." This, then, I would earnestly recommend to you: Let your first concern be about your own souls. Seek for reconciliation with your offended God; and endeavour to walk in the light of his countenance. Then, whatever others may do, you may look forward to better times, when all troubles shall have fled away, and your happiness be unalloyed in the bosom of your God.

(4) [Inordinate Desire Punished - Numbers 11:10-13](#)

Excerpt: 2. Cultivate a Contented Spirit - "Be contented with such things as ye have." (Heb 13:5) It is better to have little with a devout spirit, than abundance, and "leanness of soul withal." (Ps 106:15KJV) God showed that it was not from any want of power that he did not feed them every day with flesh (Ed: Referring to God's provision to Israel in the wilderness - cp Nu 11:4-6, 31-34); but because he knew that it would be productive of no good to their souls. Think not that it is from any want of love or power that he suffers you to be tried in a variety of ways. He could easily carry you on without any trials, and give you all that the most carnal heart could desire. But trials are the fruits of His love: He desires to instruct you in every part of your duty; that you may "know both how to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." (Php 4:12) "Learn then in every thing to be content," and to say from your hearts in all things, "Not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42)

Thomas Watson wrote that **contentment** is

a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a Christian carries himself in an equal poise in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three aphorisms.

(1) Contentment is a divine thing; it becomes ours, not by acquisition, but infusion; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of philosophy, but is of an heavenly birth; it is therefore very observable that contentment is joined with godliness, and goes in equipage; "godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Ti 6. 6) Contentment being a consequent of godliness, or concomitant, or both, I call it divine, to contradistinguish it to that of contentment, which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have seemed to have this contentment, but it was only the shadow and picture of it; — the beryl, not the true diamond: theirs was but civil, this is sacred; theirs was only from principles of reason, this of religion; theirs was only lighted at nature's torch, this at the lamp of scripture. Reason may a little teach contentment, as thus: whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to; and if I meet with crosses, it is but catholic misery: all have their share, why therefore should I be troubled? Reason may suggest this; and indeed, this may be rather constraint; but to live securely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature supplies, only religion can bring this into the soul's exchequer.

(2) Contentment is an intrinsic (internal) thing -- it lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment has both its fountain and stream in the soul. The beam has not its light from the air; the beams of comfort which a contented man has, do not arise from foreign comforts, but from within. As sorrow is seated in the spirit; "the heart knows its own bitterness:" (Pr. 14. 10) so contentment lies within the soul, and does not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this blessed contentment: it is a spiritual thing, and arises from spiritual grounds; the apprehension of God's love. When there is a tempest

without, there may be music within; a bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart; outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christian's heart, where contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our money and plate, but not of this pearl of contentment, unless we are willing to part with it, for it is locked up in the cabinet of the heart; the soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of contentment, is like Noah in the ark, that can sing in the midst of a deluge.

(3) Contentment is an habitual thing -- it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment does not appear only now and then, as some stars which are seen but seldom; it is a settled temper of the heart. One action does not denominate; he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so: but he is said to be liberal, that is, "given to hospitality," that is, who upon all occasions is willing to relieve the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man that is given to contentment. It is not casual but constant. Aristotle, in his rhetoric, distinguishes between colours in the face that arise from passion, and those which arise from complexion; the pale face may look red when it blushes, but this is only a passion; he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man, who is so upon occasion, and perhaps when he is pleased: but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion in his soul. ([The Art of Divine Contentment](#) - highly recommended reading) (For motivation to read this book, the old style of which does take some effort [Read Some of the Reviews](#))

Contentment is being just as happy driving that Mercedes as you would be if you had to drive that jalopy from college. In both cases you'd have a ride. Contentment is taking as much pleasure in that big three-hundred-thousand-dollar house as you would a two-bedroom apartment. In both cases you'd have a roof over your head. Contentment is appreciating that T-bone steak as much as you would a hot dog. In both cases you are not starving. Contentment is being just as satisfied with the designer outfit as you would with an outfit from the thrift store. In both cases you have clothes on your back and you are not naked. Contentment is realizing that God has met your needs. (Tony Evans' book of illustrations: stories, quotes, and anecdotes)

Someone said: But if one should guide his life by true principles, man's greatest wealth is to live on a little with contented mind; for a little is never lacking.

Advertisers are well aware of our propensity toward covetousness, and spend an inordinate amount of time attempting to make us dissatisfied. They know if we become discontent enough, the frustration of our covetousness will make us spend and spend. Due to our chronic covetousness, many of us have adopted the motto, "I shop, therefore I am." (Tony Evans' book of illustrations: stories, quotes, and anecdotes)

UPROOTED BY DISCONTENT

And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. --1 Timothy 6:8

A little girl walking in a garden noticed a particularly beautiful flower. She admired its beauty and enjoyed its fragrance. "It's so pretty!" she exclaimed. As she gazed on it, her eyes followed the stem down to the soil in which it grew. "This flower is too pretty to be planted in such dirt!" she cried. So she pulled it up by its roots and ran to the water faucet to wash away the soil. It wasn't long until the flower wilted and died.

When the gardener saw what the little girl had done, he exclaimed, "You have destroyed my finest plant!" "I'm sorry, but I didn't like it in that dirt," she said. The gardener replied, "I chose that spot and mixed the soil because I knew that only there could it grow to be a beautiful flower."

Often we murmur because of the circumstances into which God has sovereignly placed us. We fail to realize that He is using our pressures, trials, and difficulties to bring us to a new degree of spiritual beauty. Contentment comes when we accept what God is doing and thank Him for it.

God knows everything about us, and He is making all things work together for our good. The "dirt" where He has planted us is just what we need. So let's trust Him and allow Him to bring us to maturity. Discontentment can uproot us and stop our growth. --P.R.V.

He who has learned to take from God's dear hand
What He sees fit in wisdom to command
Will rest content beneath His loving eye
And never ask from Him the reason why.
--Maxwell

CONTENTMENT ENABLES YOU TO GROW WHERE GOD HAS PLANTED YOU.

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. --Hebrews 13:5

What would it take to make you happy? Inheriting a fortune? Winning \$14 million in the lottery and being able to purchase anything you want?

A psychologist named Denier did a study on the effect that a major life change would have on a person's happiness. Half the people tested were big lottery winners. The other half suffered severe injuries in bad car accidents. To his amazement, Denier discovered that a few weeks after these drastic life changes both groups were about equally happy and satisfied with their lives. Denier concluded that we "evaluate our lives on the basis of other people in similar circumstances" and feel about the same degree of fulfillment.

Christians, however, have another explanation. If we accept ourselves the way God made us, if we are grateful for whatever He has given us, and if we trust in His unending goodness, we can experience a joy that does not depend on changing circumstances.

How foolish to keep wishing for a stroke of financial good luck to bring us happiness! Or to live in mortal fear that a calamity will take all our happiness away. Happiness does not come from happenings. It comes from accepting what God gives us and being content with it. --D.C.E.

Come joy or grief, content I'll rest
And feel myself supremely blest,
Since naught in earth or heaven can part
The Savior from the loving heart.
--Edersheim

TRUE HAPPINESS IS KNOWING THAT GOD IS GOOD.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE - A Jewish man in Hungary went to his rabbi and complained, "Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?" The rabbi answered, "Take your goat into the room with you." The man was incredulous, but the rabbi insisted, "Do as I say and come back in a week."

A week later the man returned looking more distraught than before. "We can't stand it," he told the rabbi. "The goat is filthy." The rabbi said, "Go home and let the goat out, and come back in a week." A week later the man returned, radiant, exclaiming, "Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there's no goat- only the nine of us." (Reader's Digest [12/81].) Contentment is more a matter of our perspective than of our circumstances, isn't it!....

Legend has it that a wealthy merchant during Paul's day had heard about the apostle and had become so fascinated that he determined to visit him. So when passing through Rome, he got in touch with Timothy and arranged an interview with Paul the prisoner. Stepping inside his cell, the merchant was surprised to find the apostle looking rather old and physically frail, but he felt at once the strength, the serenity, and the magnetism of this man who relied on Christ as his all in all. They talked for some time, and finally the merchant left. Outside the cell, he asked Timothy, "What's the secret of this man's power? I've never seen anything like it before." "Did you not guess?" replied Timothy. "Paul is in love." The merchant looked puzzled. "In love?" he asked. "Yes," said Timothy, "Paul is in love with Jesus Christ." The merchant looked even more bewildered. "Is that all?" he asked. Timothy smiled and replied, "That is everything." (Adapted from Leonard Griffith, *This is Living* [Abingdon], p. 149.)

That's the secret of contentment--to be captivated by Christ--as the Sovereign to whom I submit; as the Savior whom I serve; as the Sufficient One whom I trust in every situation. ([From Steven Cole's message - The Secret of Contentment](#))

A story is told of a king who was suffering from a mysterious malady and was advised by his astrologer that he would be cured if the shirt of a contented man was brought for him to wear. People went out to all parts of the kingdom looking for such a person, and after a long search they found a man who was really happy. But he did not even possess a shirt. (Michael P. Green, 1500 illustrations for biblical preaching)

A Puritan sat down to his meal and found that he had only a little bread and some water. His response was to exclaim, "What? All this and Jesus Christ, too!" Contentment is found when we have a correct perspective on life.

A little Swiss watch had been made with the smallest of parts and great skill. Yet it was dissatisfied with its restricted sphere of influence on a lady's wrist. It envied the position of the great tower clock on the city hall. One day as it passed with its owner by the city hall, the tiny watch exclaimed, "I wish I could go way up there! I could then serve many instead of just one." Now it so happened that its owner was in a position with the city that gave her access to the tower clock, so she said, "You shall have your opportunity, little watch." The next day, a slender thread was let down from the tower and the little watch was tied to it. Slowly and carefully, the watch was pulled up the side of the tower, rising higher and higher each moment. Of course, when it reached the top, it was completely lost to view. In this dramatic way, the watch learned that its elevation had effected its annihilation! Pray that you too may not lose the small influence you now have for Christ by coveting something larger for which you are not equipped, and which God constantly refuses you in his love. Learn to be content. (Michael P. Green, 1500 illustrations for biblical preaching)

Two little teardrops were floating down the river of life. One teardrop asked the other, "Who are you?" "I am a teardrop from a girl who loved a man and lost him. But who are you?" The first teardrop replied, "I am a teardrop from the girl who got him." Life is like that. We cry over the things we can't have, but we might cry twice as hard if we had received them. Paul had the right idea when he said, "... I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation ..." (Phil 4:12NIV). (Michael P. Green, 1500 illustrations for biblical preaching)

Billy Graham tells this story illustrating godliness and contentment - My wife and I were invited to have lunch with one of the wealthiest men in the world. He was seventy-five years old. Tears came down his cheeks. "I am the most miserable man in the world," he said. "I have everything anyone could ever want. If I want to go anywhere, I have my own yacht or private plane. But down inside I'm miserable and empty." Shortly after, I met another man who preached in a small church nearby. He was vivacious and full of life, and he told us, "I don't have a penny to my name, but I'm the happiest man in the world!"

Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).

God promises to provide the necessities of life, such as food and clothing. Once we have accepted this, we have laid the foundation for genuine contentment.

"As World War II was drawing to a close, the Allied armies gathered up many hungry orphans. They were placed in camps where they were well-fed. Despite excellent care, they slept poorly. They seemed nervous and afraid. Finally, a psychologist came up with the solution. Each child was given a piece of bread to hold after he was put to bed. . . . This particular piece of bread was just to be held—not eaten. The piece of bread produced wonderful results. The children went to bed knowing instinctively they would have food to eat the next day. That guarantee gave the children a restful and contented sleep" (Charles L. Allen, God's Psychiatry).

For most of us, the refrigerator and the cupboard contain enough food for tomorrow's meals. Yet, like those children, we still feel a gnawing anxiety. Why is this? Either we do not trust God or we think we need more than we have. We have substituted desire for need and need for desire. Even Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart," is not an unconditional promise that God will give us whatever we want. We must first delight ourselves in Him. Then our desires will be in line with what He desires to give us—and that will bring us true contentment. —D. J. DeHaan

**Contentment comes not from greater wealth
but from fewer wants.**

How Much to Make Us Content? - In the fifth century, a man named Arenius determined to live a holy life. So he abandoned the conforms of Egyptian society to follow an austere lifestyle in the desert. Yet whenever he visited the great city of Alexandria, he spent time wandering through its bazaars. Asked why, he explained that his heart rejoiced at the sight of all the things he didn't need. Those of us who live in a society flooded with goods and gadgets need to ponder the example of that desert dweller. A typical supermarket in the United States in 1976 stocked 9,000 articles; today it carries 30,000. How many of them are absolutely essential? How many superfluous? - Our Daily Bread, May 26, 1994.

Content with What He Possessed - Philip Parham tells the story of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. "Why aren't you out there fishing?" he asked.

"Because I've caught enough fish for today," said the fisherman.

"Why don't you catch more fish than you need?" the rich man asked.

"What would I do with them?"

"You could earn more money," came the impatient reply, "and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you'd have a fleet of boats and be rich like me."

The fisherman asked, "Then what would I do?"

"You could sit down and enjoy life," said the industrialist.

"What do you think I'm doing now?" the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea. - Our Daily Bread, May 18, 1994.

GODLY CONTENTMENT - Contentment is never the result of multiplying riches, increasing pleasures, or gaining fame. All these only incite discontent, for when one obtains them, he finds he still is not satisfied. Contentment does not depend upon things on the outside, but results from conditions on the inside! Paul had suffered more for the sake of Christ than probably anyone else (2 Cor. 11:23-28); yet this is the man who says, "I am content." The apostle was able to interpret all the experiences of life in terms of God's will for his eternal good (Rom. 8:28). Paul did not come to this happy philosophy of life in a moment. He says, "I have learned . . . to be content." Aspiring to be what we are not, or grasping after riches which elude us, is not the way to happiness. We must rather do our very best with God's help to accomplish our life's task with the talents and opportunities He presents.

In his famous lecture on "Clocks and Watches," Dr. Joseph Parker related the following story: A little watch, delicately strung, was dissatisfied with its restricted sphere of influence in a lady's pocket. It envied the position of Big Ben, the great tower clock. One day as it passed with her ladyship over London's Westminster Bridge, the tiny watch exclaimed, "I wish I could go up there! I could then serve multitudes, instead of just one individual." "You shall have your opportunity, small watch," she said. The lecturer then dramatically described how the pocket timepiece was drawn up the side of the mammoth tower by a slender thread. When it reached the top, it was completely lost to view. In his dramatic way, Dr. Parker concluded his lecture by exclaiming, "Its elevation had become its annihilation!"

Pray that you too may not lose the small influence you now have for Christ by coveting something larger for which you are not equipped, and which God constantly refuses you in His love. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O for the peace of perfect trust
My loving God in Thee;
Unwavering faith that never doubts
Thou choosest best for me.
—Anon.

**Discontent makes rich men poor,
While contentment makes poor men rich**

Diamonds and Discontent - Years ago, Russell Conwell told of an ancient Persian, Ali Hafed, who "owned a very large farm that had orchards, grain fields, and gardens... and was a wealthy contented man." One day a wise man from the East told the farmer all about diamonds and how wealthy he would be if he owned a diamond mine. Ali Hafed went to bed that night a poor man--poor because he was discontented. Craving a mine of diamonds, he sold his farm to search for the rare stones. He traveled the world over, finally becoming so poor, broken, and defeated that he committed suicide. One day the man who purchased Ali Hafed's farm led his camel into the garden to drink. As his camel put its nose into the brook, the man saw a flash of light from the sands of the stream. He pulled out a stone that reflected all the hues of the rainbow. The man had discovered the diamond mine of Golconda, the most magnificent mine in all history. Had Ali Hafed remained at home and dug in his own garden, then instead of death in a strange land, he would have had acres of diamonds. - G. Sweeting, in Moody Monthly, May, 1988, p. 95.

BAD AND GOOD OF POVERTY - The young man I visited in jail had been arrested for armed robbery. He was bitter as he spoke of the inner-city school from which he had dropped out because he felt unsafe. He asked, "Why couldn't I have gone to a better school? Why didn't someone help me to learn a trade?" He said he committed the robbery because he was sick and tired of having so little while others had so much.

I felt sorry for him. Poverty has a down side. It can place people in a position where they are tempted to commit crimes.

Like the writer of Proverbs 30, I would never ask God to send me poverty. Yet Jesus said, "Blessed are you poor" (Luke 6:20).

I grew up in the 1930s during the Great Depression. My family seldom ate meat, and we wore second hand clothing. Yet we were

happy. We were supremely thankful for small favors. We enjoyed simple pleasures. We appreciated one another. We valued our spiritual riches.

I'm not saying that we should desire poverty, but we can be thankful for it. We can learn lessons through it that we could earn in no other way. Let's be like the apostle Paul who said that he had learned to be content, no matter what his situation (Phil. 4:11). -- Herbert Vander Lugt

Lord, help me not to set my heart
On things that pass away;
Make me content with what I have
And help me stay that way.
--Sper

Those who are content are never poor;
those who are discontent are never rich

Today in the Word - According to a recent report, the wind carries elements such as dust and pollutants farther than scientists ever thought possible. The results of this are both good and bad. On the good side, it is estimated that some thirteen million tons of windblown dust fall on the Amazon region every year. Most of this dust comes from Africa's Sahara Desert, and it contains valuable nutrients. But the wind has also carried pesticides such as DDT as far as Antarctica, and the Arctic skies are often clouded by pollution. The wind and its effects are similar to money and its effects. Like the wind, money is by itself morally neutral. But money is also such a powerful force that it sweeps a lot of things along with it, and produces some good and bad effects. People can use money to spread good around the world. But it can also poison the lives of people who have it or want it. (Today in the Word)

1 Timothy 6:6-10,17-19 The Challenge Of Riches

By David C. McCasland

While our family was living in Kenya in the 1980s, we drove a young woman from Nairobi to visit her parents who lived near Lake Victoria. On the way, we stopped in the city of Kisumu to leave our luggage at a hotel where we would stay after taking her home. When our friend saw our hotel room that we considered an average-size room with two beds, she said, "All this for only five of you?" What we considered ordinary, she saw as luxurious. Riches are relative, and some of us who live in prosperous nations have a tendency to complain about a standard of living that others would gladly embrace.

Among the followers of Christ in Ephesus, some had more money than others. To Timothy, their pastor, Paul wrote, "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" (1 Tim. 6:17). Paul urged them to "be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (v.18).

Our natural tendency is to grasp what we have instead of freely giving to those in need. The challenge of riches is living with thankful hearts to God and open hands to others.

One grace each child of God can show
Is giving from a willing heart;
Yet, if we wait till riches grow,
It may be that we'll never start.
—D. DeHaan

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.

Commandment 10—Be Content

Read: 1 Timothy 6:3-10

You shall not covet your neighbor's house . . . nor anything that is your neighbor's. —Exodus 20:17

A store owner in Maine stubbornly refused to carry a new product. "You must remember, young feller," said the storekeeper to the salesman, "that in this part of the country every want ain't a need."

Confusing our wants with our needs goes to the heart of coveting and explains why we are so often driven by the desire for more and more. We fail to see that life's greatest fulfillment is not found in accumulating things but in knowing God.

The tenth commandment may seem like an add-on compared to such big-ticket items as murder, stealing, lying, and adultery, but it is foundational to all the other commandments and ensures peace and contentment. It is the only command that zeroes in on a forbidden attitude rather than an action. Yet it is a safeguard against the temptation to break the other nine commandments.

David's covetous desire for another man's wife led to adultery, stealing, and murder (2 Sam. 11). And a desire for more and more pleasure, power, or possessions can destroy family relationships and cause us to lie to others. And because covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5), it also keeps us from having and maintaining a right relationship to God.

Lord, help us to be content in You. By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we would covet more and more
Of this world's gold, of earthly store,
Help us, O God, to look above
And draw upon Your matchless love. —DJD

Contentment is wanting what you have, not having everything you want.

I have often been encouraged by people without their realizing it. I remember walking through the main lounge of a Christian retirement community late one evening. The residents had gone to their rooms for the night, except for one elderly woman. Unaware of my presence, she patiently worked on a jigsaw puzzle and joyfully hummed to herself. She seemed to be quite content.

I began to wonder, "How can people find true contentment, no matter what their circumstances?" The apostle Paul addressed this issue in 1 Timothy 6. He warned against corrupt people who see godliness as a means for financial profit (1Ti 6:5). A more subtle error among Christians is the belief that godliness-plus-money is life's winning combination. Paul corrected both errors by stating the real winning combination: "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1Ti 6:6). He urged believers to be satisfied with food and clothing (1Ti 6:7, 8). "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1Ti 6:10), but loving and trusting God is the root of all contentment.

How about you? Are you experiencing the joy that comes when godliness is combined with contentment? If so, you've got the winning combination. —Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**True contentment is not in having everything,
but in being satisfied with everything you have.**

The Rich And The Poor - Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation! --Psalm 68:19

My wife and I think of ourselves as neither rich nor poor. When we consider people living in poverty, struggling just to get by, we can feel guilty because of our comfortable lifestyle. But when we see others who live in luxurious houses, drive expensive cars, and take exotic vacations, our lifestyle seems unpretentious and humdrum.

Actually, how much we possess is not as important as our attitude toward our possessions. Paul wrote that "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1Ti 6:6). Regardless of our status, we should be content, neither coveting more nor resenting those who have more than we do.

Although we as Christians may enjoy God's blessings without feeling guilty, we must also heed Paul's admonition not to be haughty but to trust in God (1Ti 6:17). We must humbly acknowledge Him as the source of all we have, and share willingly and generously with others (1Ti 6:17, 18). Such generosity has eternal value (v.19). Since God measures our giving by the degree of our sacrifice (Mk. 12:42, 43, 44), many who have little to give in this life will be immensely rewarded in the life to come.

Whether we are rich or poor, let's be sure to invest in eternity. --H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we've been blessed with riches,
We must be rich in deeds;
God wants us to be generous
In meeting others' needs.
--Sper

Our value is determined not by what we have

but by what we do with what we have.

Great Gain - Over the past 15 years, a New Jersey businessman has anonymously given away more than \$600 million to universities, medical centers, and other beneficiaries. When a legal complication forced him to reveal his identity, he explained his generosity by saying,

"Nobody can wear two pairs of shoes at one time. I simply decided I had enough money"

A friend of the donor described him as a man who doesn't own a house or a car, flies economy class, wears a \$15 watch, and "didn't want his money to crush him."

Few people seem able to treat their resources as a servant instead of a master. It seems so natural and sensible to grasp rather than to give. Even as followers of Christ, we may mistakenly believe that "godliness is a means of gain" (1Ti 6:5). But the apostle Paul wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great gain.... And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1Ti 6:6, 7, 8). —D. C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Money is what you make it-
A Master or a Servant**

Be Content - Confusing our wants with our needs goes to the heart of coveting and explains why we are so often driven by the desire for more and more. We fail to see that life's greatest fulfillment is not found in accumulating things but in knowing God.

The tenth commandment may seem like an add-on compared to such big-ticket items as murder, stealing, lying, and adultery, but it is foundational to all the other commandments and ensures peace and contentment. It is the only command that zeroes in on a forbidden attitude rather than an action. Yet it is a safeguard against the temptation to break the other nine commandments.

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Of this world's gold, of earthly store,
Help us, O God, to look above
And draw upon Your matchless love.
--D J De Haan

Contentment is wanting what you have,
not having everything you want.

A Good Surrender - Surrender is not a very popular word. We use it in reference to the humiliation that accompanies defeat. When a nation loses a war, it may be forced to surrender unconditionally, and has no say in the terms of defeat.

Yet there is a type of surrender that is dignified and appropriate. Paul understood it in two aspects. First, it means surrendering our desires and will to the heavenly Father. Jesus is our example, for He did the Father's will in everything (Jn. 6:38).

The second aspect is our acceptance of God's supreme sovereignty. This is marked by our realization that things do not always go our way as God works out His will on earth. Our business goes through good times and bad. Our health may suffer. Loved ones will hurt us, or leave us, or even die. Our fondest dreams may never be realized.

In the spiritual sense, to surrender means that we trust God to do what is best. It is, as Paul said, choosing to be content "in whatever state I am" (Phil. 4:11, 12), and knowing by faith that God will take care of our needs (Php 4:19). That kind of faith isn't easy. But it's the only way to overcome dissatisfaction and anger about uncontrollable circumstances.

Perhaps it's time to say "I surrender" to the Lord and to His perfect will and plan. --D C Egner ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Take my love--my God, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself--and I will be

Ever, only, all for Thee.
--Havergal

Surrender is victory when we yield to God.

Battle for Contentment - LIFE in an affluent society can be frustrating, I thought, as I walked through a local mall. On display for a special show was an astounding array of recreational vehicles. Campers and mobile homes bore signs, "Yours Today for Only \$25,000." They were so inviting I realized I was envying people who could afford one of these beauties.

Our battle to be content doesn't involve just big-ticket items. Imagine the struggle of a single mother who can barely make her rent payments. How difficult it must be to not covet a car that is rust-free or to not envy a woman who doesn't have to send her children to school in hand-me-downs. How can someone who struggles to stretch a paycheck across two weeks be content in a world of wealth and affluence?

In 1 Timothy 6:5, Paul warns us to beware of people who think that being godly will bring them riches. It is contentment plus godliness that makes us truly rich, he says. But how do we become content? By recognizing that we brought nothing into the world and that we will carry nothing out—that everything we have is from God.

When waves of envy and covetousness are pulling us under, there is one thought that can keep us from being swept away in the current: Godliness—not gold—brings contentment. —J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

1 Timothy 6:6 Advantage In Adversity

By Haddon W. Robinson

Adversity tests us. It's one thing to study the game sketched out on the blackboard in the locker room; it's quite another to take the field where adversity tackles us and bloodies our noses. Adversity tests whether we will turn tail and run or stand up to life's challenges as people of faith.

We may think that the opposite of adversity is prosperity. Not so. Prosperity is a character test in disguise. Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish essayist, understood this when he wrote, "Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man, but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity. Precious few are those who can keep their moral, spiritual, and financial equilibrium ... while balancing on the elevated tightrope of success."

Most of us can handle a demotion better than a promotion. Why? Because when adversity strikes, life becomes rather simple. We have no choice but to stand up to it or quit. Prosperity, on the other hand, doesn't seem like a test, yet it often creates in us a sense of discontent. We crave more and more of what we have enough of already.

The Bible says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6). That's much harder to come by than mere prosperity. [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Thinking It Over

Where do I turn when adversity strikes?

Do I remember the Lord as much

in my successes as I do in my failures?

Prosperity may be a greater test of character than poverty.

1 Timothy 6:1-12 Contented

By M.R. De Haan

Early one dreary, rainy morning I sat in my study and looked out the window. I watched a fat robin pull three worms from the grass, swallow them, and then fly up to the telephone wire. There, just 10 feet from me, he began to sing. For a half-hour I sat and enjoyed the robin's rendition of "Praise the Lord!"

The robin did not complain about the color or size of the worms, but he was satisfied with what he found. He was content. He was delighted with what the heavenly Father had provided.

A young girl whose father was a chronic grumbler said to her mother, "I know what everybody in this family likes. Johnny likes hamburgers, Janie likes ice cream, Willie likes bananas, and Mommy likes chicken." The father, irked because he had not been included in the list, asked, "What about me? What do I like?" The innocent little one replied, "You like everything we haven't got."

Paul could say, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" (Phil. 4:11). In Hebrews 13:5 we read, "Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" That's enough to satisfy anyone! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I would be quiet, Lord, and rest content,
By grace I would not pine, nor would I fret;
With You to guide and care, my joy be this:
Not one small need of mine will You forget!
—HGB

Thankfulness is the soil in which joy thrives.

WHAT WE DON'T NEED - Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. - 1Timothy 5:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

In the fifth century, a man named Arsenius determined to live a holy life. So he abandoned the comforts of Egyptian society to follow an austere lifestyle in the desert. Yet whenever he visited the great city of Alexandria, he spent time wandering through its bazaars. Asked why, he explained that his heart rejoiced at the sight of all the things he didn't need.

Those of us who live in a society flooded with goods and gadgets need to ponder the example of that desert dweller. A typical supermarket in the United States in 1976 stocked 9,000 articles; today it carries 30,000. How many of them are absolutely essential? How many superfluous?

It's hard for us to say sincerely with the apostle Paul, "Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1Ti 6:8). In our constant battle against seductive materialism of our culture, let's follow the example of Arsenius. As we walk through the markets and shopping malls, we too can rejoice at the sight of all the things we don't need.

That's only the first step, however. The next step is to become much more wise in our spending, more generous in our giving to others, and more sacrificial with the resources God has given to us. - V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Contentment isn't getting what we want
but being satisfied with what we have.

1 Timothy 6:8 The Alice Tax

By David C. McCasland

Author Calvin Trillin's wife, Alice, held a unique view of income tax. She believed that "after a certain level of income, the government would simply take everything." She thought there should be a limit on how much money people were allowed to keep for themselves. Writing in The New Yorker, Trillin said of his wife, "She believed in the principle of enoughness."

In Mark 12, Jesus avoided a carefully laid trap by telling His questioners to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mk 12:17). When Jesus watched people making their offerings to the temple treasury, He commended a woman who would have been considered foolish for her extravagance. "This poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood" (Mk 12:43-44).

Jesus placed more importance on wholehearted love for God than on wholesale concern over material needs. His tranquil attitude toward money and possessions was based on trusting His Father to supply each day's needs. "Your Father knows the things you have need of" (Matt. 6:8). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Enoughness. What a concept!

He clothes the lilies, feeds the birds;
Would He to you, then, pay less heed?
Look up to Him with prayerful heart,

He will supply your every need.

—Renfrow

Contentment is not getting what we want but being satisfied with what we have.

1 Timothy 6:6-16 Forever Joyful

By Vernon C. Grounds

Wall Street Journal columnist Jonathan Clements offered his readers “Nine Tips for Investing in Happiness.” Interestingly, one of his suggestions was precisely the same as that given in the favorite old hymn by Johnson C. Oatman, “Count Your Many Blessings.” Clements urges us not to brood over the riches of our neighbors but to focus on the many blessings we actually do possess. That’s wise counsel, provided that we realize our spiritual wealth in Jesus is immeasurably more valuable than any material possessions.

God didn’t give us the Bible as a guidebook for happiness. Yet it tells us how we can be eternally joyful and how we can experience joy on our way to that eternal happiness. So it’s enlightening to compare biblical truth with common-sense advice.

“Godliness with contentment is great gain,” Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:6). The apostle wanted his protégé to understand that being grateful for the basics of life would help keep him from the trap of covetousness.

So let’s focus on the wonders of God’s grace, training ourselves to make a spirit of gratitude pervade our lives. That’s the way to experience joy today and to be forever joyful. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings—money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven nor your home on high.
—Oatman

Count your many blessings and you’ll soon lose count.

TODAY IN THE WORD According to a recent report, the wind carries elements such as dust and pollutants farther than scientists ever thought possible. The results of this are both good and bad. On the good side, it is estimated that some thirteen million tons of windblown dust fall on the Amazon region every year. Most of this dust comes from Africa’s Sahara Desert, and it contains valuable nutrients. But the wind has also carried pesticides such as DDT as far as Antarctica, and the Arctic skies are often clouded by pollution. The wind and its effects are similar to money and its effects. Like the wind, money is by itself morally neutral. But money is also such a powerful force that it sweeps a lot of things along with it, and produces some good and bad effects. People can use money to spread good around the world. But it can also poison the lives of people who have it or want it.

We have already talked about the dangers of falling in love with money and material things, but let’s look again in the context of what we do to make a living. The vast majority of people make their money from their jobs or some other form of income-producing activity.

Paul’s precaution against attaching our hearts to our bank accounts takes on an added urgency in a culture that tempts people with the dream of instant wealth by buying a lottery ticket or hitting it big at the casino. Books have been written and films made about the grief that has pierced the lives of people who fell into the destructive trap of a get-rich-quick fantasy. That particular danger may seem like a stretch from where you live every day--and we hope it is. But the danger of letting money become our first love can also reach us in the ordinary daily routine of making a living.

APPLY THE WORD Just as the wind leaves visible evidence of its power, so too does money. If you look back on the events of your life, you can probably see the benefits--and perhaps some hard lessons--that money has provided you over the years.

1 Timothy 6:6-12 Money Talk

By Dave Branon

Marilyn and Steven had been married just a few years, and money was tight. But as she looked at their threadbare bedspread, she wanted to replace it. So she decided she would buy a new one with a credit card—hoping to somehow find the money to pay it off.

Her devotional reading for the day surprised her when it pointed her to Proverbs 22:27, “If you lack the means to pay, your very bed

will be snatched from under you" (niv). Marilyn decided not to go into debt for a new bedspread that day.

Decisions about the way we spend our money are a personal matter between us and the Lord and can be difficult to make. But God hasn't left us without help. He tells us: "Honor the Lord with your possessions" (Prov. 3:9), and "You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matt. 6:24 niv).

With such truths in mind, we look further in His Word for help to use money wisely. We find this: "Beware of covetousness" (Luke 12:15). Another says, "The borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 22:7). And in 1 Timothy we read, be "ready to give, willing to share" (6:18).

Money is a big issue. God, who provides for all our needs, can show us how to use it to bring Him honor.

Lord, sometimes money and finances are overwhelming. It's hard to know what decisions to make, so please lead me and give the wisdom to use my finances in a way that pleases You.

Never let gold become your god. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

TODAY IN THE WORD Coming down the stairs one morning, a British gentleman by the name of Lord Congelton overheard his cook conversing with one of the other servants. "I would be perfectly content," the woman declared, "if I just had five pounds!" After pondering the matter, Lord Congelton decided to help his long-time employee. He pulled her aside later in the day and gave her a five-pound note--a fairly substantial sum, worth about \$25 at the time. The surprised cook thanked her employer profusely, whereupon Lord Congelton departed. But once outside the door, Congelton paused to see what, if anything, the woman would say. Surely, he reasoned, she would express her thankfulness to God. A second or two passed and Congelton heard the woman cry out, "**Oh, why didn't I say ten pounds?!**"

Like Lord Congelton's cook, many Christians find it difficult to be content. Typically we focus, not on what we do have, but on all that we lack. It doesn't help matters when we are bombarded daily by advertisers whose sole purpose is to make us dissatisfied with our current possessions and hungry for their newest products and latest models. Even our children are targeted on Saturday mornings with commercials designed to make them want the latest toy.

In his first epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul warns us about the dangers of discontent. He reminds us that possessions and riches are temporal (v. 7). No matter how much we accumulate, we will leave it behind when we die. He reminds us that the desire for more leads to "ruin and destruction" (vv. 9-10).

APPLY THE WORD How do you treat the other members of your family? Today, take a moment to consider. If you find it difficult to be content, it may be that you are filling your mind with too many materialistic temptations. Many Christians have found relief (as well as a renewed joy) by shutting off the TV (or tuning out commercials); avoiding unnecessary shopping; and refusing to peruse mail order catalogs.

Another Version of the preceding anecdote - Coming downstairs one morning, Lord Congelton heard the cook exclaim, "Oh, if I only had five pounds, wouldn't I be content!" Thinking the matter over, and anxious to see the woman satisfied, he shortly after handed her a five-pound note, then worth about twenty-five dollars. She thanked him profusely. He paused outside the door to hear if she would express her satisfaction and thank God. As soon as his shadow was invisible, she cried out, "Why didn't I say ten?"-
Prairie Overcomer

The magazine Campus Journal reported on a recent survey that asked people to name the salary they thought they would need to achieve that elusive standard of happiness known as "the American dream." The results were interesting because the study had segmented the people based on their actual incomes. Two examples tell the story. People who earn about \$25K a year estimated they would need about \$54K to be happy. And on average, people in the \$100K income range said it would take about \$192K to reach the stated goal of the study. Do the math and you'll see that most of the people surveyed said it would take about twice their current income to make them happy. What we don't know is whether these people, and others like them, actually live as if they're only halfway content. Judging by some of the unwise and spiritually harmful things some people do to acquire more money, the answer to that question has to be yes. Many people live with a mindset of discontent.

The first sentence of today's reading (1Ti 6:6) is the biblical alternative to this mindset. Paul says contentment is worth a great deal when it enables us to pursue God's real goal for us--"godliness," becoming like Him. To some people, discussing money and godliness on the same page may seem like trying to go in two different directions at once. That's because of a common misinterpreting of 1Ti 6:10 (1 Timothy 6:10 Commentary) by saying the love of money is the root of all evil. Some people even shorten that to: "Money is the root of all evil." That's not what Paul was saying. A desire for money that's so consuming it turns us

away from God is a source of many evils, but not all. Thank goodness for that, because the dangers that the love of money brings are bad enough. They include ""many foolish and harmful desires"" that bring ""ruin and destruction"" (1Ti 6:9) (1 Timothy 6:9 Commentary). No need to ask Paul what he really thought about the problem! What a refreshing break we have in 1Ti 6:11 (1 Timothy 6:11 Commentary). If we want to become men and women of God, we need to put sin behind us and pursue the valuable virtues Paul lists there.

APPLY THE WORD Here's a test to measure your CQ (contentment quotient). Write the three or four material possessions you consider most valuable. Then ask yourself some questions in relation to these items. If you lost them, would you no longer be content? Could you serve God just as well without them? Would you still be a giver instead of a taker? And finally, would the loss of these things in any way dull your desire to pursue those qualities that please God?

1 Timothy 6:6-12 Almost Content?

By Bill Crowder

As I stepped into the restaurant parking lot after lunch, I saw a pickup truck speeding through the parked vehicles. While observing the driver's reckless behavior, I noticed the words on the truck's front license plate. It read, "Almost Content." After thinking about that message and the sentiment it tried to communicate, I concluded that the concept "almost content" doesn't exist. Either we are content or we are not.

Admittedly, contentment is a tough needle to thread. We live in a world that feeds our desire for more and more—until we find it almost impossible to be content with anything. But this is nothing new. The book of Hebrews addressed this issue, saying, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (13:5). The only remedy for hearts that "want it all" is the contentment found in the presence of the living God. He is sufficient for our needs and longings, and He alone can bring us the peace and contentment we'll never find in the pursuits of this life.

Almost content? There is no such thing. In Christ we can know true contentment. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I find contentment in His wondrous grace,
No cloud or shadow can obscure His face;
When great temptations I must bear,
I find the secret place of prayer.
—Dunlop

Contentment is not getting what we want but being satisfied with what we have.

TODAY IN THE WORD Earlier this year, Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, was awarded the 1996 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. Before becoming a Christian in 1951, Bright says he was a materialistic young businessman. After his conversion, he and his wife, Vonette, made a crucial choice that allowed them to concentrate on ministry.

"We made a decision to relinquish all our rights, all our possessions, everything we would ever own," says Vonette. For the Brights, the antidote to greed and the secret to contentment was a radical decision regarding material things. In many ways their decision is unique to their situation and their calling, but every believer must deal with the trap of wanting to get rich (v. 9).

This is really the crux of the issue when it comes to greed. Verse 10 of today's text is a much-quoted and often misquoted warning about the allure of greed. It's the love of money that is the root of all sorts of evil.

It's not what you have but what you lust for that does the damage. Greedily chasing after money or anything else that takes your heart away from God is like trying to run through a twisted patch of thorns. You'll never make it through without getting "pierced" repeatedly. In fact, you may not make it through at all.

Look at the contrast Paul describes between those who want to get rich and are eager for money and those who pursue God. The former can't take their gold with them even if they get it (1Ti 6:7).

APPLY THE WORD When do you say "Enough"? Most people don't say it at all. Greed is easy to spot in others but tough to pinpoint in ourselves. Here's a brief self-test that may help focus the issue. Jot down the When the Bible tells us to be content with what we have, God is not asking us to settle for second best. On the contrary, He is asking us to let go of the temporary baubles of earth so as to claim our eternal treasures. The exhortation of Hebrews 13:5 is followed by the staggering promise of God's never-failing presence.

1 Timothy 6:8 Simply Content

By David C. McCasland

A few years ago, an automaker used the tune of the old Shaker song “Simple Gifts” to promote a luxury car. To those who knew the lyrics, it seemed contradictory to use a song about finding contentment in a simple way of life to sell an expensive car. It says, “’Tis the gift to be simple, ’tis the gift to be free, ’tis the gift to come down where we ought to be.”

We often struggle to accept the Bible’s teaching that contentment has nothing to do with our wardrobe, our bank account, or whether we have steak or fish sticks for supper. It is not material prosperity but “godliness with contentment” that the apostle Paul called “great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). Timothy may have been as stunned as we are to read the words, “having food and clothing, with these we shall be content” (v.8).

How many of us will pause today to thank the Lord because we have something to wear and something to eat? But how might our lives be revolutionized if we did?

That old Shaker song also reminds us that contentment is a gift that is to be enjoyed. It says, “And when we find ourselves in the place just right, ’twill be in the valley of love and delight.” In the abundance of God’s simple gifts, we can be content. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

As we keep on collecting more and more stuff,
We sometimes complain that we don't have enough;
But let us be thankful for what God has sent—
With food and with clothing may we be content.
—Fitzhugh

Contentment comes not from great wealth but from few wants.

1 Timothy 6:6-19 Profit Sharing

By David C. McCasland

A businessman who sold his road construction company stunned his employees by dividing a third of the profit among them. Each of his 550 workers received a share of the \$128 million, with some of his long-term associates getting bonuses of \$1 million each—tax free.

“It’s sharing good times, that’s really all it is,” the owner said. “People work exceedingly hard for us... I wanted to go out doing the right thing.”

A friend once said to me, “Sometimes God doesn’t entrust us with money, because we want to keep it while He wants us to give it away.” I pondered this statement in light of the generous business owner and the words of Scripture directed toward those “who are rich in this present age” (1 Timothy 6:17). Paul said, “Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (v.18).

It’s easy to say, “Well, if I had millions of dollars, I’d be happy to share what I have with others.” But would I? What riches of time, talent, or treasure am I hoarding today? What has God given me that I am unwilling to share?

In whatever way God blesses us, He longs for us to be joyful and generous as we pass it on. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Help us, Lord, while we are living
To be faithful, kind, and true;
Jesus, bless our humble giving
So that others may find You.
—Johnson

The Lord sees not only how much we give, but also how much we keep.

Check Your Checkbook! - SOME evening when you have a spare moment, get out your old checkbook registers and read the entries. You will be startled to learn how you spent your money. The entries will read like a family history book, chronicling every major event—births, deaths, and illnesses—and reflecting your tastes, habits, and interests.

They record vacations, travels, and other moves. They also tell much about how expensively you dress or how extravagantly you eat. The total spent in each category will pinpoint the things that make the greatest demands on your income—either due to need or choice.

This checkbook checkup might also gauge our spiritual temperature. Contributions given to the work of the Lord compared to expenditures for unnecessary things offer some clues. When we give nothing to church or to people in need but spend large sums on personal gratification, it's time to examine our values.

A healthy checkbook checkup will show that we've been "rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:18). —R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Checkbook Checkup

Read: 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —Matthew 6:21

Some evening when you have a spare moment, get out your old checkbook registers and read through the entries. You may find it interesting, and perhaps somewhat startling, to discover just how the money you've earned has been spent.

The entries will read like a family history book. They chronicle every major event—births, deaths, and illnesses—and quite accurately reflect your tastes, habits, and interests.

They record your vacations, travels, and other moves. They also tell much about how expensively you dress or how extravagantly you eat. The total spent in each category will pinpoint the things that make the greatest demands on your income— either because of need or by choice.

Such a checkbook checkup might also show our spiritual temperature. The contributions given to the work of the Lord compared with the expenditures for the unnecessary things of life offer some clues. If nothing has gone to the church or to people in need, but large sums were spent for personal gratification, we need to examine our values.

Does your checkbook indicate that you've been "rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share"? (1 Tim. 6:18).

Try doing a checkbook checkup today. By Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It's not what you'd do with a million
If riches should e'er be your lot,
But what you are doing at present
With the dollar and quarter you've got.
—Anon.

We show what we love by what we do with what we have.

True Wealth

Read: 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God. —1 Timothy 6:17

Money is a powerful force. We work for it, save it, spend it, use it to satisfy our earthside longings, and then wish we had more. Aware of its distracting danger, Jesus taught more about money than any other topic. And, as far as we know, He never took an offering for Himself. Clearly, He didn't teach about giving to fill His own pockets. Instead, Jesus warned us that trusting in wealth and using it to gain power clogs our spiritual arteries more readily than most other impediments to spiritual development. In telling the story of the "rich fool," He shamed His listeners for not being rich toward God (Luke 12:13-21), indicating that God has a far different definition of wealth than most of us.

So, what does it mean to be rich toward God? Paul tells us that those who are rich should not be conceited about their wealth, "nor to trust in uncertain riches" (1 Tim. 6:17). Rather, we are to "be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (v.18).

Interesting! God measures wealth by the quality of our lives and our generous disbursement of wealth to bless others. Not exactly

Wall Street insider talk, but great advice for those of us who think that our security and reputation are tied up in the size of our bank account. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we've been blessed with riches,
We must be rich in deeds;
God wants us to be generous
In meeting others' needs.
—Sper

Riches are a blessing only to those who make them a blessing to others.

Happy Without - The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 BC) believed that if you are truly wise you will not be obsessed with possessions. Practicing to an extreme what he preached, he even refused to wear shoes.

Socrates loved to visit the marketplace, though, and gaze with admiration at the great abundance of wares on display. When a friend asked why he was so allured, he replied, "I love to go there and discover how many things I am perfectly happy without."

That type of attitude runs counter to the commercial messages that continually bombard our eyes and ears. Advertisers spend millions to tell us about all the latest products that we can't be happy without.

The apostle Paul advised his spiritual son Timothy, "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1Timothy 6:6-8). If we become enamored with things, Paul warned, we may wander from the faith and be pierced with the pangs of frustrated desire (1Ti 6:9, 10).

Let's ask ourselves, "What am I truly happy without?" The answer will reveal much about our relationship with the Lord and our contentment with Him. —Vernon C Grounds

**Contentment comes not from great wealth
but from few wants.**

Contentment

by [William Cowper \(Piper's comments\)](#)

Fierce passions discompose the mind,
As tempests vex the sea;
But calm content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to Thee.

In vain by reason and by rule
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heavenly skill.

Since at His feet my soul has sate,
His gracious words to hear,
Contented with my present state,
I cast on Him my care.

"Art thou a sinner, soul?" He said,
"Then how canst thou complain!
How light thy troubles here, if weigh'd
With everlasting pain!

"If thou of murmuring wouldst be cured,
Compare thy griefs with mine;
Think what my love for thee endured,
And thou wilt not repine.

"Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
And I do all things well;
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
And rise with me to dwell.

"In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportion'd to thy day;
At death thou [still] shalt find me nigh,
To wipe thy tears away."

Thus I, who once my wretched days
In vain repinings spent,
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,
Have learnt to be content.

1 Timothy 6:7 FOR WE HAVE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THE WORLD, SO WE CANNOT TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF IT EITHER:

Greek: [ouden gar eisenegkamen](#) (1PAAI) [eis ton kosmon, hoti oude exenegkein](#) (AAN) [ti dunametha](#); (1PPPI)

Amplified: For we brought nothing into the world, and obviously we cannot take anything out of the world; ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

KJV: For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Moffatt: for we bring nothing into the world, and we Can take nothing out of it.

NET: For we have brought nothing into this world and so we cannot take a single thing out either.

NLT: 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. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: We brought absolutely nothing with us when we entered the world and we can be sure we shall take absolutely nothing with us when we leave it. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TLB: After all, we didn't bring any money with us when we came into the world, and we can't carry away a single penny when we die.

Weymouth: for we brought nothing into the world, nor can we carry anything out of it;

Wuest: for not even one thing did we bring into this world, because not even one thing are we able to take out.

Young's Literal: for nothing did we bring into the world -- it is manifest that we are able to carry nothing out;

- **brought:** Job 1:21 Pr 27:24 Ec 5:15,16
- **So we cannot take:** Ps 49:17 Lk 12:20,21 16:22,23
- 1 Timothy 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Related Resource: Christian Contentment

Related Passages: First Timothy 6:7 parallels the sentiment expressed by Job and also by Solomon, both men who had much of what the world has to offer in terms of material things and possessions (cp Job 1:1-3, Eccl 2:1-10 and especially Eccl 2:11).

Job 1:21 (Job in the context of losing most of his material things and possessions) said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Eccl 5:14-16 (Solomon) When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him. 15 As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand. 16 This also is a grievous evil—exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind? (

Pr 27:24 (Solomon also wrote) For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown endure to all generations.

Ps 49:16-17 (**sons of Korah** echo the truth concerning the emptiness of material possessions) Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; 17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him.

For (term of explanation = What does it explain? see Ps 49:16) when he dies he will carry nothing away. His glory will not descend after him. (Ps 49:17)

Spurgeon: He has but a leasehold of his acres, and death ends his tenure. Through the river of death man must pass naked. Not a rag of all his raiment, not a coin of all his treasure, not a joy of all his honour, can the dying worldling carry with him. **Why then fret ourselves about so fleeting a prosperity?** His glory shall not descend after him. As he goes down, down, down forever, none of his honors or possessions will follow him. Patents of nobility are invalid in the sepulcher. His worship, his honour, his lordship, and his grace, will alike find their titles ridiculous in the tomb. Hell knows no aristocracy. Your dainty and delicate sinners shall find that eternal burnings have no respect for their affectations and refinements.

Thomas Adams: The form of money agrees well with the condition of it; it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run away. Could we be rich so long as we live, yet that were uncertain enough for life itself is but a dream, a shadow, but a dream of a shadow. (Augustine.) Rich men are but like hailstones; they make a noise in the world, as the hail rattles on the tiles of a house; down they fall, lie still, and melt away (Woe! Cp Jas 1:11-note). So that if riches could stay by a man, **yet** he cannot stay by them. Spite of his teeth, he shall carry away nothing when he dies. Life and goods are both in a vessel, both cast away at once; yea, of the two, life has the greater likelihood of continuing! Let it fly never so fast away, riches have eagles' wings, and will out fly it. There are thieves on the highways, that will take our money and spare our lives. In our penal laws, there are not as many ways to forfeit our lives as our goods. Rich Job lived to see himself poor to a proverb. How many in this city are reputed to be rich, and yet have broken (are bankrupt) for thousands! There are innumerable ways to be poor; a fire, a thief, a false servant, suretyship, trusting bad customers, an unfaithful factor, a pirate, an unskillful pilot, has brought rich men to poverty. One gale of wind is able to make merchants rich or beggars. Man's life is like the banks of a river, his temporal estate is the stream: time will mold (shape) away the banks, but the stream stays not for that, it glides away continually. Life is the tree, riches are the fruit, or rather the leaves; the leaves will fall, the fruit is plucked, and yet the tree stands. Some write of the pine tree, that if the bark be pulled off, it lasts long; (for the bark) being on it rots. If the worldling's bark were stripped off, he might perhaps live **longer**. There is great hope he would live the **better**.

THE PLAIN TRUTH OF OUR SHORT LIFE

For (gar) we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either- Paul's trying to remind us here is that we bring nothing in, we can take nothing out, therefore we need to have a right attitude toward these things. It is no accident that the first (inspired) word in the Greek is **nothing** (ouden = absolutely nothing, not one single thing!) which lays heavy emphasis on this truth. Given this straightforward truth we all do well to pray...

Lord, help me not to set my heart
On things that pass away;
Make me content with what I have
And help me stay that way. (AMEN)
--Sper

For (1063)(gar) is "a marker of cause or reason between events, though in some context this association may be remote or tenuous" (Louw-Nida). Stated another way "**for**" is a **term of explanation** which always provides an opportunity to **pause and ponder the passage**. You will be amazed how much truth a humble, prayerful, Spirit dependent attitude will allow to discern as you simply observe the text! In the present context, "**for**" explains or amplifies why godliness is associated with true contentment and is great gain. In other words when a man or woman of God possesses godliness joined with contentment they are able to dispense of those things that we cannot take with us into eternity future and the sum is "great gain."

Hiebert - With "**for**" Paul elucidates the nature of this godly contentment, now restated in personal terms. (Notice the three "we"

verbs.) As believers we realize the transitoriness and perishableness of all that this world gives. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

Lange says: In this and the following verses the Apostle shows the many grounds of this Christian contentment. The first lies in the very nature of those worldly things for whose possession the unsatisfied man strives. They are not our lawful property, but a loan, received at our birth, to be soon surrendered at the first summons. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Lenski explains **For (1063) (gar)** writing "thus = "to make this clearer let me put it this way." The stress is on "contentment," the last word of v.6; and again on "we will be content," the last word of v. 8. Having arrived naked because we are going to leave that way and cannot possibly leave any other way, the few things we really need for our short stay (Jas 4:14) are not going to disturb our minds as godly people; we are simply going to be content. That is our great source of spiritual gain. Those who do not perceive what Paul here says are to be pitied, especially if they try to make their false godliness a means of gain. (See [Interpretation of St Paul's Epistle to Timothy](#))

Bible Knowledge Commentary says: Paul is speaking about the complete transiency of material things. They should be freely used and enjoyed to the glory of God if one has them, but in no way do they contribute to godliness.

Henry Alford writes "we were appointed by God to come naked into the world, to teach us to remember that we must go naked out of it."

Brought (1533) (eisphero [aorist tense = eisenegka] from **eis** = in or to, into + phero = to bring, bear) means literally to bring into. Used literally (Lk 5:18, 19, Heb 13:11) Figuratively to bring into someone's ears and so to "announce" (Acts 17:20) Eisphero is also used in a figurative sense by Jesus in Mt 6:13 (also Lk 11:4) where He instructs us as His disciples to pray that God would not "**bring us into**" temptation.

Eisphero - 7x in 7v in NT -

Matthew 6:13-note 'And do not **lead us into** temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

Comment: The request "is not to suggest God causes temptation, but is a rhetorical way to ask for His protection from sin." ([NETBible](#))

Spurgeon comments: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. In the course of **providence**, the Lord tests our graces and the sincerity of our profession; and for this purpose he does "**leads us into temptation.**" We entreat Him not to try us **too severely**. Lord, let not my joys or my sorrows become temptations to me (**Ed:** i.e., tests which lead me to sin). As I would not run into temptation of myself, I pray Thee, do not lead me where I must inevitably meet it. But if I must be tried (**Ed:** We "*must be tried*" as taught in 1Pe 1:6-note where "if necessary" ~ "although necessary" or "since necessary" - Why necessary? Read 1Pe 1:7-note. Compare the positive effect of trials in Jas 1:2-note, Jas 1:3-note), Lord, deliver me from falling into evil, and specially preserve me from that Evil One (the **devil**), who, above all, seeks my soul, to destroy it (1Pe 5:8-note). Temptation or trial may be for my good, if I am delivered from evil. **Lord, do this for me, for I cannot preserve myself. (AMEN!)**

Luke 5:18 And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to **bring** him **in** and to set him down in front of Him. 19 But not finding any way to **bring** him **in** because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.

Luke 11:4 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And **lead us not into** temptation.'

Acts 17:20 "For you (Athenian pantheists to Paul) are **bringing** some strange things **to** our ears; so we want to know what these things mean."

1 Timothy 6:7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

Hebrews 13:11-note For the bodies of those animals whose blood is **brought into** the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin (On the once/year [high Day of Atonement](#)), are burned outside the camp.

We cannot take anything out - But you can send it ahead! Read Randy Alcorn's book [The Treasure Principle](#) (Borrow) or [Money, possessions, and eternity](#) (Borrow)

Do your givin'
While you're livin'.
Then you're knowin'
Where it's goin'

J. Vernon McGee says: We come into the world empty-handed, and that is the way we leave it. This is the reason a child of God ought to be using his money for the work of God. I believe that making a will is fine, but it is often much abused. As someone has rhymed it, "Do your givin' While you're livin'. Then you're knowin' Where it's goin'." A child of God should make sure that he is supporting the work of God in some way.

Brian Bell on **cannot take anything out** - You've heard them all: "Ever see a hearse w/a trailer hitch?" "Ever see a shroud with pockets?" "Souls can't tote luggage" "Or the one about the guy who was able to smuggle in some gold & when the angels saw it they asked why he brought Asphalt with him?"

Wiersbe says: I like to translate this verse: "We brought nothing into this world because we can carry nothing out." (See Job 1:21.) When someone's spirit leaves his body at death, it can take nothing with it; because, when that person came into the world at birth, he brought nothing with him. Whatever wealth we amass goes to the government, our heirs, and perhaps charity and the church. We always know the answer to the question, "How much did he leave?" Everything! (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Hiebert says: As believers we realize the transitoriness and perishableness of all that this world gives (cf 1Jn 2:17). It is an indisputable fact that "we brought nothing into the world." "Not a thing" (emphatic by position) did we bring in at birth, "neither can we carry anything out." Since after a brief stay we shall go out as we came in, it is folly to be anxious and preoccupied with merely earthly things. Our chief concern in this life is with eternal spiritual realities, and so we are prepared to be satisfied with the supply of our personal wants. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

Guy King says: We arrived here "in this world" with no luggage of material possessions; when we take our journey hence, we shall depart similarly unencumbered. All we shall take with us are the spiritual things--our memories; our characters: but material properties--no! Why, then, all this craze for riches: we cannot take them with us.

Demarest says: "You can't take it with you." "Shrouds have no pockets." Such proverbs are hardly debatable. I've never heard anyone argue to the contrary. So why do we spend so much time and energy multiplying and accumulating wealth? The reason most often given is that we should "save for a rainy day." This makes a lot of sense, and it might well be irresponsible to fail to provide some hedge against future needs if one is able to do so. Multiplying and accumulating wealth so that one will not become a burden to others certainly seems prudent from a human point of view. (BORROW [The communicator's commentary. 1. 2 Thessalonians. 1. 2 Timothy. Titus](#))

Steven Cole - Greed is always shortsighted, focused on this life only. Put a man on his deathbed, and offer him a billion dollars. Apart from leaving it to his heirs, the money would be worthless to him. Death isn't a pretty good chance-it's a certainty! And you leave it all behind. Two people were discussing the recent death of a wealthy man. One asked, "How much did he leave?" The other answered, "All of it!" You never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul! You can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead to the Bank of Heaven. Both Jesus and Paul talked about laying up treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19-note; 1Ti 6:17, 18, 19). Jesus told the parable about the unrighteous steward (Luke 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), who knew that he was going to get fired. So he quickly used what he had to make friends for himself for the future. Jesus applied it (Luke 16:9), "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings." He did not say, "if it fails," but, "when it fails." Money will fail us at death. Jesus is telling us to use unrighteous money now to make friends for eternity. Use your money that undoubtedly will fail, to invest in something that certainly will succeed, namely, bringing people to heaven. (Cultivating Contentment)

Take out (1627) (**ekphero** from **ek** = out + **phéro** = bring, bear, carry) means literally to bear or carry out (Acts 5:6, 9, 10, 5:15). Bring out, lead (Mk 8:23). Bring forth, in the sense of growth, as the ground or earth "bears out" plants (Heb 6:8, Ge 1:12).

Ekphero - 6x in 6v in NT...

Mark 8:23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He **brought** him **out** of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

Acts 5:6 The young men got up and covered him (Ananias) up, and after **carrying** him **out**, they buried him.

Acts 5:9 Then Peter said to her (Sapphira), "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will **carry** you **out** as well." 10 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they **carried** her **out** and buried her beside her husband.

Acts 5:15 (Acts 5:14) to such an extent that they even **carried** the sick **out** into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

1 Ti 6:7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot **take** anything **out** of it either.

Hebrews 6:8 but if it ("ground" in Hebrews 6:7) **yields** (brings forth - as used in Lxx of Ge 1:12) thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

Ekphero - 81v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Gen 1:12; 14:18; 24:53; Ex 4:6f; 12:39, 46; Lev 4:12, 21; 6:11; 14:45; 16:27; 26:10; Num 13:32; 14:36; 17:8f; 20:8; Deut 14:28; 22:15, 19; 24:11; 28:38; Josh 7:23; 18:6, 8; Jdg 6:18f, 30; 19:22; Ruth 2:18; 2 Sam 12:30; 1Kgs 17:13; 20:42; 2Kgs 10:22, 26; 15:20; 23:6; 24:13; 1Chr 9:28; 20:2; 2Chr 34:14; Ezra 1:7f; 5:14; 6:5; 8:17; 10:19; Neh 5:11; 6:19; 9:15; Ps 37:6; 69:31; Pr 10:18; 29:11; Eccl 5:2; Song 2:13; Isa 40:26; 42:1, 3; 54:16; Jer 8:1; 17:22; 50:25; 51:10, 44; Ezek 12:4, 7; 17:23; 24:6; 46:20; Dan 5:2f; Amos 4:3; 6:10; Hag 1:11; Zech 4:7; 5:4

Johnny Sanders - Little commentary is need here. Job said it so well: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). I had so many funerals in one fifteen year pastorate that the local funeral directors joked about helping me recruit some members because they were burying all of mine. I have had funerals under all sorts of circumstances; rain, sleet, and snow, and intense heat. I have been in large and small processions. But so far I have never seen an armored car in a funeral procession. Perhaps you read about the man who died before three friends could repay ten thousand dollar loans. The three friends agreed that they owed the money and since their friend had no family, they thought the best thing they could do was to go by the open casket as they left the service and slip the money into the casket. They met later and the first man said, "Well, I feel better now. I slipped ten thousand dollars cash into the casket with Joe." The second friend said, "I didn't know how you would handle it, but I did the same thing." The third friend said, "The banker told me you had each cashed a ten thousand dollar check, so I knew what you were going to do. But instead of getting him to cash my check, I just made out a thirty thousand dollar check to Joe and slipped it into the casket - and picked up your twenty thousand dollars change."

Be sure you give your kids wisdom before you give them wealth

John Owen - Let us be in an expectation of such changes of **providence**, that they may not be great surprises unto us. When we are in peace, let us look for trouble; when we are at liberty, let us look for restraint; and when our children are about us, let us look for the removal of them; and be content to see all our comforts in their winding-sheet every day. It is impossible but our hearts will be too much upon them, unless we keep them in this frame. ([from a sermon entitled The Everlasting Covenant, The Believer's Support Under Distress.](#))

Related Resource:

- [The law of rewards](#) by Alcorn, Randy (Borrow this book)
- [SPECIAL TOPIC: WEALTH](#)

TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Do not lay up . . . treasures on earth, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Matt 6:19, 20

Many Christians are short sighted, placing greater value on the enjoyments of this present life than on the glories of the future in heaven. Because their perspective is wrong, their time is misspent, their talents are misused, and their money is misinvested. They amass a fortune on earth but give little thought to laying up treasures in heaven. They forget that the more we "send on ahead," the brighter will be the anticipation of going there.

A woman met a friend of her father's who had not seen him for many years. The woman's father was a devout Christian, so she found great joy in telling his old acquaintance about her dad's trust in the Lord, and the way he faced suffering, trials, and even the prospect of death. The friend, however, had lived a different kind of life. Having given himself over completely to earning money and hoarding every cent he could, he had become very wealthy. But he didn't have the same glad anticipation of the future as his friend did. He explained it to the daughter in this way:

"Your father can be more optimistic about heaven than I for a very simple reason.

He is going to his treasure. I'll be leaving mine!"

That expresses it well. When death comes, those who have chosen to live for selfish fulfillment will enter eternity empty handed. But those who have lived for the Lord and wisely invested in eternity will have a glorious entrance. They'll find their treasures in heaven!

--R.W.D. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Shall the great Judge say, when my task is through,
That my soul had gathered some riches too?
Or shall at the last it be mine to find
That all I had worked for was left behind?
--Anon.

You can't take your money to heaven,
but you can make an investment for eternity.

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 1 Timothy 6:8

I am told that in a cemetery in England stands a grave marker with this inscription:

SHE DIED FOR WANT OF THINGS.

Alongside that stone is another which reads:

HE DIED TRYING TO GIVE THEM TO HER.

In a laughable and yet tragic manner these epitaphs suggest the folly of living and working only for this world's goods. Whenever someone is so enamored by earthly possessions that acquiring them becomes his primary goal, he encounters frustration and disappointment. This is true because man is a spiritual being and can never be content with material fortunes.

The old Cracker Jack slogan, "**The more you eat the more you want,**" reminds us of an important truth. People can easily develop an insatiable appetite for **things** while neglecting to fulfill the real cravings of their hearts with the "bread of heaven."

I've yet to meet an unbeliever who has amassed great wealth and doesn't want more. Riches simply do not satisfy, and the more a man gets the more he wants! The person who knows the Lord and whose affection is centered upon "things above" (Col 3:2+) can find perfect contentment even with the bare necessities of life. That's why the great apostle Paul could write to Timothy, "having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:8).

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33+).

Where are your priorities in life? Have you discovered the secret of true contentment? --R.W.D. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Fret not for want of earthly things;
They'll never satisfy.
The secret of contentment is
To let the Lord supply.
--D.J.D.

Most of us seem determined not to be content with our lot until it's a lot more!

1 Timothy 6:6-8 Homily

Godliness the Highest Gain —

I. Because it ensures the supply of absolute necessities—" Having food and raiment let us be therewith content " (1Ti 6:8). Our real wants are few. What do we need more than food and covering ? They who fear the Lord have the promise of sustenance (Isa. 33:16 ; Ps 37:3). The godly are under the special care of the Divine Universal Provider.

II. Because it promotes a spirit of contentment.—" Godliness with contentment is great gain " (1Ti 6:6). Godliness is a great means of gain — not of that gain which breeds discontent in its covetous pursuit, but the present and eternal gain which piety brings to the soul. Godliness is gain when it is accompanied with the

contentment it inspires. It not only feels no need of what it has not, but also has that which exalts it above what it has not. Godliness is its own sufficiency, and satisfies every want of the complex nature of man. Godliness, even with affliction, is great gain. A minister recovering from a dangerous illness confessed, "This six weeks' illness has taught me more divinity than all my past studies and all my ten years' ministry put together."

III. Because the contentment accompanying true godliness is independent of worldly possessions (1Ti 6:7).— Godliness reminds us of the condition in which we entered the world, and in which we shall leave it. We brought nothing with us ; we shall take nothing away. If we have little, we are taught to be content with that little ; if we have much, we are taught how fragile is our hold upon our possessions — not to set our hearts upon them, but use them as stewards who must give an account to the Giver of all good. Richard Boyle, the great Earl of Cork, outlived most of those who had known the meanness of his beginning. He never forgot it himself, but took pains to preserve the memory of it to posterity in the motto he always used, and which he caused to be placed on his tomb : " God's **providence** is my inheritance." ([The Preacher's complete homiletical commentary](#))

LESSONS —

1. Our spiritual gains are our truest wealth.
2. Contentment is a special endowment of godliness.
3. The godly man makes the best of both worlds.

1 Timothy 6:6-8. The Cultivation of Christian Contentment

I. Godliness is itself a gain. —

1. Because it is a satisfying reality.
2. Because it gives us the highest pleasures of which we are capable.

II. Godliness with contentment is great gain. —

1. Contentment is the outcome of godliness.
 2. Reasons for cultivating Christian contentment,
 - (1) We have nothing (1Ti 6:7).
 - (2) We have need of nothing (1Ti 6:8).
 - (3) We are in danger of being entangled by striving after earthly things (1Ti 6:9, 10).
 3. The advantages of cultivating Christian contentment.
 - (1) It will protect us from the temptation to become rich anyhow (by any means!).
 - (2) It will shield us from avarice.
 - (3) It will teach us to acquire spiritual riches (cp 1Ti 4:7-8-note)
 - (4) It will gladden the brief space of our earthly probation
- Lay Preacher ([Ref](#))

1 Timothy 6:6 CONTENTMENT

I The Text presents us with a bride. -- "Godliness."

II. A bridesmaid. — " Contentment."

III. Her great dowry. — "Great gain"

IV. The present payment. — " Godliness with contentment *is* great gain."—T. Fuller. ([Ref](#))

Ruth Bryan - September 19th.—I have had sharp exercises this week, concerning what many would think a trifle. On Monday, a tenant gave me half-a-sovereign, which was lost I know not how. It appeared most mysterious, for I much needed it. My soul sank within me, because I feared my Father must be angry, or He would not so constantly smite me in providential matters. It seemed as if my Lord would speak there would be a calm; and I know He will, although I cannot see how He can be glorified in this thing. I felt

much encouraged by reading "Burroughs on Contentment ([The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment](#))." It is to encourage dependence on the Lord when ways and means seem most shut up. He quotes 2Kings 3:17: "You shall not see wind, neither shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water." I never saw the passage in this light before. My God, **You are able**. My soul was afresh encouraged to supplicate, notwithstanding long delays and straitenings. ([Gleanings from the Inner Life of Ruth Bryan](#))

1 Timothy 6:8 IF WE HAVE FOOD AND COVERING, WITH THESE WE SHALL BE CONTENT: echontes (PAPMPN) de diatrophas kai skepasmata, toutois arkesthesometha. (1PFPI):

Greek: [dunametha](#); (1PPPI) 8 [echontes](#) (PAPMPN) [de diatrophas kai skepasmata, toutois arkesthesometha.](#) (1PFPI)

Amplified: But if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content (satisfied). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

KJV: And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Moffatt: If we have food and clothes, we must be content with that.

NET: But if we have food and shelter, we will be satisfied with that.

NLT: So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Surely then, as far as physical things are concerned, it is sufficient for us to keep our bodies fed and clothed. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TLB: So we should be well satisfied without money if we have enough food and clothing.

Weymouth: and if we have food and clothing, with these we will be satisfied.

Wuest: And having food and clothing, by these we shall be fortified sufficiently;

Young's Literal: but having food and raiment -- with these we shall suffice ourselves;

- Ge 28:20 48:15 De 2:7 8:3,4 Pr 27:23-27 30:8,9 Ec 2:24-26 Ec 3:12,13 Mt 6:11,25-33 Heb 13:5,6
- 1 Timothy 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Related Resource: Christian Contentment

Related Passages:

Hebrews 13:5-6+ Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," 6so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

THE BARE BASICS ARE ENOUGH

But if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content([arkeo](#)- satisfied) - Note that Paul does not even say a roof over our head but in fairness clothing or covering is general enough that it could refer to both clothing and shelter! Jesus had no place to lay His head and he survived! Paul sets the standard. He was content in Christ (Php 4:13), but where was he? He was in the [Mamertine prison](#), a veritable hole in the floor with the city sewer system flowing by. He was in a damp, dark, stinking dungeon.

If you are not content with your **food and clothing** consider praying...

Lord, make me truly wise, I pray,
Contented with my lot;
Help me to shun all earthly things
That soon will be forgot!
- Henry G. Bosch

William Barclay says: Content comes when we escape the servitude to things, when we find our wealth in the love and the friendship and the fellowship of men, and when we realize that our most precious possession is our friendship with God, made

possible through Jesus Christ.

Guthrie says: Verse 8 gives a definition of Christian contentment. If we have no more than the bare necessities such as food and raiment ('covering material', which may represent shelter as well as clothes) contentment should result. (Borrow [The pastoral epistles : an introduction and commentary](#))

Hendriksen says: The original ("shelter" or "coverings") in all probability, includes the dwelling in which a man resides as well as the garment which he wears. The Lord does not demand of us that, having clothing, we do not even look for a tent or a house in which to live. (Borrow [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

Wiersbe says: I am reminded of the simple-living Quaker who was watching his new neighbor move in, with all of the furnishings and expensive "toys" that "successful people" collect. The Quaker finally went over to his new neighbor and said, "Neighbor, if ever thou dost need anything, come to see me, and I will tell thee how to get along without it." Henry David Thoreau, the great author of the 1800s, reminded us that a man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without. (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Bible Knowledge Commentary says: Christians do have basic material needs for food and clothing, of course, like everyone else. But when they are met, a godly Christian can be satisfied.

Food (1305) (**diatrophe** from **diatrepho** =to maintain,<> **diá** = an intensifier + **trépho** = to nourish) is used only here in the NT (one use 1Macc 6:49) and from the meaning of the root verb **diatrepho** gives us the sense of that which sustains, maintains, nourishes, or supports the body. Sustenance. Nourishment. Means of subsistence suggests that it may have a broader sense than just food, though that is doubtless the primary idea.

Mouton and Milligan record that **diatrophe** is found in a papyrus contract of apprenticeship from Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, and dated A.D. 66—perhaps the very year that 1 Timothy was written—this word occurs in the sense of **board and room**. Five drachmas was to be paid for the boy's "keep" (Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, page 156).

A well-filled stomach is indeed a great thing
—all else is luxury.

Covering (4629) (**skepasma** from **skepázo** = to cover) strictly speaking means covering material and thus literally is a covering. It is used only here (not in Lxx) where Paul describes clothing, raiment, or less likely shelter, although there are secular Greek uses that refer to a house.

Ralph Martin writes that "Though used mainly for clothing, **skepasma** sometimes referred to a house (as in Aristotle's Metaphysics). In the broadest sense it means "protection." So these two terms taken together would cover the necessities of life, which we refer to today as "food, clothing, and shelter." (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

Poor indeed is the man
who cannot enjoy the simple things of life.

Be content (714)(**arkeo**) is a verb which means to be enough, to be sufficient or to be adequate with the implication of leading to satisfaction. In the **passive voice** (as here in 1Ti 6:8), **arkeo** means to **be** satisfied or **be** contented with something.

Wuest adds that **arkeo** means "to be possessed of unfailing strength, to be strong, to suffice, to be enough," finally, "to be satisfied, contented." The underlying thought is that one should be satisfied with that which meets our need, and not desire a superfluity."

Richards adds that in the present passage **arkeo** means not only "to be enough" but shifts the emphasis to our **attitude**, so that we have "*an attitude that lets us be satisfied with whatever is available.*"

Each day God sends His loving aid
To strengthen you and me;
We need to use today's supply
And let tomorrow be.
—Anonymous

The derivative adjective **autarkes** describes the man who needs nothing externally to be satisfied in life for all he needs is within. the believer who has Christ dwelling within. **Wiersbe** adds that "*The word "content" actually means "contained." It is a description of the man whose resources are within him so that he does not have to depend on substitutes without.*" ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)) In the great Psalm 75, **Asaph** expresses a similar thought asking...

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? (**Ed: What is the answer?**) And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Ps 73:25-26- [see Spurgeon's exposition](#))

Comment: In Psalm 73 Asaph begins somewhat "discontented" (Ps 73:2-3) but came to his senses ("came into the sanctuary of God" Ps 75:17) and came to understand Who is the Source of true contentment verses 25-26. Beloved, are you where Asaph was in Ps 73:2-3? Then consider memorizing and meditating (chewing) on the truth in Ps 73:25-26? **May God be pleased by His Spirit to illuminate this truth deep within our innermost being, in our heart of hearts, so that we might experience the precious jewel of divine contentment in Christ, our all in all, by His grace and for His glory. Amen.**

NIDNTT describes the fleshly attempts of the Stoics for contentment...

In the moral philosophy of Stoicism the ability **to be content** (arkeisthai) **became the essence of all the virtues**. So the Stoic Diogenes Laertius speaks of Socrates as being *autarkes kai semnos*, contented and devout. To practice the virtue of contentment was to acquiesce wisely in that which suited one's own nature or one's daimon; becoming independent of things, a man relied upon himself or-as others taught-submitted to the lot meted out to him by the gods (Diogenes Laertius, 2, 24; Epictetus, Dissertations 1, 1, 12 f.). To have no needs was the ideal of Stoicism. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Arkeo is also used in...

2Corinthians 12:9-note And He (Context = Paul had prayed 3x for relief from thorn in his flesh - 2Co 12:7,8) has said to me, "My grace is **sufficient** for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Comment: In 2Cor 12:9, **arkeo** is in the **present tense** indicating that the divine gift of **grace** is continually sufficient - His grace is a very present help in time of trouble (Ps 46:1-note), like the battery in the commercial, a veritable "Ever Ready", All Sufficient, Supernatural Source of Strength. Though he had suffered fourteen years of a thorn in his side, he had received fourteen years of grace as his supply. Indeed, God gives us a lifetime supply of His grace for our weaknesses. As Robertson puts it "Christ's grace suffices and abides." Notice also that **arkeo** is at the head of the sentence for added emphasis and thus literally reads "Sufficient for you my grace". This clearly places emphasis on the words **sufficient for you**. Note also that **Christ** says His grace **IS** sufficient for you, which means that we don't have to ask Him to make His grace sufficient. It already **IS!**

It is also worth noting that the related word **autarkes** which means essentially *self sufficient* was used by the Stoics. In 2Corinthians Paul is writing to a church immersed in pagan philosophies, including stoicism, so how fitting to counter man's flawed view of sufficiency with the only source of true sufficiency - God's grace. Vincent adds that **autarkes** (autos = himself + arkeo = to suffice or be sufficient) was "A stoic word, expressing the favorite doctrine of the sect, **that man should be sufficient to himself for all things; able by the power of his own will, to resist the shock of circumstance**. Paul (referring to Php 4:11-note) is **self-sufficient through the power of the new self: not he, but Christ in him**."

Hebrews 13:5-note Let your character be free from the love of money, **being content** (present tense - used with an imperative sense in context) with what you have; **for (term of explanation** - What is the writer explaining?) He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you (**Note** that there are 5 negatives in the Greek of this last clause! This should cause us never to doubt that God will leave us!)"

Spurgeon: How easy it is, how easy it must be, for a man to be contented when he knows that God has promised to be with him in all circumstances and at all times!

Arkeo - Used 7x in the Septuagint (LXX)- Ex 12:4; Nu 11:22; Jos. 17:16; 1Ki. 8:27; 2Chr 6:18; Pr 30:15, 16. Here is an OT use...

Joshua 17:16 And the sons of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough (arkeo) for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the valley land have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shean and its towns, and those who are in the valley of Jezreel." (cp Jdg 1:27 explains why they had this problem = they failed to fully obey. Partial obedience = disobedience beloved! Contrast Judah's experience - Jdg 1:2, 3, 4)

THOUGHT: When you take your eyes off the Lord and the faithfulness of His Word (cp Peter's experience of taking his eyes off His Sufficient Savior, Mt 14:30), your "**hill country**" never seems to be **enough**, for you will begin to focus on the adversaries and adversities (or the waves, like Peter!). Instead, let us focus on His sure promise to give us "every spiritual blessing...in Christ" (Eph 1:3-note). Let us focus on the promise of His **power sufficient to possess** what we feel too weak to possess (cp Josh 1:2, 3, noting

Joshua's responsibility and God's sufficiency). God had given Israel the land of Canaan as their possession, but they had to possess it which is another way of saying they had to "**trust and obey**". (see Joshua's last words testifying to God's faithfulness -- Joshua 23:14, 21:45) In short, Jehovah promised Israel they would be able to possess a new and glorious **LAND**, but to NT believers He promises we will be able to possess a new and glorious **LIFE** in Christ (cp Gal 2:20-note). And He gives us sufficient grace to possess this promise!

Matthew Henry well said that "The necessities of life are the bounds of a true Christian's desires. Truly, the secret of contentment is not having much but wanting little. This is not to say we cannot have more than food and clothing. It means that having more than these presents a temptation (1 Tim. 6:9). May we, as God's children, refuse to let the world squeeze us into its mold, and refuse to imitate it as it seeks everything to live with and nothing to live for.

Much wants More!

Guy King says: It is one of the rich man's dangers that he lacks contentment--having got one thing, he wants another; as the old proverb puts it, "Much wants More". After all, he can afford it, so why shouldn't he have it? Perhaps we shall be able to settle that point later on in this Study. As we said earlier, it is not wrong to have riches, of course not; but only bear in mind that there is a danger of bloated, and pampered extravagance.

Demarest says: There was a memorable line in the movie Oh, God! John Denver is talking with "God" (in the form of George Burns) and raises the classic question, "If you're so loving and good, how come there are so many people starving in the world?" To which "God" replies: "Look, I gave you plenty to go around for everyone. As long as some of you insist on having more than you need, others will go hungry." And that's the way it is!

G. K. Chesterton said: "There are 2 ways to get enough: one is to continue to accumulate more and more, the other is to desire less and less."

John Owen - Our lots are various in this world : how they may be farther different before we go out of it we know not. Some are in one condition,—some in another. That we envy not one another, nor any in the world; that we repine not at God, nor charge him foolishly,—is that I aim at ;—a thing sufficiently necessary in these days, wherein good men are too little able to bear their own condition, if in any thing it differs from [that of] others. ([from a sermon Of Walking Humbly With God](#))

Life and Works of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon by Henry Davenport Northrop, D.D. A benevolent person gave Mr. Rowland Hill a hundred pounds to dispense to a poor minister, and, thinking it was too much to send him all at once, Mr. Hill forwarded five pounds in a letter, with simply these words within the envelope, "More to follow." In a few days' time, the good man received another letter by the post--and the letters by the post were rarities in those days;--this second messenger contained another five pounds, with the same motto, "And more to follow." A day or two after came a third and a fourth, and still the same promise, "And more to follow." Till the whole sum had been received the astonished minister was made familiar with the cheering words, "And more to follow." Every blessing that comes from God is sent with the self-same message, "And more to follow." "I forgive you your sins, but there's more to follow." "I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there's more to follow." "I adopt you into my family, but there's more to follow." "I educate you for heaven, but there's more to follow." "I give you grace upon grace, but there's more to follow." "I have helped you even to old age, but there's still more to follow." "I will uphold you in the hour of death, and as you are passing into the world of spirits, my mercy shall still continue with you, and when you land in the world to come there shall still be more to follow."

Rut, Rot or Revival: The Condition of the Church by A. W. Tozer

We have God. We have Christ. We have truth. We have a world needing help. We have the saints, and we have the power of prayer. We have the joy of obedience and we have the sweet wonder of His presence. We have the joy of Christian song. We have all this and we do not need garbage. We have God. All we have to do is trust in His Son Jesus Christ and obey the truth, and the Lord will manifest Himself, show Himself through the lattice.

John MacArthur - The simple life involves accepting what God provides and avoiding covetousness. The following practical principles will help keep life free from the desire for more material possessions.

First, believers must consciously realize that the Lord owns everything they have. They are mere stewards of their possessions. Purchases should be evaluated as to how they would advance the kingdom, or make one's ministry more effective.

Second, believers must cultivate a thankful heart. Since God owes them nothing, anything they receive from Him should make them thankful.

Third, believers must learn to distinguish wants from needs. That principle, if followed, would greatly increase the amount of money available for the Lord's work.

Fourth, believers must discipline themselves to spend less than they make. The ease of buying things on credit has become a severe temptation. As a result, many people are so hopelessly mired in debt that they will never get out.

Finally, believers must give sacrificially to the Lord. Laying up treasure in heaven for the work of the kingdom should be their highest joy and source of greatest reward. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 1 Timothy 6:8

Of all people, we as Christians have reason to be content. Yet I'm afraid that too often we are not satisfied with the blessings we have. Like so many others, we always want just a little bit more.

One day Lord Congleton, a godly man, overheard one of his kitchen servants remark, "Oh, if I only had 5 pounds, I would be perfectly content." Pondering her statement, he decided he would like to see someone who was perfectly content. So he went to the woman and said he had heard her remark and wanted to do something about it. He proceeded to give her a 5-pound note. With great feeling she thanked him. Congleton then left the kitchen, but paused for a moment outside the door. As soon as the woman thought he was gone, she began to complain, "Why on earth didn't I say 10 pounds!"

Human nature seems afflicted with the pernicious disease of "more-itis"--an insatiable desire for material wealth and possessions. God, however, commands us to be happy with the necessities of life and not to set our heart on the passing things of this earth. The apostle Paul gave this testimony: "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, in this to be content" (Phil. 4:11).

Do you have an irrepressible longing for just a little bit more? If so, remember the admonition of Hebrews 13:5, "Let your manner of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." --P.R.V. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, make us truly wise, we pray,
Contented with our lot;
And help us shun all earthly gain
Which soon will be forgot.
--Bosch

Contentment comes not from great wealth but from few wants.

IT'S TOUGH TO BE CONTENT

Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. --Hebrews 13:5

Life in an affluent society can be frustrating, I thought, as I walked through a local mall. On display for a special show was an astounding array of recreational vehicles. Campers and mobile homes bore signs, "Yours today for only \$25,000." They were so inviting I found it difficult not to envy people who could afford one of these beauties.

Our battle to be content isn't just for big ticket items. Imagine the struggle of a single mother who can barely make her rent payments. How difficult it must be not to covet a car that isn't rusty or not to envy a woman who doesn't have to send her children to school in hand-medowns. Or how can someone who struggles to stretch a paycheck across 2 weeks be content in a world where he is surrounded by wealth?

In 1 Timothy 6:5, Paul warns us to beware of people who think that being godly will bring them riches. He says contentment plus godliness makes us truly rich. But how do we become content? By recognizing that we brought nothing into the world and that we'll carry nothing out--that everything we have is from God. Are you bothered by the riches of others? Tell God about it. Trust Him to meet your needs. Fellowship with Him each day through prayer and the Word. Godliness--not gold--brings contentment. --J.D.B. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, make us truly wise, we pray,

Contented with our lot;
For heavenly gain shun earthly things,
Which soon will be forgot.
--H.G.B.

CONTENTMENT IS NOT FOUND IN HAVING EVERYTHING,
BUT IN BEING SATISFIED WITH EVERYTHING WE HAVE.