

Godliness with Contentment

In 1 Timothy 6:6, the apostle Paul tells Timothy, "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

Christians strive for godliness, but I am convinced we have often forgotten contentment. The word thus translated comes from *autarkeia* meaning "self-satisfaction, contentedness, sufficiency" (Strong). It means being satisfied with yourself, who you are, and what you have accomplished.

Certainly, it is not being advocated that the Christian should ever reach the point where they no longer desire to grow and develop as a servant of God. The focus here is on one's place in this physical world. When a person becomes a Christian and adapts his life to the will of God, thereby forming godliness, that individual has reached the pinnacle of success on this earth. Life has been fully formed around God's commands and expectations. The responsibilities presented have been accepted. The presentation is worthy of the promised rewards for the faithful. There is nothing greater that can be accomplished by man on this earth.

Unfortunately, godliness is not often examined with such a long-term view. Some Christians do not see godliness as sufficient, but desire physical wealth and position as well. They focus their life's efforts on their rank within their business, their salary, or their perceived importance. There is worry about the next step up the ladder, the next raise, the next purchase, the next want. It consumes their efforts.

This is not contentment. It is a mindset geared toward physical accomplishment and status. Consider what Paul said in the same context of chapter 6: "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. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:7-10).

Christians need to be aware of the dangers present with a lack of contentment. When being God's servant and obeying his will are not enough for us, we are telling God that his grace is not enough for us (2 Corinthians 9:12-13), his care and comfort do not compensate sufficiently (Matthew 6:30-33; Psalm 37:25).

Contentedness is not something that is naturally retained. It is an attitude that is consciously enacted. It is easy to allow the physical desires of the world to take away contentment and replace it with ambition, pride, and lust. The Christian must remember that he who has godliness with contentment has the greatest acquisition on earth. ~~ *Adam Cozort*