

1 Timothy 6:3-12
Finding Great Gain
February 9, 2025

Television executives estimated that between 117 and 120 million viewers will watch the Super Bowl games tonight between the KC Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles - that is a lot of eye balls! - Therefore, advertising during the Super Bowl is incredibly expensive!

USA Today is reporting that a 30 second ad during the Super Bowl this year will cost you a measly **7 Million dollars** - though some companies have reported paying as much as 8 Million!

This leads me to believe that one of two things is true:

- 1. These companies have money to burn and don't care how they spend it!**
- 2. Advertising during the Super Bowl is so effective, they will pay whatever it takes for 30 seconds on the airways tonight!**

I think these companies are run by some PRETTY SMART PEOPLE - and despite that fact that yes, they may have MONEY TO BURN, advertising Works! - these companies are spending millions of dollars because they believe, and their research proves, that they can convince you IN 30 SECONDS TONIGHT, that you need what they're selling!

They genuinely believe their MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR ADS will catch your eyes & ears and CREATE A NEED in your life - and that eventually you will respond to that ad and buy what they're selling!

Folks, advertising works - The World is really good at making us humans desire THE SILLIEST STUFF - they're goal is to MAKE YOU BELIEVE there is ANOTHER SOMETHING out there you can't live without!

It might be as expensive as NEW LEXUS for your driveway - or it might be as cheap as a new MENU ITEM from the Taco Bell - but they are going to work hard to sell you on something!

Well, here in 1 Timothy 6, the Apostle Paul is trying to help us FIGHT OFF these CREATIVE GENIUSES - these folks whose SOUL DESIRE to make us ALL DISCONTENT!

We are living in the WEALTHIEST, MOST AFFLUENT country the world have ever known! - we have MORE STUFF than our ancestors could even imagine - yet, it is still INCREDIBLY EASY to make us think we need more!

This morning I want us to take a look at a very important and timely topic -

How can I find contentment in a world driven to discontentment? -

Well, we find Paul's wisdom on this subject starting here in 1 Timothy 6:3 -

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wrangling's of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

The Letter of the Apostle Paul's was written to his young protege Timothy - Timothy is AT THIS TIME overseeing the Churches in the City of Ephesus - In the first five chapters Paul has covered many important topics for this YOUNG PASTOR.

Most have had to do with helping Timothy understand how the church is to function - how to ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP - how to deal with THE ELDERLY & WIDOWS - and the importance of pray and teach God's Word.

He has also spend a great deal of time teaching HIS SON IN THE FAITH how to deal with the PROBLEM PEOPLE in his church - And, yes there were some men who were giving young Timothy a HARD TIME!

As he begins to close his letter in chapter 6 - and remember when Paul wrote the letter he did not divide it into chapter and verses - those were added much later to help us NAVIGATE OUR BIBLE'S - Paul simply wrote Timothy a letter and we are near the close of that letter.

Paul's warning to Timothy is that there are a lot of DANGEROUS MEN out there - they are going CREATE PROBLEMS in the church - they will twist the teachings of Jesus and of Paul in order to GET WEALTHY.

Paul remind Timothy that they will have SELFISH MOTIVES - rather than care about the people, they will seek to use the people of the church to enrich themselves!

These men are corrupt - they have no interest in the truth - They are simple using the Gospel of Christ as a MEANS OF FINANCIAL GAIN - they are out for money and power - and they will use **whatever disputes and arguments** they need in order to FILL THEIR POCKETS!

Paul advice to Timothy is to GET AWAY from these guys! - **“withdraw yourself”** is his advice to Timothy - Don't get PULLED INTO ARGUMENTS with them - Don't be intimidated by them - Just get away from them - And don't let them WEASLE THEIR WAY into the church!

Please take note of Paul's comment about them: they **“suppose that godliness is a means of gain!”** - in other words, they were using some FALSE PIETY as a way of personal, financial gain! - though they DRESSED LIKE SAINTS, inwardly they were wolves!

Let's DEFINE THIS WORD **godliness** before we go any further - this is a term Paul uses all through this letter - it simply means “having an attitude of wanting to please God” - to be godly in Paul's thinking is **“wanting to live life in a way that pleases Our Heavenly Father”**.

It is wanting to love like Jesus loves - wanting to serve others like Jesus served - wanting to reflect the heart of Jesus to all those around me!

These false teachings were talking a GOOD GAME - but nothing in their motives reflected the HEART OF JESUS - they put on a GODLY MASK in order to profit financially - they discovered that behaving a certain RELIGIOUS WAY - or saying certain CHRISTIAN PHRASES would benefit them - so they preyed on innocent believers there in Ephesus in order to get rich!

Godliness should never be used in this way! - In 1 Timothy 4:7-8, Paul tells us the TRUE BENEFITS of Godliness - **7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.**

Here are the REAL BENEFITS of godliness - Godliness will be profitable in this life and in the life to come - Godliness is learning to live our lives as God DESIGNED IT TO BE LIVED - it will make our lives better!

God knows WHAT'S IMPORTANT in this life - He knows what will truly make us HAPPY & FULFILLED during our time here on earth - and living a LIFE PLEASING to Him will do just that! - **Doing things HIS WAY is always the BEST WAY!**

We study to learn HIS WORD - then we prioritize OUR TIME as He prioritized in His Word - we must MAKE LIFE DECISIONS according to the truth we find in His Word - if we do, Godliness will be a great blessing to us!

But, Godliness also benefits us IN THE LIFE TO COME - Godliness keeps us on THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIVE in Christ - Heaven awaits those who truly follow Christ and seek to live a life pleasing to Him! - Using godliness with SELFISH MOTIVES will only lead us to Hell, not Heaven.

Interestingly, here Paul reminds Timothy that BODILY EXERCISE will help you a little in this life - I try to get on MY TREADMILL as often as I can - I'm WALKING AND WORKING to stay in some kind of shape hoping it makes my life a little easier - but I daily try to remind myself it is the SPIRITUAL EXERCISE that is most profitable for me!

I hope we are all doing SOME KIND OF EXERCISES that help our bodies stay healthy - but I also hope we all realize that it is THE LIFTING of God's Word - and Walking in the Spirit - and doing some DEEP KNEE BENDS of prayer - these are of the GREATEST BENEFIT to our lives!

Let's go back to verse 6 of Chapter 6 - **6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.** - Paul now tells us that godliness needs a COMPANION - these are the DYNAMIC DUO of a blessed life - Godliness, when it is coupled with CONTENTMENT, brings great gain in my life!

We have defined godliness as “wanting to live life in a way that pleases God” - Now let's define what contentment means as the Bible uses the term - **Contentment is trusting that God has supplied everything that I need RIGHT NOW to live a happy and fulfilled life.**

I may not have everything I want - especially after watching all those Super Bowl commercials tonight - but I have everything I need - There is nothing out there that I MUST HAVE in order to be happy & fulfilled - Contentment is trusting that God has given to me everything I need RIGHT NOW where I am in life!

You do realize that we will never have EVERYTHING WE WANT - **Our sinful flesh will always want more!** - Do you realize that on MOST DAYS the average Americans eat BETTER THAN the Caesars of Rome ate in Paul's day - We have COMFORTS & CONVENIENCES most in the world can only dream of having - Most of us travel more in a week than our great-grand parents traveled in a life-time!

With all this, we still want more! - Doesn't that let you in on a secret you should know: **Your flesh will never be satisfied!** - So stop allowing your flesh with its UNENDING DESIRES to RULE YOUR LIFE! - As Christians, we must LEARN TO FIND CONTENTMENT in what God has supplied!

Listen to what Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:10-13** **But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Here Paul is writing to the church in Philippi THANKING THEM for how they were supporting him - but there had been seasons when they had not had the OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO - during those times, PAUL HAD SUFFERED - there had been times in his ministry when he had very little - He had literally gone hungry.

But, there had been other seasons WHEN HE HAD PLENTY - Yet notice during BOTH TIMES he had **“learned in whatever state, to be content!”** - Look at that important statement again: Notice, Paul had learned to be content.

It was not his NATURAL STATE - He was not born content - He didn't suddenly become content when he BEGAN FOLLOWING JESUS - NO - He had to learn to be content!

Paul had to learn that GOD WAS RESPONSIBLE for his PLACE IN LIFE - He had chosen to live for Jesus - He was trusting that Jesus would take care of MEETING HIS NEEDS! - He had learned to IGNORE THE FLESH and its discontentment.

Don't misunderstand - Paul wasn't SITTING AROUND DOING NOTHING waiting on God to bring manna from heaven - NO, Paul worked a job in just about every place he traveled - that is IN ADDITION to all of the ministry work he did - He was a TENT MAKER in his day job - and that was hard work!

Paul worked to BE RESPONSIBLE for his own needs - He worked hard so that he would NOT BE A BURDEN on the churches he was planting - he trusted God to provide his needs with the WORK HE HAD.

In doing so he found that SOME SEASONS OF LIFE were lean - and he LEARNED TO BE CONTENT during those lean times - other seasons were PLENTIFUL & ABUNDANT - Amazingly, Paul learned to RELAX & REJOICE in both!

In other words, **Paul was WALKING AND TRUSTING, NOT RUNNING AND CHASING** - He was walking by faith - trusting the Lord to provide - He was not running in PANIC - Not chasing every desire to have more - even when HE NEEDED MORE!

Paul had learned that God could be trusted and He would provide all THAT PAUL TRULY NEEDED to accomplish the WILL OF GOD.

Have you LEARNED CONTENTMENT? - or are you still chasing stuff? - I have seen a lot of Godly people who are RUNNING & CHASING, rather than walking and trusting.

They love God, but they ARE MISERABLE with what He has provided - even though what is God has provided is meeting their needs - and in many cases SIGNIFICANTLY MORE than just meeting their needs!

Phil. 4:13 is one of the most quoted verses in all of the Bible - **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Yet most people don't know ITS CONTEXT - Paul says these words in the CONTEXT OF LEARNING CONTENTMENT! - He says this in the context of LEARNING TO LIVE with what God has provided - sometimes that was abundance - sometimes it was meager - but with either state Paul realized he would be just fine - He could SURVIVE OR THRIVE through it all because of the strength he found in Christ Jesus!

The 10th and final commandment of the Big Ten that God gave to Moses is found in **Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."**

In Romans 7, Paul says this is the commandment that got him - This was the one that MADE HIM REALIZE just what a sinner he was - This was the commandment THAT BROUGHT TO LIGHT all of the evil desires that were in his heart!

Paul had watched too many Super Bowl commercials there in Rome - They had CAUSED HIM TO COVET all of these things that others had that he didn't have! - There was a time in Paul's life that he was miserable and defeated.

But THRU THE YEARS of following Jesus, he had learned to be content - He had FOUND PEACE IN RESTING, rather than chasing WHAT OTHER'S HAD - He had learned he could be happy right where God had him - if that meant DOING WITHOUT some things he wanted, well that was just fine!

Paul discovered that the Dynamic Duo he needed in his life was this wonderful combination of **Godliness coupled with Contentment!** - Neither was enough on their own - it was THE COMBINATION of the two that BROUGHT GREAT GAIN to his life.

Paul discovered the SECRET TO A JOYFUL Christian walk - True peace in Christ is found when he combined Godliness and Contentment together in his walk with Christ - THIS IS GREAT GAIN! - IT WAS NOT necessarily financial gain - but it was great spiritual gain.

Have you discovered that you really CAN DO ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens you? - Your life may not be full of ALL THE STUFF you think you need, but with the STRENGTH OF CHRIST, you will be just fine - IF YOU LEARN CONTENTMENT!

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

OK - I can promise you the Super Bowl commercials WILL NOT COMMUNICATE this message to you tonight! - But listen to what Paul is selling - God knows we need food to survive and clothing to keep us warm - In other words, God knows OUR NEEDS - but past our needs, EVERYTHING ELSE is a bonus!

Certainly this is not the VIEW OF THE AVERAGE AMERICAN - No, we were fortunate enough to be born in a COUNTRY OF AMAZING ABUNDANCE - But do you understand our life IS NOT THE LIFE most in this world experience!

I doubt there is a person in this room that only has FOOD & CLOTHING in their possession - maybe a few, and for these we are here to TRY AND HELP - but most of us have much, much, much, much more than just food and clothing! - and yet many of us are STILL UNHAPPY & DISCONTENT!

We covet our neighbors house - theirs has 5 bedrooms and ours only has 3 - we covet our neighbors job - they make \$10,000 more a year than we do - we covet our neighbors vacation - they went to Europe, we only went to Daisy World! - Wow, we have gotten way past food and clothing!

Listen, I have lived a long time - I had a birthday last week and it wasn't a small one! - Trust me when I say, when you START LOOKING AROUND and comparing your life to others, you will never be satisfied - there will always be someone with more than you have - and that is a MISERABLE WAY to live life! - No matter HOW MUCH you have, it will never be enough!

Instead, why don't you start THANKING GOD for what you do have rather than COMPLAINING TO HIM about what you don't have - **Gratefulness is the FIRST STEP on the path to LEARNING CONTENTMENT!**

In verse 9, Paul gives to all of us a WORD OF WARNING - **9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**

Remember the context of this passage - Paul has been talking about GODLINESS AND CONTENTMENT - He has told us that this combination is the KEY TO GREAT GAIN in this life - Now he POINTS OUT A GRAVE DANGER to that gain - and the key word in his warning is the word **DESIRE!**

In many ways DESIRE IS THE OPPOSITE of Contentment - Can I be real honest this morning - most of the people sitting in this room this are already rich - at least that is what most of the rest of the world would say about us.

There are literally BILLIONS OF PEOPLE all around the world who would trade places with you this RIGHT NOW! - So, can we get past the COMPARISONS WITH OUR FRIENDS for a moment and talk about our real problem?

Our problem is not how much we have. Our problem is HOW MUCH WE DESIRE! - It is our DISCONTENTMENT caused by what we desire - this has put us in a dangerous place!

When we get discontent and start following OUR DESIRES FOR MORE, we start making BAD DECISIONS - We start COVETING THINGS that Paul says will DROWN US & DESTROY our lives! - The desire for MORE AND MORE STUFF will take us down a path that is OUTSIDE THE WILL OF GOD!

When we LEAVE THE WILL OF GOD, our faith can get overwhelmed by our UNENDING DESIRES for more - When this happens, we start making choices out of GREED & SELFISHNESS - Rather than trusting what God has for us, we STRAY FROM GOD in pursuit of dangerous things.

Paul says that these choices will ultimately lead to MANY SORROWS - THE VERY THINGS we think will make us happy BECOME DAGGERS that pierce our lives CAUSING INCREDIBLE PAIN.

Paul points out two problems with CHASING WEALTH AND RICHES - First, wealth leads to greater temptations. - For Example: Did you know I wasn't tempted to spend the weekend on MY YACHT rather than come to church and worship with my church family today!

I wasn't tempted to FLY MY JET TO THE BEACH for a little R & R - though that does sound inviting in the middle of the winter in Atlanta! - I wasn't tempted to MOTOR OVER to the Super Bowl tonight in New Orleans - I wasn't tempted to SPEND THE WEEKEND in Las Vegas and gamble away my discretionary income! - because I don't have any discretionary income!

And why was I not tempted to do any of these things? - I can't afford any of these things! - Maybe some of you can - And if you can, you face what Paul calls **"a temptation and a snare"** - Your RESOURCES have given you DECISIONS TO MAKE that most of us will never have!

Paul rightly points out that with greater wealth comes GREATER TEMPTATION - WHY? - simply because you have more opportunity!

Paul also tells us this wealth comes with A SNARE! (A TRAP) - What is THAT SNARE? - The Snare of riches is THE DISTRACTION it all brings to our lives - In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus referred to this distraction when He described it as, **"the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches"**.

This is the DANGEROUS PART of having A LOT OF STUFF that we never think about - it all has to be cared for and maintained! - it is a DISTRACTION TO OUR LIVES that is difficult for most people to handle!

Understand, WEALTH IS NOT SINFUL - God may very well BLESS YOUR WORK and enable you TO AMASS GREAT WEALTH.

And if he does, hopefully you will use that wealth to ENLARGE GOD'S KINGDOM - hopefully you will see it as a tool to bless others! - But, CHASING WEALTH is dangerous - DESIRE WEALTH is dangerous - Why? - because the desire indicates a HEART THAT IS DISCONTENT!

Again, Paul's point is not that wealth or money are somehow evil - most of the people of the world would say everyone in this room is wealthy! - **Paul's point is the danger of WRONG DESIRES!**

He well knew the words of Jesus when He said in **Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** - WRONG desires reveal a WAYWARD HEART - As Jesus points out, our desires follow our heart.

This is why Paul IMMEDIATELY MENTIONS THE LOVE OF MONEY - again, money was not the ISSUE FOR PAUL - it was THE LOVE of money - The problem is OUR HEART, not the size of our PAYCHECK OR BANK ACCOUNT!

Here are the questions Paul is raising: **What do you desire? What do you love?** - these were the pressing questions on his mind - If you are SUFFERING WITH DISCONTENTMENT this morning, you really need to examine the answers to those questions in your life!

Contentment reveals that my heart IS CENTERED ON Jesus - I can have much or I can have little - Either condition works for the person whose trust is in THE HEAVENLY FATHER.

Discontentment reveals a heart that HAS WANDERED FROM Jesus - My love for Him has been replaced with a LOVE FOR STUFF - In the words of Jesus to the Church at Ephesus in Revelations 2:4, **"we have left our first love"**! - Our heart has STRAYED TO LESSER THINGS!

So, in light of this, what does Paul tell Timothy and us: **11 But you, O man of God, flee these things** - If your heart has left your first love, FLEE THESE THINGS - What things: the DESIRE FOR MORE - the LOVE of money and all the temptations that come with it - Repent and turn back your heart back to Jesus!

Paul finishes his thoughts with these words: **pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

Simply put, Paul says to Timothy and to us, **Don't make wealth and stuff the goal of your life. Pursue the things that really matter in life!** - Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness! - these are the things that bring GREAT GAIN to my life.

It is so easy to PURSUE THE WRONG THINGS - I love playing golf - it is fun for me - I get some exercise when I play - and according to Paul, this profits me A LITTLE!

But, every now and then, golf GOES FROM being a hobby to a pursuit - I start getting caught up in GETTING BETTER - my hobby suddenly becomes A PASSION, A DESIRE TO ME - I get my eyes off of things that really matter, and I begin TO FOCUS ON being a great golfer - and trust me, it is a dream!

Do you know what happens to the game I so enjoy when BECOMING GREAT takes over? - Golf becomes MISERY for me - suddenly it's no longer fun - I get angry when I hit a bad shot - EVERY MISSED PUTT becomes frustration for me - What was meant to be fun becomes an EXERCISE IN FUTILITY! - from time to time I might even throw a club!

Why? - because I started pursuing THE WRONG THING! - I let my eyes get off of the things that really matter **like righteousness and love and faith and godliness** - and immediately my life LOSES IT JOY!

This is a miserable way to live life! - and yet **discontentment can happen to us so quickly when we start desiring, loving and pursuing the wrong things!**

In closing, let's ponder a couple of important questions:

What has been the desire of your heart lately?

What have I fallen in love with recently?

What has become the pursuit of your life?

The answer to those 3 questions will lead you to a Fourth Question: **Have I become discontented with the life God has provided for me?** - I think there is NOTHING SADDER than a Christian who is lost the JOY OF THEIR SALVATION.

Their discontentment and misplaced desires has drained all of the excitement they once knew from their lives.

If that is you today, I have a reminder for you: **Godliness combined with Contentment are great gain!**

Let's pray.