



“The Road to Contentment”

- 1 Timothy 6

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Chapter 6

6:1

Paul continues in chapter 6 of this letter to a young pastor Timothy, with more of the practical application he covered in chapter 5. Sadly, for many of us, Christianity never leaves “theory and concept” to move into the reality of living faith. Yet Paul taught, *as did Jesus Christ*, that our faith is to have a reality in our day to day lives...in our everyday living that we experience upon this earth. Yet mankind seems always to attempt a compromise...to “compartmentalize” our beliefs to fall on Sunday mornings and maybe Wednesday evenings! Yet no such faith is ever spoke of in scripture except in the overt negative.

The Bible always paints a picture of the manifest of our faith as being one of complete surrender. A “dying” to self. Authentic biblical Christianity is only presented as an “absolute.” An “all-into-the pool” lifestyle where nothing is withheld ...nothing is given precedent over God and kingdom pursuits. It’s radical...no denying that. But let’s not forget that Jesus was the embodiment of “radical.” HE was all in. And we are reborn and alive because He was.

As Paul wrote this letter from prison, there were in fact literally millions of slaves throughout the Roman Empire. Certainly Paul did not...nor Jesus, nor Christianity in general, condone or encourage the practice of slavery, but He did teach that we are to live out our faith in whatever situation we find ourselves in, even the difficult ones.

Yet the honest truth is that often we feel that in certain uncomfortable or difficult situations we are absolved from obedience and excused from a ‘full on’ walk of faith. But exceptions do not exist. The compromised life and the marginal faith is a damnable road that is in fact one of Satan’s greatest weapons against us. If followed, it will only lead to self-delusion and ultimate emptiness. Eventually, it leads to hell. That is not a personal judgment upon any one individual, but rather a reiteration of what Christ Himself taught repeatedly throughout the gospels.

1John 2:15-16: *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”*

So how does the beginning of this passage affect us, after all, we aren’t slaves. For us today, this passage is certainly applicable to employee/employer relations. For slavery in Paul’s day was generally not that which America was part of a hundred years ago. Not that it was then a rosy and comfortable situation, but it was more

of a situation of an indentured servant. A method for paying off deep and unmanageable debt. Perhaps we could call it a “really bad job.”

Many of us fail to apply our faith to the area of our employment, and often go so far as to leave a bad taste in the mouths of our unbelieving employers concerning Christians and Christianity. We are, in fact, to serve our employers as if we are serving God the father directly.

6:2

Some of us are blessed enough to work for believing employers, and yet how quick we are to forget that such is indeed a great blessing! We are apt to feel because our employer is a believer that we can get away with being lazy and less than diligent. We can think that because he is a brother he should treat us different than the unredeemed employees...that we ought to be the first to get that raise or to move up the corporate ladder. But actually we should be attempting to take the weight upon ourselves...to work harder, be more committed, more honest, and other-centered. We are to serve them with even a greater diligence and honesty because they are brothers in Christ.

Col 3:22-25: “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”

6:3-5

Today we as believers are often guilty of trying to live out a very watered-down ‘Jesus-lite’ Christianity. The ‘tide’ to accept this revisionist version of Christianity is getting stronger by the day. Let’s acknowledge here that such a lifestyle is *not* Christianity, no matter what you call it. Not only are blatant unbiblical teachings being widely accepted, those of us who hold to scripture are marginalized and labeled as cultic! Paul is not surrendering to such pressure however. His salvation is too valuable to acquiesce! Not only is he hardcore about the doctrine itself, Paul is hardcore against those who teach otherwise! Paul says they “know nothing!”

While the Body of Christ is large, and has room for differences of practice and style, the fundamentals of scripture and doctrine can never be compromised. Paul here deals with both those who teach otherwise, as well as those that do not “consent to,” or “attach themselves to” the actual practice and living out of the truth and totality of scripture.

Paul says such a guy suffers from “pride...” This is where the problem always originates! In fact, this is generally where all of our problems originate! Scripture tells us elsewhere that “Pride goes before a fall.” The destructive elements of self-pride are so great that such seems to be the very hand of Satan himself.

The NKJ says such a person is “obsessed”...the old KJ says “doting.” The original term speaks of being “ill” or having a sickness. In other words, there are those in their pride that will become consumed with trivial matters, arguments of semantics, and efforts to ‘wiggle out’ of emphatic doctrine, that it eventually becomes like a disease to their lives, their witness, and their faith. I have met some of these folks.

The result of such debates are envy, strife, hostile criticism of others, “evil suspicions,” conspiracy theories and “useless arguments.” All of which fail to exercise anything godly nor does it bring glory to our Creator.

Such practices carry us finally to the personal state of verse 5. For the waves of compromise in the area of truth soon sweeps us out, away from the shores of safety, into the “deep waters” of destruction. A place of corruption, perversion, and void of the truth.

Notice the common motivation of such people is “personal gain.” It doesn’t really matter what’s true or right, but just how it affects me personally. Paul is cutting them no slack. Nor is he offering us any!

He is direct and to the point. He tells us frankly to “withdraw from them.” Not to stay and argue, or advise, or even counsel or evangelize them. For sure we are not to buddy with them or hang out with them. We are to move away from them. And we can certainly understand why. For seldom is an individual who is “in this deep,” drawn out of such through the words of men. Paul was known to “turn them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.” Amos 3:3 says “*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*”

This practice can be one of the most difficult things to do in the living of our faith. Especially if they are family. Often in such cases the answer is simply “I won’t do that...” People will throw words at you like “shunning” and “divisive.” These terms are ploys to guilt you into rejecting scripture. Call it what you want, the Word of God is explicit.

6:6-7

This is a great promise and truth that has proven to be so elusive to many believers! Paul remarks in Philippians 4:11 “...*I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.*” “Contentment” is something that mankind strives for in any number of ways and yet when we look around this world we see everything but peace and contentment!

The fact is, the lives of those who seek such via the world are unfulfilled, incomplete, dissatisfied, empty, lonely, and restless. How about you today? Are you “complete and totally satisfied?” Many folks claim the faith, but in fact are still looking for peace and contentment in the same places as the unredeemed world. So we might wear the hat of Christianity today but still not know these things Paul is talking about.

Paul is herein giving us the secret to happiness, the key to contentment; **Godliness!** What exactly is “godliness”? It is the seeking of and the taking on of the attributes of our father God. It is God-like-ness.

Godliness is not about possessions or any kind of earthly gain. The world says it is, yet they never seem to attain such despite having ‘more’ than ever in the history of mankind. For here Paul reminds us that our entrance into this world and our exit, is completed “empty-handed!” So anything that is acquired in between, is simply a “loan,” and thus never capable of providing true contentment! We don’t want to admit it, but we just aren’t created that way. We need more than stuff and empty temporal pleasures.

6:8-10

This lack of contentment has pushed us into a maze of psychiatrists, prescription and illicit drugs, depression, alcohol abuse, divorce, and suicide. Notice that Paul doesn’t try to give us any deep “earthly” concepts and theories. He simply tells us that truly walking with Christ gives us the peace that brings a simple contentment. He says that we *can* be satisfied with what we have...with simple living, because ‘stuff’ does not serve to bring us what we want or what we need. This doesn’t mean we are somehow to *seek* poverty; but rather satisfied with where God has put us, and with what He has given us!

How long is mankind going to keep pursuing this failed experiment? The fact has been proven over and over; money...and the world in general, is no substitute! But we keep trying! Year after year, generation after

generation! Few false gods have such a power over man as money and riches, because it is with such we can buy all of our other 'gods.'

Notice that Paul uses the word "drown" in verse 9. For the "love of money" is both "all encompassing" and "all destructive." It truly "drowns" men in destruction, waste, and ruin!

Please note that it does not say that "**money** is the root of all evil," but that the **love** of money is the root of all evil. But before you grab hold of this fact to qualify your lifestyle, ask yourself "what is the motivation in my life? What drives the decisions, the goals, and the priorities in your life?" Because even with the dangers that are real and understood, we still covet after always *more*. And because of our lust, the fact is for many of us, we have "pierced ourselves through with many sorrows."

6:11

Paul gives Timothy his God ordained council on ministry: **flee, follow, and fight**. Firstly Paul calls upon Timothy to "flee"...to "run away from" the dangers which he had been addressing. The issues of the "love of money" and the ungodly, empty and worthless theological debates that many seek to involve themselves in. Paul was no stranger to this ideal of "running away" from temptation and sin.

2Ti 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts...

1Cor 6:18 Flee sexual immorality...

1Cor 10:14 ...flee from idolatry.

For Paul, there was no loss of 'manliness' in running away from sin! But there was in **falling into it** because of pride! Paul was herein addressing young Timothy specifically ...but by default he addresses us too, those who seek to be "men of God" today. Paul's direction is to **flee**: to "run away." Not stand in its midst and "be strong." But to literally change directions, and do so with earnest and expedience.

But Paul's warning is not to just run away, but to in turn focus on the positive: to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness." Often we can become so focused upon our **defense** that we forget to embrace the **offense**. And certainly in this matter we can embrace the old adage that "the best defense is a good offense!"

6:12

It's interesting here that Paul would use the language of "fight." For most of us will never actually 'enter the ring' spiritually speaking! We want to see Christianity as a sort of pseudo hippy love fest complete with sitar music and butterflies! But one needs to essentially throw out the Bible in its entirety and start all over again in order to embrace that version of the church and the faith!

It is indeed a "fight of faith." We are at war! Yet again, the vast majority of the greater church today wants to dispel such a notion...despite the fact that it is right here in the Bible! They want to embrace a sort of "can't we all just get along" philosophy of faith, and the answer to that is frankly and biblically NO.

Matthew 10:34-36...*Jesus says "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household."*

Paul tells Timothy to “lay hold” of eternal life. That does not mean somehow that he had to battle through works for his very eternal salvation, but rather the call is to embrace His already received salvation! Oh how many of us need to hear this call and “lay hold of our eternal life!” We often sit week and after week in our assigned pew and never know the challenges or the blessings that God has ordained for us as His children! Many of us have never really “laid hold of” our eternal life. We in fact often look and live just like the rest of the world except for how we spend our Sunday mornings!

The life of the true believer is never to be one of reclusive passivity, but rather it is to be a “fight.” The word “fight” (gr) means to agonize, struggle, battle, contend, and pursue the prize through conflict. We do not fight this fight in order to receive salvation, but rather to make this salvation truly our own...a part of us...our very nature and being!

Paul goes on to remind us that we have already been called to, received, and testified of our salvation and eternal life. So now we need to actually get up and live it! Our faith must be lived out...not just given lip service! Eternal life is not just living forever in heaven. It is living dynamically now...

6:13-16

For many of us, our tendency is to take a calloused position on this matter. To say “ya, ya...I have heard it all before! I know...’get up and live the faithful life...’” Many of us have excused ourselves from really living out our faith...from serving God and kingdom... for so long, that we hardly hear the call anymore. We have grown immune and thus more lazy than ever.

But Paul stops to truly ‘pound home’ this matter of ‘fighting the good fight of faith.’ He says “*I urge you...in the sight of God... the God who has given life to everything....I urge you...before Jesus Christ Himself...the one who did not fail to testify of His Father before Pilate...something that cost Him His very life...setting the example for us on how to live it out...I urge you...that you keep this commandment.*”

What Paul is asking is not merely a suggestion. It is rather a “**charge**” (original Greek)...a “command or an order.” Paul is not making such an order under his own power and position, but in sight of God, and before Christ Jesus. So what’s that commandment again? “*...Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed ...*”

We are being called to do so not with a tacit reluctance or a half-hearted commitment! But to do so “without spot”...to do so “without blame.” The New Living renders this as “without wavering.”

“*...until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time...*” In the eternal realm we will “see Him as he is” (1Jn 3:2). But if one is truly “in-the-game”, you do not have to wait. For our “King of kings” and “Lord of lords” shows Himself in the lives of His children, and in the Family of God. Jesus Himself knew that what He faced, *and in turn what WE face*, is indeed a battle! And it is in that very battle, that He shows Himself! An personal expression that drives Paul in verse 16 to momentarily be swept away in an impassioned description of his Lord.

6:17-19

Paul’s final direction to young Timothy in this letter is to warn those who *do* have money to “be careful.” Notice that he says that this ‘living God’ has given richly “all things to be enjoyed.” It’s not possessions or money that is the overt problem, but rather the dependence...the “addiction to,” these things, as well as the attitude that they create in us, that is the danger for the believer.

Those who have, are being asked to use their money to assist those who do not. If we have the finances, we are to be “rich in good works.” And most of us in America do indeed have the ability to assist, but most often lack the heart. Because Satan and this world has us convinced that the luxuries are really necessities, and that we can’t do without them.

Paul calls us to be “ready to give, and willing to share.” 1John 3:17 tells us “*If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion — how can God’s love be in that person?*”

And by using our riches to bless others we “send ahead” into the eternal...the place where we will be spending forever...the only thing of this world that can be transferred from this world into the next. We lay a “good foundation” for what is to come.

6:20-21

Paul comes to the end of this letter with final instructions for his young prodigy. He instructs Timothy to “guard that which is committed to your trust.” And in this exhortation, lies one of the greatest instructions for a new pastor...for any pastor! For though we often wonder why God would choose men like us, he does indeed. And now we must answer that call and guard that which he has given us responsibility over. It is a directive that many have failed in and moreover have swept that fact “under the rug” and moved on.

1Tim 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

1Thess 2:4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

Paul reminds Timothy to keep the main thing the main thing. It is so easy to become distracted and get off on some issue or another that has no bearing on winning the lost and dying world for Jesus Christ. We must constantly ask ourselves; “*Does this that I’m doing...I’m living...does it further the kingdom?*”

There will always be those who will come around who want to simply “babble.” They will carry on about meaningless issues that have no part in our living out of the faith. Trivial matters to get you distracted from the real fight and the real issues. Avoid these folks. They will mess with your heart and confuse your head. “Grace be with you Timothy. You’ll need it. ***We all do...***”