

Introduction

I'd like to begin by having you imagine the following scenario. I give you one million dollars with these two conditions attached to it. First, you have to spend it within a month. You have to return to me whatever you have left after that. And second, you have to spend it on things that you yourself want. You don't have to need the things you buy but you have to honestly want them. With that scenario in mind, let me ask you. Upon what things would you spend that money?

That's an instructive question the answer to which speaks volumes about us. It reveals how contented we are or are not and that's what I'm going to preach about today. Be content.

Contentment Defined

Paul wrote this letter to a young protégé of his named Timothy. Timothy oversaw a number of churches in Asia Minor. False teachers had crept into these churches and Paul instructs Timothy how to handle them. One of the issues that these false teachers addressed was money and possessions. So, Paul tells Timothy the truth about that issue.

The first point he makes is found in verse 6, **"Godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment."** Godliness has its accompanying virtues, in other words, one of which is contentment. It's one of the defining characteristics of godliness.

We need to know, therefore, what it is. *Webster's Dictionary* defines it this way, **"Satisfied with one's possessions, status, or situation."** It's the first of those that Paul is writing about here, money, verse 10, and possessions, verse 8. To be contented means to be satisfied with the money and possessions we have. That makes determining whether or not we're contented an easy thing to do. If we don't desire more than we have, we're contented. If we do desire more than we have, we aren't.

Decision Magazine interviewed Rick Warren about his best selling book *The Purpose Driven Life*, which made him a multimillionaire. When

asked about the impact of that on him, he replied that his wife and he hadn't changed their lifestyle "**one bit.**" "**We made no major purchases,**" he declared. Going back to the opening scenario I proposed, Warren and his wife were contented. They were satisfied with what they had.

Desiring More

But most Americans aren't.

Let me quickly say it isn't because we don't have enough money and possessions because almost all of us do. I mentioned a startling statistic in our church's November newsletter. Gregg Easterbrook wrote a book titled *The Progress Paradox*. He points out in it that the typical American has a higher standard of living than 99.4% of all the human beings who have ever lived. It's estimated that 80 billion human beings have lived in history. Almost all us here this morning, therefore, have a higher standard of living than 79,520,000,000 of those.

But that doesn't necessarily make us contented does it?