

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

NOT GREEDY FOR MONEY

We are measuring a godly man by looking at the spiritual characteristics required of leaders in the church. Even if you do not aspire to a position, your practice should be the same if you want to be a maturing, godly man.

Our tenth characteristic is “not greedy for money.”

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

1 Timothy 3:3 not given to wine, not violent, **not greedy for money...**

Alternate acceptable translations are *free from the love of money* and *not a lover of money*.

You’ve heard, and it’s true, that money is mentioned over eight hundred times in the Bible. *It’s an important subject.*

With regards to maturity the church often mistakes financial success with spirituality. A wealthy person is not necessarily a spiritual person.

We’re talking more about attitude rather than bank account. You can be average or even poor and be a *lover of money*.

Paul will expand on this phrase, give his commentary, in 6:6-10.

1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

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

Godliness - pursuing the disciplines of the Christian life as a disciple of Jesus - is a goal in and of itself. When accompanied with contentment, it is its own reward.

"Contentment" is a word that indicates you live above your particular circumstances, with an inner resolve to trust in the Lord regardless your situation.

William Barclay explained the word like this:

The word here used for *contentment* is *autarkeia* . . . By it they meant a complete *self-sufficiency*. They meant a frame of mind which was completely independent of all outward things, and which carried the secret of happiness within itself. Contentment never comes from the possession of external things.

Paul's famous teaching on this is found in Philippians 4:11-13.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

Philippians 4:12 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.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Whether abounding or whether abased there is a learning curve that leads you to "learn" to "be content."

David Guzik makes this insightful comment on contentment:

It is hard to be content, because our consumer culture feeds our lack of contentment, by rewarding us when we are discontent, and with advertising that tries to make us feel discontent without a product.

A wonderful biography that I'd recommend to you is titled *Ordained of the Lord*. It's the biography of H.A. Ironside, author and pastor of Moody Church in Chicago. Ironside knew what it was to be abased as he served the Lord as an itinerant preacher of the Gospel, often lacking his daily necessities of food and shelter. Time after time God had a lesson for him to learn in his poverty. One lesson in particular involved a deeper understanding of Philippians 4:19, where we read,

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

After going through a particularly difficult time Ironside received a letter from his stepfather applying this verse in a way he'd never considered before. His father wrote,

God spoke to me through Philippians 4:19 today. He has promised to supply all our need. Some day He may see that I need a starving. If He does, He will supply that.

God knows when you need a starving, and He will supply it. He knows when you need to be abased in order to grow closer to Him, and send your roots deeper into His Word, and He is faithful to supply it.

Poverty can be God's supply for you! When it is, learn to appreciate it.

You started life with no material possessions; you can't take your accumulated wealth with you. Therefore, along the way you should be content if you have food and, literally, "shelter" - clothing to cover your body and a roof over your head. Paul reduces life on earth to its basic requirements to emphasize that this earth is not your home; you are just passing through. Why, then, get so attached to it? Why, then, have an earthly perspective?

1 Timothy 6:9 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.

1 Timothy 6:10 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.

It is the "desire" for earthly wealth and the "love" of money that are to be avoided. Think of all the terrible things people will do if the price is right.

Paul says that it can be your *spiritual* undoing - causing you to "stray from the faith."

"Stray" and "depart" are serious words; "shipwrecked" and "turned aside after Satan" no less serious. There *are* people in churches who succumb to worldliness and leave the faith. *Don't be one of them!*

Adam Clarke:

It requires but little of this world's goods to satisfy a man who feels himself to be a citizen of another country, and knows that this is not his rest.

Jesus once told a parable that has troubled some. In Luke 16:1-14, He speaks of a dishonest manager, who is about to be called to account. Knowing he will be fired, he begins to settle accounts with his master's debtors at terms favorable to the debtors, so they will treat him kindly when the master fires him. The master ends up complimenting the manager for his shrewd tactics (presumably before he fired him).

What was praiseworthy about the manager?

1. First, he knew he would be called to account for his life and he took it seriously.
2. Secondly, he took advantage of his present position to arrange a comfortable future. Likewise we can use our material resources *right now* even though we can't bring them with us!

We can't take it with us. But we can send ahead and make preparation for our arrival to Heaven. We can use the material possessions of this world to further the Gospel and thus lay up for ourselves heavenly rewards.