

1 Timothy Lesson 7 Articles

Many in today's workforce feel deeply discontented. "If only I had a better boss If only I could make more money If I could just work for *that* company" And so it goes.

Two thousand years ago, John the Baptist exhorted disgruntled Roman soldiers to be content with their wages (Luke 3:14). It's still good advice.

We can grow content when we see God as our sole provider: "Give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, 'Who is the LORD?' or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God" (Prov. 30:8, 9).

We can also grow content as we focus on the necessities of life: "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim. 6:7, 8).

Much of our restlessness comes from desiring the many perks our affluent culture offers. But do we really need them? Can we get along without designer jeans? God will often supply our wants out of His goodness and grace, but He promises to supply only our needs.

We can grow content as we learn to express gratitude for what we have, rather than complain about what we're missing: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content for such things as you have" (Heb. 13:5). Solomon said, "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire" (Eccl. 6:9).

God already has blessed us with so much. Satan schemes to redirect our focus to what eludes us, thus fostering a malignant virus of discontent. Instead, why not take inventory of all that God has blessed you with and thank Him for each and every blessing you note?

We find our greatest source of contentment, of course, in a delightful relationship with Jesus Christ: "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:11, 13). Paul could feel satisfied with his often harsh lot in life because his communion with the Savior filled his heart to overflowing.

"Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).¹

6:9-10 Paul supported this warning about wealth with a contemporary proverb the wayward Ephesian elders validated by their behavior.¹⁵⁹ We can make three comments about the proverb. First, *it does not condemn money but the love of money*. Second, it does not state that all evil comes from the love of money, but such misplaced love can cause a great variety of ("all kinds of") evil. It is incorrect to say that the love of money causes all sins. Ambition and sexual lust are also fertile breeding grounds of sin. Third, the wandering elders from Ephesus who had sold out to greed were living proof of this maxim. The concern about materialism Paul had expressed in v. 5 had become a reality in the false teachers. Judas and Ananias and Sapphira were New Testament figures who "drowned" because of this inordinate love.²

¹ Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (1 Ti 6:7–8). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.

¹⁵⁹ A proverb similar to this is well attested in ancient writings. For the proverb see *T. Judah*, 19.

² Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Vol. 34, pp. 169–170). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.