

Thanksgiving

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving – a day meant for us to consider all the things we have to be grateful for. I don't live in a grand style, but I know I am blessed with more comforts and conveniences than the majority of people in the world. I turn on the faucet and clean water comes out. I flip switches and have light and heat. There's food in the refrigerator, a reliable roof over my head, and generally enough money to pay the bills. If I have my health and my family too, I am content and very thankful.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:6-10a)

Unfortunately, retailers and popular culture say something different. We are bombarded by messages that tell us we deserve the “very best” and shouldn't accept anything less. We're encouraged to emulate the rich and famous, even if we can't afford to. Home improvement shows teach us to be discontented with our houses and everything in them. Personal make-over features imply we should be dissatisfied with how we look. Then advertisers offer to come to our rescue, selling us the car, house, cosmetics, vacation, and latest smart phone we can't possibly be happy without. And this push to spend, spend, spend – on ourselves as well as others – is even more feverish this time of year.

All this flies in the face of godly wisdom. In the *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5), Jesus said blessed are the humble, the meek, and those who seek righteousness (not riches). The Timothy passage above teaches that godliness with contentment (not worldly advancement) is great gain. In fact, seeking wealth and its trappings can be downright dangerous.

Have you fallen into the trap of discontentment? Do you feel an unhealthy desire for more and more material things? Has too much spending resulted in debt or perhaps conflict with your spouse? Always striving after more prevents us from appreciating the many good gifts God has already given us, chief among these, our restored relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. Remember, true satisfaction grows out of gratitude for what we have, not from getting everything we want. So resolve to make giving thanks your year-round lifestyle, not just a one-day pit stop on the way to Christmas.

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