



January 18, 2009

I Can't Get No SATISFACTION...

1 Timothy 6:3-12

MINISTERING HELPS

Group Prayer

Get your group to split up into twos. Encourage them to be prayer partners for the week and to share things that are on their hearts that they could really use prayer support for. Encourage each to communicate this week to follow up on how things are going. Give them time to actually pray for each other in class today.

Stay Connected

In two weeks, we will begin our ONE MONTH TO LIVE EMPHASIS. Sometimes a special emphasis like this can get someone coming to BFG again. If you have someone who has fallen out of fellowship, why not buy them a book, take it to them and invite them to be a part of the study. Assign long-term absentees to members who would be willing to buy the book and deliver it with an invitation to participate.

REACHING HELPS

The Super Bowl is scheduled for February 1, 2009. Through the years, many classes have used this for a class party, enjoying the time of fellowship with those they know. Occasionally classes will actually invite NON-members to come and use the party as an OUTREACH event.

Challenge your class to make this year's party an OUTREACH event by...

- 1) Making it just as much a priority to invite unchurched friends as we do members and associate members.
- 2) Taking 15 minutes at halftime for a member or two to share their testimony of how they became a believer in Jesus and/or how they got connected to your BFG.

We have had years past where people came to know Christ because of our Super Bowl parties... could this year be one of those years?

TEACHING HELPS

Today, Pastor Chad continues our sermon series called THE ROAD TO FINANCIAL PEACE.

It is refreshing to hear the testimony of someone who is a new Christian. They may use many different words and explanations, but it always seems to be a story of how they were chasing after things that could not satisfy, but for the first time in their lives they have found satisfaction in Christ.

Sometimes believers are fooled into chasing again things that cannot satisfy. Wealth can be one of those things. While money is NOT the root of all evil, the LOVE OF money is.

Let today's lesson remind us that real satisfaction cannot be found in our wealth, only in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I Can't Get No Satisfaction ... 1 Timothy 6:3-12

Before movie companies were careful about Swahili translations--assuming no one in the U.S. would understand--a director needed an African messenger who was to gasp out a sentence to the big chief, collapsing as he delivered his message, since he had run for days with his vital news. A local Englishman who spoke Swahili was asked to write an urgent-sounding sentence in the language. He did, tongue in cheek. An American actor played the part beautifully. All went well until the movie was shown in Nairobi (where everyone spoke Swahili, of course). The drama of the moment was reduced to high comedy. What the messenger actually said as he threw himself, exhausted, before the chief was, "I do not think I am getting paid enough money for this part."

That could be the feeling of every person at one time or another. We often feel more valuable than the compensation we are paid. Although there is truth to the workman being paid according to his work, there is much truth and scripture dealing with contentment and greed. Let's face it, everyone wants satisfaction in life. Problems begin to arise when satisfaction is found in things, particularly, everything. Our desires tend to lead us to expect that food we consume, the gifts we give and receive, the salaries we anticipate, and all the other variables in life meet our level of satisfaction. Yet, is that where real satisfaction for the believer ought to come? (i.e. the quality and quantity of the material things we possess.) John Piper, a pastor ministering in Minnesota, promotes the phrase, "God is most glorified in me, when I am most satisfied in Him." Today we will examine the origin of true satisfaction.

1 Timothy is a book of instruction. It is written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy about the church and God's truth. Paul is in Rome under Roman house arrest while he authors this first of his "Pastoral Epistles." Much of the instruction within the book shapes our current expectations of ministry and the minister.

The letter is broken into 4 main sections. The first, chapter 1, deals with instruction regarding false teachers and doctrine. The second section deals with conduct in the church, 2:1-3:13. Paul's third section gives instruction on guarding the truth within the church, 3:14-4:16. The last section instructs on the various groups within the church, 5:1-6:21.¹ It is in this last section, after Paul has given instruction related to age, widows, elders, and slaves, that he turns his attention to living a satisfied godly life.

1. Unhealthy Interests Won't Satisfy ... 1 Timothy 6:3-5

³*If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching,* ⁴*he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions* ⁵*and*

Teaching Points

Introduction...

- Ask members to discuss answers to the following questions...
 - If you were thirsty at the end of a long period of exercise, what would be the most satisfying thing to drink? Why?
 - If you came home from a long day's work, what would be the most satisfying thing you would do? Why?
 - What does it mean to be satisfied? How is being satisfied related to being content?
- We only have one shot at living this life we have been given. What is the up-side and down-side of trying to find satisfaction and contentment in the following...
 - work
 - spouse
 - kids
 - wealth
 - Jesus Christ

All of these have an up-side and a down-side so how do you choose which to passionately pursue? Let's see how today's Bible passage can help us answer this question...

¹ Bible Knowledge Commentary

constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

False teachers are known by their covetousness. Paul uses these verses to instruct Timothy about how false teachers use a form of distorted truth as a means to financial gain. The key to identifying false teachers is found by examining their teachings, actions, and motives.

False teachers give a different type of instruction. At this point, Paul is coming to a close in his letter and tells Timothy that false teachers will 1) teach differently, 2) not agree with the teachings of Christ, and 3) not agree with godly teaching. The concept of different teaching or false doctrine is found in 1:3 where Paul tells Timothy, ³*As I urged you when I went*

into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain persons not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴ *or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith.* Paul warns Timothy that false teachers will use questionable topics of conversation to further their own agenda. This agenda, according to Paul, is rooted in greed.

False teachers will not agree with the teachings of Christ. Paul uses medical terminology to convey that their teaching is unhealthy in relation to Christ's. This is not a comparison, but a distinction. Christ's teaching is balanced and leads to a healthy spiritual life. False instruction leads to a fake and unbalanced spiritual life. Perspective and purpose are Paul's point. Read and observe Jesus' perspective in Matthew 6:19-24.

False teachers do not agree with godly teaching. The literal translation is "They do not agree with the teaching that corresponds to godliness." The men Paul is writing about are not aligning themselves with God's truth but their own selfish greed evolving their instruction to become humanistic. In fact, Paul describes these individuals as conceited and knowing nothing. The knowledge that they propose is worthless. Their knowledge is so poor that knowing it makes one dumber.

False teachers are also known by their actions. The false instruction that they gave led them to argue and fight over the ridiculous. Paul describes this as unhealthy instruction, which leads to unhealthy action. These actions lead to envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicion and friction, none of which are characteristics of Christ or Christian behavior. They are the external results of wrong thinking and wrong doctrine.

False teachers are known by their motives. These men had corrupt minds. They had rejected real faith for their own vain pursuits. The covetousness in their hearts had robbed them of the truth and their own ambitions. Greed had deceived them. He gives such an example in 2 Timothy 3:8.

The reason behind their motives is greed. Paul clearly points out that these men are in it for the money. They use their twisted form of godliness as means to financial riches. There is much teaching in regard to a spiritual leader's view of money. (Read Titus 1:10-13; Jude 11-16; 1 Timothy 3:3; and 1 Peter 5:2) These men are not practicing these truths. God gives clear instruction through Paul that He is not to be used for personal profit.

Greed and covetousness must not to be found within walls of ministry and teaching. When money becomes more important than ministering, sinful behavior and teaching become common. We must be cautious to teach truth that leads to godliness.

1. Unhealthy Interests Won't Satisfy... v3-5

- Get someone to read all of 1 Timothy 6:3-12
- Point out that the first three verses of this passage give us some clues to the internal conflicted-ness of a person who pursues wealth for satisfaction.
- With what phrases and words is the person described in verses 3-5?
- Why would there be so much conflicted-ness? Does the fact that this person is associated with church make his/her conflicted-ness greater or less?

2. Contrasting Healthy Pursuits with Unhealthy ... 1 Timothy 6:6-10

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain.

⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

⁹People 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.

¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Godliness with contentment is gain. Paul teaches Timothy one of the best “secrets” within the Christian life, contentment. Money does not satisfy but godliness with contentment does. The word contentment literally means self-sufficient. The concept is not self-sufficiency but God given sufficiency that does not depend on material circumstances providing opportunity for great gain. As Paul said in Philippians 4:12 “*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*” It is the ability to showcase godliness regardless of material status.

Basic principles back up Paul’s point. In life and death there is nothing material passed on, therefore no object or possession carries eternal value. “There are no u-haul’s attached to hearses.” Likewise, that which sustains life, food and clothing, are the only things truly needed to survive. If the belly is satisfied and the body is covered, we are to be content. (Read Jesus’ teaching in Matt. 6:25-

24) How vastly different is Paul’s view of contentment compared to the 21st century. Houses, cars, boats, computers, cell phones, shoes, TV’s, and tools are all “needed” for contentment and satisfaction. Although none of these are bad in and of themselves, when contentment is the result of having them, then they become wrong. True contentment comes from the Father, not from external material circumstance.

The greedy are easily persuaded and led into ruin. Paul explains that those who are in it to get rich fall fast. Paul is talking about desire, greed, and coveting. When these become the overriding principles in life, people truly believe happiness can come, “If I only have more.?!” This type of thinking according to Paul is Russian roulette. (read Proverbs 1:15-19) It brings temporary satisfaction, but they end up falling into temptation so far that they cannot get out. Whether it be excessive debt, work hours, work commitments, occupation choices, or anything that leads to unhealthy living, Paul warns that these habits will ruin and destroy. More money is not the need, self-control and discipline is the need. It is ultimately a matter of choice and commitment.

Loving money is evil. Verse 10 is one of the best known money verses in the Bible, and yet how often we choose to neglect it. Paul is very clear that loving money will lead to greater sinful actions. Greed is one of the seven “deadly sins” for good reason, it leads people away from faith and dependence on Christ. Loving money will not allow you to love God. Christ said, “You cannot serve two masters.” The scriptures are clear that when

2. Contrasting Healthy Pursuits with Unhealthy... v6-10

- Paul begins to contrast spiritually healthy pursuits against pursuits that are spiritually destructive.
- Paul says that if we really want to be gainful or expand in something that matters, it is done by going after two specific things...
 - GODLINESS- What is godliness? What is the difference between being godly and the Mormon understanding that we will become gods?
 - CONTENTMENT- What does it mean to be content? How does Philippians 4:12 help us to understand the meaning?
- What are some of the foolish and harmful things that people who make wealth their pursuit fall into? Have you experienced or known someone who has experienced ruin and destruction chasing after wealth?
- What is the difference between “money is the root of all evil” and “the love of money is the root of all evil?”
- Verse 10 lets us know that even believers are not exempt from the grief that can come from making money your great pursuit. What would be the warning signs that a believer might be wandering from the faith because of the love of money?

a person receives Christ they ultimately are saying that His way is the right way. Paul makes clear that part of Christ's way means financial gain is not the focus of life. Christ must be the ambition of life, then satisfaction becomes overwhelming and He can be most glorified because I am most satisfied.

3. By Faith Pursue That Which Has an Eternal Payoff ... 1 Timothy 6:11-12

¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

By faith we are to pursue godly things. Paul gives clear instruction for the godly regarding greed, money, and long lasting satisfaction. He commands Timothy to flee the temporary and pursue the permanent. This is in direct contrast with the false teachers. Timothy is to "flee from all this," i.e. the unrighteous acts and motives of those who live for and love money.

Verse 11 is typical Pauline theology. Paul understood it is not enough to simply stop a wrong activity or thought; a godly one must replace it. Therefore, Timothy is instructed to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness within the church to find long lasting satisfaction. Individually they contrast the actions of the false teachers. Collectively they bring godliness to a new height by producing eternal fruit and contentment. Joy and purpose are the result of pursuing these characteristics. Solomon makes this clear throughout the book of Ecclesiastes.

Godliness is a fight of faith. This fight is first of all good and therefore worth a fight. Secondly, it is spiritual. Third, it does impact the physical. It requires purpose, tactics, and motivation. For these reasons, Timothy is told to "fight the good fight of faith." He must stand up for truth and righteousness. He must not allow greed and money to overcome him. He must "take hold of the eternal life." This action is stepping out and stepping up. Paul is challenging Timothy in his "next steps." It is no longer good enough for Timothy to do nothing. Paul has given him much instruction, and now it is time to take action. Timothy is responsible to respond. ²

3. By faith pursue that which has an eternal payoff... v11-12

- What does it mean to flee something? From what do we usually flee? (things we know can hurt us)
- Take time as a class to discuss the meaning of each of the following words...

*righteousness
godliness
faith
love
endurance
gentleness.*

How are these things pursued? How do you know when you are beginning to grasp them?

- Is it a fight to go after these things by faith? What are we fighting against?
- What does "the eternal life to which you were called" mean?

Points for Application...

- When we are conflicted, it is for a reason. Challenge class members to consider internal conflicted-ness as a warning light that something needs to be checked out spiritually.
- How content are we? How important is being godly to us? What could we do without this week that is an "extra" that would be a call to prayer for contentment and godliness every time we wanted it?

What is your good fight of faith today? What eternal grasp can you cling to for satisfaction?

² References: Bible Knowledge Commentary, www.desiringgod.org