

Sunday 7/18/04

**“Lord, Change My Attitude (Before It’s Too Late)” – Week 5**

Saved as mdutton\adult bible fellowship\Lord, Change My Attitude\05 Lesson Chp 4 Contentment

**Introduction: An Attitude of Contentment**

1. We’re continuing our series: ***Lord, Change My Attitude*** – by James MacDonald – the book is available in the MRC (great read and it’s very direct and challenging!)

2. We’re taking these subjects in a ‘put off’ and ‘put on’ format

- it’s not enough to stop a bad habit – we need to REPLACE that habit with godly living (Eph. 4:22-24)

3. Last week we studied Numbers 11 and an attitude that needs to be put off: *Covetousness*

- We made several observations about *covetousness* from Numbers 11:

**A. Covetousness is wanting wrong things.**

Note: Ex. 20:17 – your neighbors house spouse . . . servant . . . animal or anything that is your neighbors

**B. Covetousness is wanting right things for wrong reasons.**

**C. Covetousness is wanting right things at the wrong time.**

**D. Covetousness is wanting right things but wanting them in the wrong amount.**

- by definition: *Covetousness is wanting God to replace Himself with something we consider more important.*

Point: Coveting really goes after the sufficiency of God in our lives! -- is God enough or do we need more?

4. Today, we studying the ‘put on’ element of CONTENTMENT!

- A key verse to getting victory in this area is:

- **Hebrews 13:5 *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"***

- the use of the word ‘*never*’ is actually two Greek words combined, that when put together forms a solemn statement and is one of the strongest Greek phrases – a more literal translation would be:

- ***“I will never ever desert you, nor will I ever ever forsake you”***

**Input: How does the promised presence of God help us to content?**

[we find our joy and satisfaction in Him – not things that pass away with time!]

5. Remember this statement: *“A consistent attitude of contentment can bring lasting joy and lead you out of the wilderness of covetousness” –p. 83*

6. Please open your Bible to Proverbs 30:8-9

- remember what covetousness is: : *Covetousness is wanting God to replace Himself with something we consider more important.*

7. Let's read our passage of study:

- **Proverbs 30:8 Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, 9 That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or That I not be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God.**

## I. We Need to Develop An Understanding of Contentment

### A. Defining contentment

***Contentment = a satisfaction with God's sufficient provision.***

- It's being happy/joyful with whatever God supplies – the key is the whatever
- it's easy to be content when you get what you want – but what if what God wants you to have is different than what you wanted?

**Input: What is a contented person thinking about on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis?**

[various answers – one is “what I have is all I need – or maybe even more than I need and God has been gracious to me!]

Point: Contentment means to rest in what one already has and seek nothing more!

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### B. Contentment has a partner: Godliness

[Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12]

**Quote: “We must never be content with who we are, only with what we have.”**

- we always need to grow to be more Christlike – don't get satisfied w/that part of your life > it's the what we *have* part that we struggle with!
- If we posted this on a chart and compared these two qualities –it would look something like this:

<b>Godliness</b>	<b>Contentment</b>
• deals with <i>who</i> I am	• deals with <i>what</i> I have
• being unsatisfied with my character in becoming like Christ	• being satisfied with what I possess in God.

- Here's a formula that may help you to remember this concept:

**Godliness + Contentment = Great Success!**

(Obviously that is success in God's eyes, not in the eyes of the world)

**C. Our substitutes won't work!** [Note: This point could take a lot of time – let it happen!]

\* *Neighbor Nudge*: break into small groups and discuss the following questions:

**1. What other substitutes do we tend to put into the equation of success?**

**2. Why won't that substitute work (glorify God) in the long run?**

Example: Godliness + POPULARITY (approval of man) = success

- that won't work because the fear of man brings a snare, and success is defined by being Christlike, therefore glorifying God, and being godly often brings the disapproval of man!

\* Potential Answers:

1) Godliness + **Prosperity** = Great Gain

- **Luke 12:15 "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."**

2) Godliness + Poverty = Great Gain

> A poor person can struggle with covetousness – it's a heart issue!

3) Godliness + **Power or Influence** = Great Gain

Read Matt. 20:25-28 – Gentiles 'lord it over' – but it's not going to be this way w/you!

4) Godliness + **Family Harmony** = Great Gain

- It may be the fruit on the tree, but it's not the goal.

- Besides, Jesus had some strong words to say about pleasing family members:

- **Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."**
- **Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life."**

5) Godliness + **Ministry Success** = Great Gain

- what if you don't have ministry success – can you still please God?

- what if persecution is part of the equation an attendance goes down – does that mean you've failed?

- the other side is, a healthy discontent is always good (i.e. recognizing the need to grow and be more effective in what we do – that's stewardship!

Example: Faith Baptist Church was about 425 in 1989 – now we're around 1,200 – but I'm never satisfied – not bad, but it does bring contentment!

*"Godliness plus contentment is great gain. Notice the word great. It's great gain. We're not playing for small stakes here. We're playing for all the marbles. The positive results of embracing this truth are massive." –p. 89*

- The question is: How do you change?

**II. Three Steps That Break The Pattern Of Covetous Thinking And Lead To Contentment**

### A. Step #1: Look to eternity

- **1 Timothy 6:7** “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either”
  - Don’t build your life around things that pass away with time!
  - Think about how long it would take for a tornado to suck up your house and leave nothing but the foundation!
    - Ken Collier, friend of mine told me when Laurie was in her car accident: “*It’s just a thing; don’t cry over anything that can’t cry over you!*” [good advice!]

### B. Step #2: Let enough be enough

- **1 Timothy 6:8** “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”  
“When we expect to be satisfied with the basics, God will often surprise us with treats.”

Input: Any examples you can give of that in your life?

-Think of the persecuted church around the world – they don’t have a building, land, resources like we do!

ILL: Megah Singh – church planter in India – met during my doctoral program – he is training Chinese pastors who are coming across the border with nothing but the clothes on their back sometimes!

### C. Step #3: Learn from examples

- We think we have to learn everything on our own. Why can’t we learn from other people (i.e. that wealth, things, possessions don’t satisfy)? – Think about these examples:
  - John D. Rockefeller- “I have made millions, but they have brought me no happiness.”
  - Cornelius Vanderbilt- “The care of millions is too great a load. There is no pleasure in it.”
  - Henry Ford- “I was happier as a boy working in a mechanic’s shop, though we had nothing.”

## III. What’s going to happen if you don’t live this way? – Look carefully at 1 Tim. 6:9

### A. Temptation and a snare (trap)

**1 Timothy 6:9** “But those who want to get rich fall (i.e. want = *settled desire born of reason*— the point being that you choose what you want to choose!) **into temptation and a snare (trap).**”

- the temptation is to sin and neglect other biblical responsibilities – the trap is to think that what you GET will satisfy you rather than what you ARE in Christ and seeking to glorify God!
  - **1 Timothy 6:10** “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil.”

-The problem is the *love* of money.

-Loving money is not the root of evil but a root of evil.

### B. Paul presents two ugly pictures

1. “Some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith.”
2. “. . . and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (NKJV)

Q: How ugly is the picture of a person stabbing themselves?

Point: Sin is never logical . . .and choices have consequences!

- We need to say what Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:11** “**I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.**” (he was writing from prison!)

ABF Study Guide  
 “Lord, Change My Attitude (Before It’s Too Late)” – Week 5 (Contentment)

**Introduction:**

**Input:** How does the promised presence of God help us to be content?

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**I. We Need to Develop An Understanding of Contentment**

**A. Defining contentment**

**Contentment** = a satisfaction with God’s sufficient provision.

**Input:** What is a contented person thinking about on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis?

**B. Contentment has a partner: \_\_\_\_\_ – 1 Timothy 6:6-12**

“We must never be content with who we are, only with what we have.”

Godliness	Contentment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deals with _____ I am</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deals with _____ I have</li> </ul>
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Godliness + Contentment = \_\_\_\_\_!

**C. Our \_\_\_\_\_ won’t work!**

**Neighbor Nudge:** *What other substitutes do we tend to put into the equation of success? Why won’t that substitute work (glorify God) in the long run?*

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### **B. Step #2: Let enough be enough**

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### **C. Step #3: Learn from examples**

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