

Message Four The Motivation For Godliness

1 Timothy 6:3-19 *If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,*

4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,

5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain,

7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,
14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.
17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.
18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,
19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

SYNOPSIS: The goal of this message on The Motivation for Godliness is to illustrate the material and spiritual blessings that God has in store for those who are faithful to pursue a lifestyle of Godliness, and to demonstrate how material blessings and spiritual blessings can work in conjunction with each other to bring about the fullness of life.

INTRODUCTION:

Godliness is a lifestyle that is consistent with the character of God.

Godliness does not mean perfection, but it does mean growth in consistency where we are both desirous of and functioning in a way that reflects who God is.

Your soul is begging for Godliness.

It's begging to be filled with more of God, and if the soul is not being filled with Godliness, you wind up with a starving soul.



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It's a big problem because that is the one thing above all other things that interrupts our move toward Godliness.

That is the one thing that will hinder, limit, distort and deny our desire to pursue Godliness, and Paul tells Timothy to make this point clear.

There is great gain in Godliness, but only under God's conditions.

Whenever you see people using religion solely for financial gain, you will also see prosperity theology.

These are the people who go to church just to get the blessings.

They use a camouflage of Godliness for the financial benefit that will accrue to them.

That's called materialism.

Money itself is not the problem; loving it and longing for it above anything else is the problem.

Loving and longing for money will put a stop to your move toward Godliness, so Paul spends the entire **sixth chapter of 1 Timothy** dealing with this subject.

How do you know if you are a materialist, a lover of money?

You know it when your desire for physical things has a greater priority in your life than your desire for spiritual truth.

And as we know, the problem with loving and longing for money is that you are never satisfied, no matter how much money you have.

In contrast, **Hebrews 13:5-6** says *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

In other words the contented man or woman is the one who knows that God is acting on his or her behalf.

One of the main reasons the spiritual is subject to the material in so many Christians' lives is that they suffer from a lack of contentment.

Contentment means inner sufficiency in spite of external circumstances.

The opposite is an all-consuming desire to get rich that Paul says will plunge anyone who takes that route into all kinds of pain and suffering.

1. THE BIBLE SAYS GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT BRINGS GREAT GAIN

There is a great "profit margin" to Godly living, but the profit is by design, mostly spiritual, not material.

If you want to enjoy the high profit margin of Godliness, a marriage needs to occur between your pursuit of Godliness and contentment in your life.

Lack of contentment will stifle Godliness, but the presence of contentment with the pursuit of Godliness will give you a great profit margin (**Hebrews 13:5-6**).

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The problem with trying to find contentment in material wealth is that it never satisfies (**Ecclesiastes 5:10**).

Ecclesiastes 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

A great prayer to pray for contentment is found in:

Proverbs 30:8-9 Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me,

9 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.

The problem is that too many people try to use Godliness for greedy material gain.

This attitude says, "Let me be more religious so God will give me more money."

People like this are simply using Godliness as a camouflage for greed.

If money itself is not the problem—loving it and longing for it is the problem.

Lack of contentment will stifle Godliness, but the presence of contentment with the pursuit of Godliness will give you a great profit margin.

Here are some ways you can tell if you are a lover of money:

If you spend more time complaining about what you don't have than giving thanks for what you do have.

If your financial life is going up and your spiritual life is going down.

If you compromise spiritual principles to gain a profit.

If you are praying more for the growth of your cash than for the growth of your character.

If you treat rich people better than you treat people without money.

If you rob God of His tithes and offerings to pocket all you get for yourself.

2. IF YOU ARE RICH IN MONEY, YOU SHOULD EVEN BE RICHER IN SERVICE

The more your material worth goes up, the more your service to the Lord should go up.

The reason there's so much misery in the church, and the kingdom of God can't advance, is because so many rich people aren't generous.

Too many of us want to beg off by claiming we aren't rich, but by any standard, almost all believers in this culture can be considered rich.

The problem for many of us as Christians is that we have confused wants with needs.

God has promised to richly supply all of our needs (**Philippians 4:19**).

Philippians 4:19 *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

Before we can claim this promise, we need to learn the lesson that precedes this promise (**Philippians 4:11-18**).

Philippians 4:11-18 *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.*

12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

3. HOW DO I REALLY KNOW IF I AM GETTING THIS RIGHT?

If you spend more time complaining about what you don't have than giving thanks for what you do have, you are not getting it right.

If your financial life is going up and your spiritual life is going down, you are not getting it right.

If you compromise spiritual principles to gain a profit, you are not getting it right.

If you are praying more for the growth of your cash than for the growth of your character, you are not getting it right.

If you treat rich people better than you treat people without money, you are not getting it right.

THE CORROSIVE EFFECTS OF GREED:

A man went to his pastor one day and said, "Pastor, I'm depressed."

The pastor asked him what was wrong.

"Well," he said, "last year my aunt died and left me thirty thousand dollars.

The year before that, my uncle died and left me fifty thousand dollars."

His pastor said, "So why are you depressed?"

The man replied, "Because this year, nobody died."

That's the kind of thinking we can fall into when we become gripped by greed.

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