

# Paul's Secret to Contentment

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, to our text in 1 Timothy chapter 6, beginning in verse 6. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can not take anything out of the world.

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

For the love of money is the 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.

Let me preface this text and this sermon by practicing something I read years ago in a book I found very helpful. The book was called The Speed of Trust. And it was essentially just a book on how to build trust between a leader and people in an organization.

And one of the things that feels so counterintuitive that that book taught me was, every once in a while you have to kind of showcase your trustworthiness to people.

[ 1 : 1 5 ] It isn't always that people are going to notice everything. Every once in a while you have to kind of present like, hey, here's one reason you can trust me. Or here's a track record that you could lean into and so forth.

And I just want to take a moment to say that I hope you understand that when it comes to me talking to you about your relationship with money, that you can trust me.

I am allergic to the guilt manipulation and covetousness that is so common in our culture.

It disgusts me. And so I esteem and value people who have a proper godly relationship with money, who are trying to be careful, who are hard workers, who are productive.

One of my favorite book titles, one of my favorite books, is a book written in the 1980s called Productive Christians in the Age of Guilt Manipulators. And it's essentially just a book pushing back against all of the class envy that gets permeated into the gospel and presented to the average person as if it's all the same.

[ 2 : 2 7 ] The gospel and this class envy is all the same. It's not the same. And so I just want to broadcast a little bit. And if you've known me for quite some time, you probably agree that I'm not someone you can trust me when I help you walk through this.

And what we've got here, just to be clear, is one of the most pointed warnings in the New Testament. It doesn't get much sharper than this.

It doesn't get much more dire than this. And the truth is, is that if you are wise, you will read this again and again, asking the Lord through his Holy Spirit to remove any self-justification, any self-deception, because at the end of the day, it's your soul, not mine, right?

You have enormous self-interest in making sure you don't fall into the trap described here.

And what I really believe is the case is that sometimes a pastor needs to allow an individual to take responsibility for their own soul. And here I would say just this.

[ 3 : 44 ] Our hearts are deceptive and wicked. We tend towards self-justification. And we tend to lie to ourselves about our real motives. Not so much so that you can never know what you really think, or that you need someone like me to tell you what you really think, but enough so that if you will just slow down and meditate and pause, God will show you the truth, okay?

So what I'm suggesting to you today is don't make me take this text seriously for you. You take this text seriously for you. I'll take this text seriously for me, right?

You need to just make sure, though, that you understand the enormous soberness of this passage. Let me read it again. But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world.

We cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. Verse 9 is where it gets pretty rough. 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.

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.

[ 5 : 12 ] What I would like to do now is to trust you, that you take this seriously, and that you are actually asking, okay, I think this is a real danger in my life.

Pastor Chris, how do I avoid falling into this temptation? So that's where we're going to be today. You're going to trust me, and I'm going to trust you. I'm going to trust that you look at this passage and say, well, I don't want anything to do with that, so how can you help me avoid this?

And what we see in our text is that the way to avoid this is by developing contentment. Contentment is the way we avoid falling for this trap, this terrible trap that can lead even to the destruction of our own souls.

So what I'm going to do today is not only define contentment, but I'm going to tell you about Paul's secret to contentment, and I'm going to just talk about Paul, and I'm going to explain how Paul managed to avoid this snare, okay?

Now, first of all, we want to define contentment, and I'm going to use this text, our primary text, but also a secondary text in Philippians 4. So let's define contentment to begin with. Philippians 4, 10 through 13 is our companion passage, and it says, Paul's writing this from prison, by the way.

[ 6 : 33 ] I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but had no opportunity. Not that I'm speaking of being in need. Here's where our contentment definitions are going to come from.

For I have learned in whatever situation I'm in to be content. 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.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Okay, so we've got these two verses. This will be enough for us for this sermon to define contentment. Let's unpack it. First of all, contentment in the Greek literally just means enoughness.

Enoughness. Fullness. I am satisfied. You felt that at some point on Thanksgiving evening and probably plowed right through that feeling, right?

But there was a moment where you felt that. Enoughness. I have reached enoughness. Probably didn't listen to it, but you did feel it. So the Greek just means enoughness.

[ 7 : 41 ] Now, what is enough? It's not subjective. Paul says in verse 8, food and clothing is enough. With these, we will be content.

That's what he says in 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 8. Now in Philippians, we also see him say this, I have learned in whatever situation I'm in to be content.

So now we have another thing about contentment. It's a skill that has to be learned. It's a thing that you've got to learn. So if you've never tried to learn it, you probably don't have it.

And then we also see in verse 13, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. Now that tells us what? That tells us that it's a hard thing. It's a thing that needs contentment, requires strength.

And that Christ is ready to supply you with the strength to be content. And then we can add one more thing to our definition.

[ 8 : 41 ] Verse 12 in Philippians 4, And this is one of the things that people sleep on with contentment.

You need contentment to guard you both in poor times and in rich times. You need contentment in both those situations. See, here's how I would talk about it.

It's probably deeper than this, but this is good enough for now. In thin times, in times where you lack, contentment will keep you from grumbling. In rich times, in abundant times, contentment will keep you from grasping.

Have you ever rented a car that's nicer than your car? This happened to me this week. I was in Minnesota to preach for a pastor, a brother pastor up in Minnesota.

And at the airport, it was like 1.30 in the morning. And the guy said, hey, are you driving to Kansas City in this rental car? I was like, yeah. He's like, so someone left us a convertible, a convertible Mustang.

[ 9 : 48 ] And like, we don't want that in Minnesota. Would you drive that to Kansas City? You know, same price as your economy car, but would you drive this to Kansas City? He's like, yeah, I can handle that. So, and the Lord provided a beautiful thing where like, like the day that I got that car, I had it on a Saturday and a Sunday.

The Saturday, it was like 66 in Minneapolis. And so like, I got dad rock blast, had a great stereo. Got dad rock blasting, heat blasting, right?

Put the top down and I'm the only dude in Minneapolis driving with the top down. I don't care. But you know, if you're used to driving this kind of car and you get that kind of car, suddenly there's the temptation to continue the experience.

And so what do you think I did by Sunday? I Googled for, you know, 2023 Ford Mustangs and started looking, you know, starting building and pricing as they say on the Ford site.

Contentment can let you enjoy a thing just for the thing it is and keep you from having to grasp to perpetuate that thing. So it keeps you from grumbling when things aren't going your way.

[ 11 : 01 ] It keeps you from grasping when God shines his favor on you. So that's contentment generally defined. Contentment is a sense of enoughness.

We need to learn it. It's useful for, and it's really necessary for both good times and bad times. And it's really Jesus who gives us the strength to have contentment.

Since nobody is safe from falling in love with money, we need contentment from Christ to keep us safe. Now, I said at the beginning, because, you know, in that Philippians 4 text, Paul says, I've learned the secret.

I thought, well, let me explain Paul's secret as best I can. Because if Paul has learned how to be content, we can learn from Paul. So I want to say, secondly, that the second point is this.

Paul was the perfect target for the temptation to want to be rich. He was the perfect target. He was the ideal guy to fall into the trap.

[ 12 : 03 ] You know, some people have a desire to be rich, but they just straight up lack the means. They just don't have the means to be rich. And they either will not be rich or turn to a life of crime. Paul had the means.

He had elite intellectual powers. He had elite persuasive powers. He had elite spiritual powers. He had enormous leadership giftings and influence over a great number of people.

And yet, Paul did not fall into the trap, into the snare of loving money, of desiring to be rich.

He didn't fall into the trap of monetizing his ministry. Everything's getting monetized these days. By the way, do you know how few people, few voices that you listen to in your life, have anything to gain by teaching you how to be content?

Do you understand that almost everybody has something to gain by teaching you not to be content? So you need to understand, like, this is such a valuable and important skill, but almost no one's teaching us how to do it.

[ 13 : 16 ] Paul avoided a snare that was really set up perfectly for his unique abilities, his unique power, his unique persuasive capacities. And what we see in the New Testament is that many people with far lesser powers, many other spiritual leaders, fell for this trap.

That's actually what 1 Timothy 6 begins with, a discussion of people who have fallen for the trap of trying to monetize their ministry. How did Paul evade the trap?

You know the answer. Contentment. But what's the secret? Like, how did Paul learn contentment? Where did his contentment come from? Point number three. One secret to Paul's contentment is simply wisdom.

Wisdom. He was not a fool. He was wise. You've heard the saying from Jim Elliott, he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

In my studies of Paul's contentment, the thing that stood out to me was how unremarkable his contentment really was in this sense.

[ 14 : 25 ] He simply chose the better investment. That's it. This is, I think, every single sermon you've ever heard me preach on money comes down to this point over and over and over and over again.

And it's really just the Randy Alcorn point in many respects, and that is simply we have places we could put our money. Which place brings the best return?

Which place is the safest? And so on and so forth. So here's the argument for where Paul's contentment came from largely. He had a relative indifference to earthly finances because he had a relative high regard and need and desire for eternal riches.

He had a relatively low view of earthly riches because he had a relatively high interest in eternal riches. To put it another way, Paul's earthly contentment is downstream of his heavenly hunger.

It's downstream of his heavenly hunger. He's content in one area because he's not content in another area. Are you spiritually content but circumstantially discontent?

[ 15 : 43 ] See, this is where you would need to make an adjustment. You're discontent in regard to earthly things, and that's a problem. And you're really pretty content with spiritual things.

You're not approaching the word with incredible hunger. You're not approaching your life as like, I'm going to run out of life at some point. I really want to invest it in stuff that lasts forever. You have relatively low regard for the things of God, for the things of eternity.

You're not very ambitious there. You're quite content on the spiritual front, but you are discontent on the material front. These two things are not coincidentally connected.

They are connected because you can be basically passionate about one thing. And this is what Jesus meant when he talked about, no one can serve God and money.

You will hate one and love the other. So what is the secret of Paul's contentment? He just thought he was picking the best option.

[ 16 : 50 ] He was just acting with wisdom. See, here's another way of thinking about it. When it comes to wealth accumulation, the Bible doesn't tell you don't want wealth.

It doesn't tell you that. It just tells you your pursuit of wealth will come down to not whether you pursue wealth, but which kind of wealth you will pursue.

You were hardwired to pursue wealth. You were hardwired to pursue glory. You were hardwired, even neurochemically, to pursue reward.

It's not a question of whether or not you will seek something, seek accumulation, seek treasure, seek glory. It's not whether, it's just which.

Which kind of glory will you seek? Which kind of treasure will you seek? The question isn't whether, it's which. And this comes directly from Jesus. In Matthew 19, 21, Jesus tells the rich young ruler, by the way, Jesus does all things well, and Jesus is even an excellent investment advisor.

[ 18 : 00 ] He even gives excellent investment advice. In Matthew 19, 21, he says to the rich young ruler, if you'll be perfect, go sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

You will have treasure in heaven. See, the offer is a better investment. It's not to have no regard for accumulation. It's not to have no regard for glory.

It's here's where to get the best return on your life. Sell your possessions, give them to the poor, and then you will have treasure in heaven. Come and follow me. Not whether, but which.

In Matthew 6, 19 through 20, Jesus says, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Not whether, which. Not whether you will pursue treasure. Just which treasure are you going to pick? This is God's kind way of using the wiring that already exists in you, speaking into that and saying, you were made to pursue glory, treasure.

[ 19 : 13 ] Gold is a stand-in, a sort of mythological, if you will, stand-in for something of much greater value, which is glory.

Like, what is the ancient connection between gold? Why has gold been so... Friends, there's like these typological connections that human beings have, not to get all Jungian, which I'm not, but gold is a stand-in for glory.

You were made to pursue glory. You were made to pursue eternal treasure. So this is what Paul is getting at when he says, Godliness with contentment is great gain.

Can you just pause for a moment and understand how weird that sentence is? We are told that contentment has no regard for gain.

Right? Like, contentment is enoughness. Right? But Paul is saying that contentment is great gain. See, he's speaking into your God-given tendency to want to gain.

[ 20 : 18 ] He's just telling you where you can gain. Godliness with contentment is gain. Contentment, having a sense of enough, and yet we are encouraged to add contentment to our godliness so we can gain something.

See if I could say this another way. There are three forms of wealth, I think, most broadly, that you can seek to accumulate.

And I think of them as the categories of what protects them. There is wealth that is protected by civil law. This would mostly be currency-based wealth.

Now, do you understand? Some of you have quite a bit of money saved up. Do you understand how utterly dependent you are on bureaucrats to keep that money safe, on court systems to keep that money safe, on law enforcement to keep that money safe?

So you have a form of wealth that is pretty fragile. It is dependent on the rule of law, and history teaches us that there are many instances where that fails.

[ 21 : 29 ] So there's one kind of wealth, which is a wealth that is protected by civil law, and then there's another kind of wealth that you might say is protected by natural law. I tend to think of it this way. Currency, currency-based wealth is typically civil law protected.

Commodity-based wealth, like if you have a bunch of apples or something, there's some commodity-based value that's protected by natural law. So there's another kind of wealth. There's a wealth that's protected by civil law.

There's also a wealth that's maybe protected by natural law. Guns, land, you know, things like that. It would be a little less fragile. And then there is wealth that is protected by divine law.

And here I'm pointing to the great number of verses where we're told over and over again that God has great regard for your works, and that he will not forget them, and that he will in fact bless you as a result of your works, not just in this life, but in the life to come.

So there's three kinds of wealth. One that's protected by the law, the civil law. The second one that's protected by some kind of natural law. And the third one that's protected by divine law. And all Paul's doing is his contentment is simply, he's just decided that he's chosen the better way.

[ 22 : 47 ] I don't know about you, but I just absolutely love steak. I just love it. And I know that if I go someplace where steaks are gonna be decent, I don't need to have any fear of missing out if I just get the biggest ribeye on the menu.

You know, if I do that, I'm not gonna be looking back over the cheeseburgers and the chicken fingers and wondering, did I miss out? I chose the best thing. I know objectively I chose the best thing.

Now that's just because I have extreme confidence in steak. You probably don't have that. But Paul had that in eternity. What's his contentment about? He just knows he made the right choice, guys.

He just knows he made the right choice. In 2 Timothy 1.12, Paul writes, for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

He knows his entrusting, his wealth is secure. He knows his wealth is taken care of. God's protecting it. It's 2 Timothy 4.6-8. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come.

[ 24 : 01 ] I've fought the good fight. I've finished the race. I've kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day.

Not only me, but also to those who have loved his appearing. There's no egoless motivations for Paul. He loves people. He loves Christ. He also loves the idea of having a wonderful future in eternity with the Lord.

I believe, as I said, this is basically the only sermon I ever preach on finances. That is simply, you guys just need to choose the best place to put your life. That's what it always comes down to.

We have these three categories of civil law, natural law, and divine law. But in our text, there's really just two categories. Wealth that can pass into the next life and wealth that can't.

Wealth that can pass into the next life and wealth that can't. You see the first category in verses six through seven? But godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world.

[ 25 : 04 ] It's all very practical for Paul. He's not waiting for some kind of thunderbolt of generosity to hit him. He's just looking at logically what makes the most sense.

If eternity is real, if God's promises are true, if I'm going to live a very short time in this life and a very long time in the next life, well, you can't take anything out of this world.

So there's one category of wealth, the kind of wealth that doesn't transfer. And then in verses 17 through 19, which we haven't read yet, pay careful attention to this. In verses 17 and 19, the same chapter, 1 Timothy 6, Paul gives us the positive side.

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.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 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.

[ 26 : 13 ] So do you see what he's doing there? He's giving us the two kinds of wealth. In verses 6 through 7, he's like, there's the kind of wealth that won't pass through this life. And then in verses 16 and 17, 17 through 19, he's like, here's the kind of wealth that will.

And here's what you do if you want to have the wealth that lasts. So let me just summarize up to this point. Here's the danger. If you fall into the desire to be rich, you fall into a temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that routinely plunge people into ruin or destruction.

I was thinking about how so many people think money will keep them safe and they don't understand that relying on money for safety is the most dangerous thing you can do.

I thought of how nonsensical it would be if I started getting worried about the security of my home and I went out and got a security cobra. I just dropped this cobra in my house.

I'm like, this cobra will bite anyone who comes in to steal my stuff. It's like, maybe what is more likely to happen is I'm coming out of the bathroom one night but I've got a cobra on my ankle.

[ 27 : 24 ] People who lean into money as a source of safety are leaning into a thing that is in and of itself, if looked at wrongly, a great danger to you.

So, there's a danger. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Now listen, fellow sinners, indwelling sin is rough on us. It really does lie to us and it'll tell us we love God when we don't and it'll tell us we don't love money when we do.

Just be careful. You're your own con artist. Just be careful. What's the protection? Well, contentment protects you.

It will keep you from grumbling in hard times and it'll keep you from grasping in bountiful times. Where does Paul's contentment come from? Just wisdom. He knew life was short and valuable. He didn't want to spend it accumulating fragile wealth that would not transfer into the next life.

[ 28 : 31 ] He wanted to spend it accumulating eternal wealth and he got all of this simply by listening to Jesus. Matthew 6, 19 again, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy where thieves do not break in and steal.

Now, unfortunately for you, I came across a quote that just absolutely convicted me about the way I should preach this sermon and it's from an old faithful rioter named Charles Bridges and I want to show you this quote so you know we're going to go a little deeper into practical application here just because I feel convicted to do so.

This is what he wrote. Subjects uncongenial to the tastes and habits of influential men in our congregation, he's talking about preaching, are passed by or held back from their just and offensive prominence.

Or touched with the tenderest scrupulosity or expounded with a wide and undefined generalities so that the sermons like letters put into the post office without a direction are addressed to no one.

No one owns them. No one feels any personal interest in their contents. Thus a ministry under this deteriorating influence chiefly deals in general truths devoid of particular application.

[ 29 : 55 ] What is he saying there? He's saying it is really tempting for a pastor to preach the general ideas that I've presented to you so far without making any actual pastoral applications to his own people who need to hear how to apply this in a way that challenges them and potentially even offends them.

So I want to make sure I'm not doing that but I also want to make sure I'm not peddling in guilt manipulation. Here's what I want to do. I think that what I've presented to you so far is right and I think there's one layer underneath Paul's contentment that I want to touch on.

Practically speaking contentment seems contentment in Christ seems to be for Paul a shift from the worldly way of thinking of more and more money to more and more people.

So what I've said before is that Paul's just making a wise investment. He's just choosing the things that last forever. It's like, okay, we all walked in here knowing this. Maybe we're not living it.

What would be the reason for us not living it? Well, I think the rubber meeting the road for Paul is he had gotten off of the track of looking for more and more money, more and more security.

[ 31 : 17 ] But he didn't just abstain from the more and more desire. He engaged the more and more desire but toward people. He went from more and more money to more and more people.

And I want to be super specific with you about this. If you are younger and you're trying to deal with buying a house and getting up savings and so on and so forth, I would tell you that even if it delays you a little, as a family, fall in love with loving people.

Make your family's mission not mere accumulation of security. But insofar as humans have any role in this, accumulation of souls.

Be a soul-treasuring family. Make your budget a soul-treasuring budget. More and more money, replace it.

More and more people. The phrase more and more people comes from 2 Corinthians 4. This is the passage where Paul talks about himself as being a jar of clay.

[ 32 : 33 ] This is a very circumstantially low period for Paul. He talks about being afflicted and perplexed and persecuted and struck down. But he finds comfort from these two ideas.

Number one, eternal reward. Verse 14 of 2 Corinthians 4. Knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.



As I've said before, Paul has a very robust view of eternal joy and he's leaning into that even as he's giving his life away. But listen to verse 15. For it is all for your sake so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.

Paul's contentment flows out of wisdom. He seeks to accumulate eternal treasures, not earthly treasures, and he has decided that people are the place where those two currencies get converted.

this weekend or on Thursday, we had my nieces and nephews down and they're just delightful kids. They're all in classical education.

[ 33 : 47 ] They all have lots of interesting things to say, but they're also funny and so on and so forth. And I had this enormous cardboard box full of Zambian currency from when I used to go to Zambia routinely years ago.

And I just kept this to give this to them because I just think as a kid it's kind of cool to see a big box full of cash and their money is all colorful and everything. And so I said, kids, come here.

And I dropped this box full of cash down that I've moved like four times, you know, four or five times. I was like, take as much as you want. They're like, seriously? I'm like, yep, take as much as you want.

Because, as you might guess, when I was going there, the currency exchange rate was terrible. The kwacha, which is their dollar, was super weak. And it was like \$1 to every 4,000 kwacha.

Right? So I've got all these bills that say like 10,000 kwacha and 20,000 kwacha. And so as a kid, you're just like, this is amazing. And, you know, like, yes, I want this.

[ 34 : 47 ] And I think there's two points to make here. Number one, I'm afraid that you and other people that I love would be tempted to see earthly wealth like, well, look at this.

It's amazing when it's really almost not worth the paper it's printed on. And, and, and, and, and here's the other problem. You can't convert it.

So when you die, it's just not going with you, which is verse 7. So that'll be one concern. But this story has kind of a happy ending, at least for the kids. Not for me. They took wads of this cash, right?

And these are really smart kids. And I'm bad at math. I, I, I may have given away hundreds of actual dollars. The currency, the currency rate has changed.

The kwacha is very strong right now. And so my brother, my brother texts me and he's like, hey, the kids were doing the math on the way home. They live in Omaha. Kids were doing the math on the way home.

[ 35 : 51 ] It's like, you gave this kid \$60 and you gave us, you know, and, and I was honestly so delighted. I love Zambia and I was so delighted that their, their economy's doing that well. I don't really care.

But then he, he said, you know, we need to find a place where we can convert this because I just told him, like, just keep it, you know, just, and he's like, well, if I find a conversion place, you still have a lot left, I'll let you know.

So the deal is, is that there aren't any places in the country, as you might imagine, in the United States, who are eager to take piles of kwacha, a box of kwacha, you know. And so, like, you can only find these places in a few, you know, there are only a few of these places around, but what you have to do is you have to take this stack of money and you go and you give it to them and then they do the math and they give you a converted amount in U.S. dollars.

So the most practical thing, we're gonna end here, is how do I get money, get eternal, how do I get earthly treasures into eternity? Where's the conversion place? It's people.

Love people. Love souls. Invest big amounts of your earthly time and wealth into people.

[ 36 : 58 ] Because they do go from this life to the next life. This is the most sound investment advice I can give you. Love people.

Make a conscious shift away from more and more money to where Paul was in 2 Corinthians 4, more and more people. They are far more valuable than another zero in your 401k.

They are far more valuable than another year of interest, than another year of equity, and so on and so forth. Be zealous. Be greedy, even, for eternal gain. Love people.

That's what God has designed for us. We have these two great commandments from the Lord. Love Him and love people. And what we find is that when we love people, we do love Him, and we plug ourselves into a kind of eternal economy, an eternal economy, and we do what Paul says.

I want to read this to you one more time. 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.

[ 38 : 05 ] You do not need to hoard wealth to have a nice life. God still wants you to have a nice life. He gives you things to enjoy, but you've got to do what I did. You've got to be content with a Mustang for two days and not for, you know what I'm saying?

Like, you can't get graspy, but God's still going to give you wonderful things to enjoy. I've had a wonderful life. I've had a wonderful life full of many earthly pleasures, full of many earthly joys.

Verse 18, they are to do good, to be rich in good works. See, this is all people-oriented. Do good, be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves. This is the conversion piece as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

This is so beautifully summarized in a book written by another Puritan, Jeremiah Burroughs. And the book is called The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment. And he writes, When the heart of man has nothing to do but to be busy about creature comforts, every little thing troubles him.

But when the heart is taken up with the weighty things of eternity, with the great things of eternal life, the things of here below that disquieted it before, are things of no consequence to him now.

[ 39 : 20 ] No consequence to him in comparison with the other. How things fall out here is not much regarded by him. It's the one thing that is necessary. It's the one thing that is necessary is if the one thing that is necessary is provided for.

If you live a life for yourself and you live a very small kind of, you know, consumeristic life, you're just kind of one of the sheep and the great industrial complexes, great herd, and you're just moving where they tell you to move and so on and so forth, you don't have any like deep weightiness in your life, no eternal weightiness in your life.

Yeah, you're going to be constantly discontent. You're just going to be noticing all the things that you don't have, all the things that aren't working out, all the things the Lord has withheld from you. But, if you just start loving people as souls that are going somewhere forever, this great ballast settles into your ship and you're not tossed to and fro with discontent and with not having and so on and so forth because you have a mission and a purpose and it's big and it's glorious and it's beautiful and it's hard and you're not paying attention to what kind of car you've got because you're caring about stuff that's more important than that.

I said earlier as we go to communion that Paul just took Jesus' words seriously. Another way to say this is that he also watched Jesus' life carefully.

Because we see this from Paul about Jesus. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might be rich.

[ 41 : 00 ] For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich. And Paul looked at Jesus' life and the outcome of Jesus' life and says well Jesus did that and the Father has given him a name that is above every name and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord.

The Father has given him great glory for this act of service and Paul said I will do this too. I will become poor so that others might become rich. So there's a treatment of 1 Timothy 6.

It's a real danger this falling in love with money thing but there really is a way to safely navigate that particular issue. It's through contentment.

And at the end of the day I would just point you to how this all worked out when the author and perfecter of our faith did not count equality with God something to be grasped but surrendered and emptied himself and gave himself up for us.

It's working out okay. It's working out okay. We can follow the captain of our faith into the same way of life. So if you're a follower of Jesus I pray that you'd come and be strengthened by the table that represents the body and blood of Jesus Christ given for you to redeem you of your many sins and to give you strength to follow him into the best places there are to walk.

[ 42 : 21 ] Come now. Amen.