



Christmas Contentment  
1 Timothy 6:2c-12  
December 15, 2019

In one sense Christmas is an easy time to live as a Christian, but we can also get stressed, frustrated, impatient, envious, disappointed, or even angry. One reason for this is our expectations, which may be too high. Perhaps you have noticed advertisements never encourage us to be content with what we have! Even if our Christmas expectations are reasonable, though, other people are involved. We do, cannot, and should not try to control everything. As a result, even our best expectations may not be met. All this can lead to unhealthy feelings and actions.

Today's passage gives us some helpful guidance from God that can help us live better as Christians during the special temptations we face at Christmas. The essential message of the passage is that God wants us to be content. It's heresy to think that godliness is a way to get rich, but it is intended to bring us contentment (1 Timothy 6:6). Paul goes so far as to say, "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" (v. 8). And he doesn't even specify how much or what kind of food and clothing! Other Scripture likewise encourages us to be content (Luke 3:14; Philippians 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:5-6).

Two primary reasons are given for contentment. First, we did not bring anything into the world when we entered it, nor will we take anything with us when we leave. Earth is not our final destination (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:11). We are just passing through (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 13:14). Second, discontentment can lead us to seek more and more possessions and bring temptation and even ruin (1 Timothy 6:9-10). God does give us good gifts to

enjoy during our journey on earth (1 Timothy 6:17), but we must not seek them to the point that they distract us from our destination (Ecclesiastes 5:10; Matthew 6:19-34; Mark 4:18-19; 8:36; Luke 21:34).

Instead, we are to seek contentment in God. In today's passage, this is stated in terms of pursuing qualities of godliness and taking hold of eternal life (1 Timothy 6:11-12). In Psalm 131 contentment with God is stated directly. Satisfaction does not come from possessions but from a meaningful connection with God (Psalm 17:15; 63:1-5; 62:1-12). If we find contentment in Him, we will be much less likely to wander off looking for "life" or satisfaction in unhealthy places or ways.

So the message is we are to seek contentment in God instead of seeking satisfaction in money and things. The primary kind of discontentment addressed in 1 Timothy 6 is financial, but the principles of this passage, apply equally to other kinds of discontentment as well, including those we are susceptible to at Christmastime (gifts, family, travel, traffic, food, etc.). We should enjoy and be thankful for any good gifts or blessings God gives us at Christmas, but we should also guard against developing unhealthy expectations about such things and also remember that contentment is found in God alone. God's invitation and warning through Isaiah is apropos (Isaiah 55:1-3).

Finally, we should remember that Satan usually does not tempt us to abandon God in one dramatic act. Instead, he does it gradually. He uses our desires to drag us away (literally "lure" as in fishing) and entice us, leading to actual sin and ultimately to death (James 1:13-15). We are wise to make sure we are not wandering little by little away from God but are instead holding firmly to his hand and continually seeking contentment in him. There are many occasions for gradually wandering away from God at Christmastime, but thankfully there are also many opportunities for drawing near to Him.

