

Panthers:

Who is more content, the person with a million dollars or the person with ten children? You probably guessed the person with ten children, and you are correct. He is more content because he doesn't want any more. That's the definition of contentment, not wanting any more or any different. It literally means "held together." This is the second desire addressed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. He warned His disciples not to seek contentment from money (Matt. 6:22-23).

The desire for contentment came from being blessed by God to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue (bring contentment to) the earth (Gen. 1:28). This desire flows vertically from the heart of God into each one of our hearts. It flows horizontally in our relationships with others (Gen. 2:18).

The first sin was pride, man desiring contentment apart from God (Gen. 3:5-6). God had created Adam and Eve with humble hearts. The focal point of their contentment was God. He satisfied their desires. Pride made man the focal point of his own desires. Now each person is born with and chooses a proud heart (Gen. 8:21). He focuses on his giftedness rather than his godliness.

Money is pride's measurement of our giftedness (time, talent, and treasures). Wisdom is humility's measurement of our godliness (Christ in us). Christ is the image of God (Heb. 1:3). He is humble in heart (Matt. 11:29), and He is the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24). Humility is the beginning of His wisdom in our lives (Prov. 11:2). In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught wisdom for contentment.

Pride seeks contentment from money. *"But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness"* (Matt. 6:23). Two thousand years ago, a "bad eye" was a greedy one. It desired something more or something different than the time, talent, and treasures given one by God. Paul equated greed with idolatry (Col. 3:5) because the eyes of the heart are focused on something other than God for contentment.

Today, we often want something more or something different, and we believe that money will solve it. With more money, we can acquire a different car, a different spouse, a different house, a different job, or even a different church.

The result is discontentment. *"If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness"* (Matt. 6:23). Darkness is discontentment. Solomon said, *"Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless"* (Eccl. 5:10). Jesus and Solomon both said that seeking contentment apart from God leads to discontentment. Regardless of how much money we have, we will never be satisfied.

Humility is generous. *"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light"* (Matt. 6:22). The eye being the lamp of the body referenced the light that illumined the heart. The eye allowed its focal point into the body. Two thousand years ago, a good eye meant a generous, content, loyal, and focused eye.

Today, we use the term "good eye" when a batter lets a bad pitch go by. The batter is content enough to let the foolish opportunity pass. When we are content, we don't need something more or something different. We are wise enough to allow life's bad pitches to go by and become generous with our time, talent, and treasures. Rather than focus on our giftedness, we focus on our godliness.

The result is the peace of God in Christ. Light is a metaphor in Scripture used for the spiritual vitality of life. Christ is that light (Jn. 8:12). A body full of light is a body full of peace, and Christ is that peace of God who holds us together (Eph. 2:14). He brings that divine peace into our lives in communion with Him so that we will share it in community with others (Jn. 14:27; 16:33).

Warning against the pursuit of money for contentment, Paul said that godliness with contentment is great gain, or full of satisfaction (1 Tim. 6:6-10). In his letter to the church at Philippi, he penned that the peace that passes all understanding comes from a content (thankful) heart surrendered to Christ in prayer (Phil. 4:6-7). He went on to say that the secret of contentment was that he could do all things *through* Christ who gave him strength (Phil. 4:12-13). He discovered contentment in the Giver, not the gifts.

This week, be generous with your time, talent, and treasures. Be content enough in Christ to give to someone in need. Spend extra time with your spouse or children, allowing them to set the agenda. Invest your talent into a coworker. Give some of your treasures to a neighbor in need. Let life's bad pitches go by being content in the peace of God in Christ, the focal point of the eyes of your heart.

Content in Christ's peace,

Mitch