

Choose Your Master Wisely

How to live in bondage:

Hebrews 13:4, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 12:13-21

OPTION #1

- ✓ Love **MONEY**.
- ✓ Desire to have even **MORE MONEY**.
- ✓ Make “**MORE MONEY**” the pursuit of your life.
- ✓ Promise God you will be **GENEROUS** when you **GET MORE MONEY**.

OPTION #2

- ✓ Love **GOD**.
- ✓ Desire to have even **MORE MONEY**.
- ✓ Make “**MORE OF GOD**” the pursuit of your life.
- ✓ Promise God you will be **GENEROUS** with **HIS STUFF NOW**.

Contentment = Where we are in **CHRIST**, not where we are in **LIFE**.

Practicing the 2nd option:

Philippians 4:1-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Matthew 6:33

- ✓ Rejoice in **WHO WE** have, not **WHAT WE** have.
- ✓ Bring every **CONCERN** to God.
- ✓ Instead of focusing on what we **DON'T HAVE**, give thanks for what we **DO HAVE**.

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Food for Thought for the week of July 29, 2018

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. This week's message pointed out that biblical contentment does not mean checking our drive or desire to succeed at the door. God gives us the freedom to ask for blessings, protection and provision. How do you balance Solomon's prayer in Proverbs 30:7-9 with our freedom to ask for blessings beyond our needs?

Proverbs 30:7-9 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ "Two things I ask of you, Lord;
do not refuse me before I die:
⁸ Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.
⁹ Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you
and say, 'Who is the Lord?'
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God.

How can Deuteronomy 8:10-18 help us further understand this balance?

Deuteronomy 8:10-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. ¹⁶ He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. ¹⁷ You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

2. The book of Ecclesiastes records King Solomon's search for contentment in a world where he had everything at his fingertips. Take a look at what he learned by reading the following passages and then jot down his insights about the pursuit of contentment.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

Pleasures Are Meaningless

2 I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. **2** "Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?" **3** I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. **5** I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. **6** I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. **7** I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. **8** I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem^[a] as well—the delights of a man's heart. **9** I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my labor,
and this was the reward for all my toil.

11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 4:4-8 New International Version (NIV)

4 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

5 Fools fold their hands
and ruin themselves.

6 Better one handful with tranquillity
than two handfuls with toil
and chasing after the wind.

7 Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

8 There was a man all alone;
he had neither son nor brother.
There was no end to his toil,
yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
"For whom am I toiling," he asked,
"and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?"
This too is meaningless—
a miserable business!

Ecclesiastes 5:10-16 New International Version (NIV)

10 Whoever loves money never has enough;
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.
This too is meaningless.

11 As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owners
except to feast their eyes on them?

12 The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance
permits them no sleep.

13 I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:

wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners,
14 or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when they have children
there is nothing left for them to inherit.

15 Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb,
and as everyone comes, so they depart.
They take nothing from their toil
that they can carry in their hands.

16 This too is a grievous evil:

As everyone comes, so they depart,
and what do they gain,
since they toil for the wind?

What is your greatest challenge in being content with what you have?

3. In the late 1800's Horatio Spafford wrote the famous hymn, *It is Well with My Soul*, in response to the tragic death of his daughters in a shipwreck. Here is the first verse of that song:

"When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea-billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to know;
It is well, it is well with my soul."

His words lead us to believe that he had found contentment even amidst horrible circumstances. Biblical contentment does not mean we have to love everything just the way it is. But it does mean we can cope with even those things we most dread. How can Psalm 46:1-3 & 10-11 help us better learn to be content even in hard times that we'd rather bypass?

Psalm 46:1-3 New International Version (NIV)

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoṯ. A song.

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

Psalm 46:10-11 New International Version (NIV)

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.