

The Jewel Of Contentment

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you, Never will I forsake you.’”

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)

I grew up in a family that was possibly the poorest in our neighbourhood. I had an older brother and he wore his hand-me-downs. He got the new clothes and I got his clothes when he grew out of them. Occasionally we would complain as children about our home and how we had to share it with renters. The other kids on our street did not need renters to help pay the mortgage.

One day my father had all of our complaining he could endure. Quietly he asked us to pile into our 1930 Buick, the oldest car on the street, and off we went we knew not where. After a while we landed in a slum area of Toronto that had pitiful shacks for houses. When we slowly passed an especially run-down house my dad pointed to it and said, “Some people call that place home.” We would pass another very dreary house and he repeated the exercise. Then we drove home to our house. Dad said nothing else the whole time but when we got home we kids

thought our house was a mansion.

As God’s chosen people we need to keep ourselves from the love of money – which is the source of all kinds of evil. Certainly we need food and shelter to sustain our lives on planet earth. To have enough funds to put clothes on our backs is essential. But where does it end? Where do we stop in our search for worldly things? Paul wrote to Timothy his son in the faith and said “Be content if you have food and clothing.” (1 Timothy 6:8) That seems the irreducible minimum for sure.

You may think Paul is using hyperbole, exaggerating, but His point is that if we have enough to survive, seek contentment in that context. Paul knew what it was like to suffer want, even of food. (Philippians 4:12). He said he had learned contentment in every situation in life. He spoke from experience.

Paul tells Timothy to flee from covetousness and pursue after godliness, faith,

love, patience and meekness (1 Timothy 6:11). This pursuit of godly things is a race we learn to run. We will not learn to substitute the godly things for material goods in an evening of meditation. Rather we must work diligently and daily at laying aside the good and reaching out to grasp the holy things which are the best.

C.S. Lewis wisely said, “Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things.” Lewis reminds us that we must serve one or the other, God or temporal things. If we put God first we shall discover He graciously provides us with the secondary things needed. Are you willing to work for the jewel of contentment? The Lord waits to strengthen you for this work of putting Him first in all things. Come to Him and come today.

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