

Godliness with contentment, is great gain

I know a man who is a little depressed. His marriage is not what he would hope it would be, so he feels like he wants out. Not that he wants someone else, necessarily; he just doesn't want that wife anymore. She's a lot of work.

He's upset about his finances too. Life would be easier if he made a little more money. Some months it's difficult to make ends meet. What with the cell phone bill, and a pack and a half a day up in smoke, there can be more month than check. The food budget might get adjusted down, once the positive effects of the gym membership kick in.

Beginning to get the picture? I'm describing millions of Americans, am I not? How is it that our opulence does anything but make us grateful? Let's look at a couple of scriptures that come to bear on this matter.

In the book of Philippians, chapter 4 verse 13, the writer, the Apostle Paul uses the phrase, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me". What was he talking about when he said that? Well, he wasn't talking about playing the violin, or lifting something heavy, or having the will power to lose weight and quit smoking. He was referring specifically about the ability to have nothing and still glorify God; the ability to be hungry and still glorify God; the ability to be poor and still glorify God; to be in the position of not having what he wanted...sometimes even what he needed, and still glorify God.

The Philippian church wanted to do something good for the Apostle and give him something, but they didn't have the means. In the middle of chapter 4, Paul was telling them (in the Haddad paraphrase), "Don't worry about me. I have learned in whatever situation I find myself, how to be content. I know how to have a lot and how have very little. I have learned the secret of being content with whatever I have, whether that be everything or nothing. I can do either and all, through Christ who strengthens me."

Looking for great strength from God, to deal with life's changes is the right thing to do. But the changes that Paul was speaking about specifically were the changes we go through when we don't have what we want. In those times, Jesus can give us the strength to glorify Him and continue to be His witnesses, even when it looks from the outside, like we're down and out... even when it feels on our insides, like we're down and out. In those times, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us, and continue to glorify Him with the sweet attitude of contentment.

1Tim 6:6... Godliness with contentment, is great gain.

Pastor