



abclinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on January 19-20, 2008

this week's coreverse

*"But godliness with contentment
is great gain. For we brought
nothing into this world and we
can take nothing out of it."*

1 Timothy 6.6-7 NIV

usingabclinks

Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days.

Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions acts as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members for more information on ABC Small Groups or go to adabile.org>ministries>small groups.

See adabile.org for abclinks archives.



Part Two of a Three Part Sermon Series

"It"

Once there was a big old "cowboy man" named Jack from West Virginia who had a loving wife of 40 years named Jewel. Jack and Jewel adored each other. They had a teenage granddaughter named Brandi who was the apple of their eye. Jack was part owner of a construction business and lived in a nice home in a nice neighborhood. They lived a simple but happy life in their West Virginia town.

Every morning on the way to work, Jack stopped for coffee and biscuits at the local C&L Superserve. He didn't regularly gamble, but if the state lottery was over \$100 million, he would buy a ticket. Before Christmas of 2002, Jack bought a Powerball lottery ticket along with his biscuits. He rose the day after Christmas to find he had the only winning ticket to the largest undivided lottery jackpot in history, worth \$314 million. In the swirl of media attention that followed, Jack stated that he was "humbled, would start a charitable foundation to help the needy, would tithe 10% to his church, and build big new churches." He became the biggest hero in the state of West Virginia.

The very first week after winning the lotto he entered a local gambling bar and strip club, and slapped \$50,000 down on the counter. Pretty soon he stopped going to the C&L Superserve because hoards of people got there early to get in line for a hand out. Not too long after that he started staying out all night visiting local casinos and the local strip joint. He was known as a high roller who usually had a woman (not Jewel) on his arm who would throw down thousands of dollars without blinking an eye. Over the next several months Jack's reputation as a hero began to sour. Jack's new motto was "If money can buy it, I can have it." Every day he gave thousands of dollars to Brandi to make up for the loneliness she felt being in a rich family. He paid local teenage boys \$500 a day just to drive her around in one of his many new cars. Brandi turned to drugs to fill the void in her life, and liberally shared them with her new friends.

By Christmas of 2003, Jack's foundation for the poor had dissolved, he was arrested and convicted on two DUI's, had a broken marriage, one of Brandi "escorts" had been found dead in his home from a drug overdose, and Brandi's body was found thrown under a tarp behind the house of a "friend." She too had died of an overdose.

Amazingly, this old "cowboy man" is Jack Whittacker who was part owner of a \$17 million business long before he ever bought the winning lotto ticket. How could this happen? We live in a country where anything is possible for those who will pursue it. Getting rich is the American dream. It's synonymous with the right to be happy. Whether we will admit it or not we all tend to think that having everything we want equals happiness. Why did Jack find only heartache and pain after becoming so rich? Why didn't his wealth bring him satisfaction? Our study this week will shed some light on the quest for true contentment.



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personal bible studies

“Contentment is not having everything you want, but being content with everything you have.”

This week, we will examine what the Bible says about riches, and what the source of our satisfaction truly is. We will take a close look at how Paul instructed his disciple Timothy on pursuing contentment. You will discover that pursuing what you think will make you happy is a perilous journey, and that the Apostle Paul has discovered the answer to the mystery of being content.

dayone

God is our father and provider. He wants us, His children, to see that He alone is about the business of giving us everything we need to be satisfied. Satan hates God and wants to hurt Him by turning us toward those things that will destroy us.

Read the following passages and record what God wants you to know about Him. What does it mean for you right now?

Hebrews 13.5

Philippians 4.19

Matthew 6.25-33

1 Chronicles 29.11-14

Psalms 119.98 and 105

Genesis 3.1-6

daytwo

The Bible gives us many warnings about pursuing money and riches. Read the following verses then write down the warning, what will happen to you, and how you can avoid it.

Proverbs 30.7-9

Proverbs 23.4-5

Proverbs 28.22

Proverbs 11.4

James 1.9-10

Ecclesiastes 5.10-11

Paul models a life that has avoided the pitfalls of discontentment. After each verse below, write how he does it.

Philippians 3.7-9

Philippians 4.11-13

daythree

The pursuit of riches was a huge problem for Christians at Ephesus, because false teachers taught and valued the pursuit of earthy riches.

Read 1 Timothy 6.6-11 then answer the questions according to what you see in the verses.

Is great gain possible? Specifically what is the gain Paul is talking about, and how do we get it? What is the key to fulfillment in this passage?

What verbs (action words) are used to describe what happens to people who pursue riches? Explain what word pictures are conjured up by these verbs.

How should we avoid seeking what we don't need according to verse 11? Give an example of what that would look like in your life.

What should we pursue instead? What do each of the key words in verse 11 mean?

Get a blank piece of paper and take a few minutes to complete the following exercise.

Make three columns. In the first column list some things that you would define as your basic needs. In the second column, list what you desire. Are your basic needs being met? Are your desires being met? In the third column, make a list of the things you regularly do to get to know God better. How much time do you spend thinking about your needs? Your desires? Praying about each list?

Take this sheet to your small group meeting and be prepared to share your lists with each other. Do you need to make any changes?



small group discussion

lean in

Have you ever pursued a dream that unexpectedly turned out to be a disaster? Tell about what happened and what you learned. **Or...** have you had to make a choice to give up the pursuit of "more" and what prompted you to make that choice?

lookdown

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-11 aloud.

After studying this passage and the other passages this week, make two columns on a piece of paper and compare and contrast gaining God's riches with gaining the world's riches. How do you go about pursuing each? What is the result of each?

Discuss the word pictures Paul uses for pursuing the love of money. Give examples of what that looks like in our culture. Is money bad? What are other perilous dreams people pursue besides money?

What is the "key" to contentment in life? Give examples from other verses you studied this week. Do most people, even Christians, pursue contentment this way? Why or why not?

How does Paul describe his own contentment?

lookout

Where do you see people in our culture attempting to find the answer to contentment? Give both good and bad examples.

Who are some people in your life that you can seek good advice from in this area? What is it about them that makes their advice wise?

lookin

In DayThree's Bible study, you were asked to complete an exercise listing your basic needs, your desires and the effort in which you pursue godliness. Share what you learned from this exercise.

How has your definition of basic needs changed over time? Do you need more or less today than you did 5 years, 10 years, 20 years ago? How does this happen to us? What influences our perspective of needs and desires?

Are you trapped by anything? Plunged into anything? Pierced by any decisions you have made? What is your next step?

What time in your life were you the most content? Why were you at peace with what you had? Answer the opposite as well. When were you most discontent? Why?

By your example, what are you teaching your children about contentment?

lookup

Spend a few minutes sharing your prayer requests and praying for each other. Ask God to show you changes you need to make in your attitude and actions toward being content. Ask God to show you how to discern between what you need and what you want.

discover
more

More sermons on contentment!

If you'd like to hear more on this important subject, we have two sermons on our website for you to listen to.

The first is Part 2 of the sermon series, "A Culture of Generosity" from January, 2007. Pastor Manion discusses contentment from the perspective of Paul as he writes a thank you note to the church in Philippi.

The second is a sermon from several years ago entitled, *The Inequity of Grace*. Over the years, this sermon has been one of the most requested and listened to. It's been nicknamed, "the ice cream bowl sermon." Take a listen and find out why!

How is your foundation?

Are you unclear or rusty on what you actually believe? Having holes in your foundational beliefs can affect your contentment. Take a look at *Know What You Believe* by Paul E. Little and *Search For Significance* by Robert S. McGee.