



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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### The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Timothy 6:1-10

1 Timothy

"Contentment"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are going to look at the first half of 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 1 through 10. Let's begin with prayer and then we'll read our text.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this time together this evening. Thank you for your abundant blessing. You've blessed us with much rain, and we thank you for that. You bless us with every good gift that we have. Every perfect gift comes down from you.

And we pray your blessings particularly on our lives, spiritually, tonight as we continue in our study of 1 Timothy. And we pray that you would guide us and direct us in it. We thank you that you have given us the capability of understanding your revelation. This book is unique. There is no book in the world like it.

There cannot be because this is inspired of you. It's God breathed. It's your revelation. And yet, we would not have access to it if we did not have new hearts, new faculties, regenerated minds and a teacher in the Holy Spirit. We praise you, Father, that you have done this.

We thank you for giving us these gifts, gifts of a new heart, the gift of the Holy Spirit. And we pray that His ministry would go unhindered this evening, and that you would open our hearts to receive the truth, not only in this room but in the other classes that meet tonight. Bless the young people as they gather together and they

fellowship, and bless the instruction that they receive. And may the time that we spend tonight in this room and the other rooms, wherever your people are meeting, may it be a blessed time.

So we commit our time to you. We pray you bless the teaching. We pray that you bless the time of prayer afterwards. May everything that we do be done well and be profitable, and be to your honor and glory. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] Again, the text is 1 Timothy 6:1-10. Paul writes:

"All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

All of us want to find contentment in this life. We want peace and stability. We want maturity. Paul tells us how to have that in the sixth chapter of 1 Timothy. First Timothy is a book that deals with the subject of the church and how we are to conduct ourselves in it.

It is, Paul says, the "pillar and support of the truth." And so we of all people should have contentment. We know the truth; we support the truth, but since we are part of God's household Satan tries to undermine that. Satan tries to bring the pillars down. And he does that in various ways.

He does that by trying to frustrate our contentment and give us instead discontentment. And, as I say, he has many ways of doing that. He has many ways of troubling the church and undermining the Lord's work. Chiefly, it is by means of false teaching. Paul deals with that subject again.

He's dealt with it already. It was the occasion, really, for the writing of this epistle. But as we come to the sixth chapter in the end of the book, he again deals with that. But there are other ways of causing Christians to be discontented. Worldliness is one, and Paul deals with that too.

Some problems, though, are more mundane and maybe more insidious because they are social problems, problems in relationships. And Paul begins the chapter with one of those problems of that nature that was a real threat. It was a difficult problem, as we can imagine. It is the problem between slaves and masters. Slaves filled the Roman world.

The Greeks and the Romans loved leisure. They liked to spend time in conversation in the marketplace and in the gymnasium and in the baths. And slaves made that possible. The economy of the Roman Empire was largely built upon the labor of slaves. Slaves occupied positions as domestic servants and laborers, as well as doctors and teachers and administrators.

There were slaves throughout the Roman world. And the gospel, very early on, had entered and taken root in the hearts of many of the slaves. And Paul described those who had been called as being "not many mighty, not many noble." He must have had a number of slaves in mind when he wrote that. So the situation of the slave and the church had to be addressed.

They were a large class of people and some of them had Christian masters which posed an unusual problem. Slaves were legally the property of their masters in society. But in the church, they were equal, and so that presented an unusual problem. And you can imagine the difficulty of the slave entering the church on a Sunday, being with his master there as an equal. It's possible to imagine that some slaves were even gifted to teach and may have taught their masters.

And then they would go home and enter the master's house and, once again, they were slaves. So it presents all kinds of problems for those who had masters that were Christians. But also the slaves who had masters that were pagans faced difficulties and they faced such temptations as looking down on their masters who were pagans, while they were saved and children of God. And that could cause them to be disrespectful. So the issue was how should a Christian slave conduct himself or herself in the household of God.

And Paul answers that, in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 6, first in regard to those with non-Christian masters. "All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against." Well, you'll notice Paul doesn't urge the slaves to flee their masters. He didn't make a direct protest against the practice of slavery. In fact, the New Testament doesn't protest it.

That doesn't mean that Paul and the apostles endorsed slavery. It only means that, as far as we can tell from reading Scripture, they tolerated it. I think we get a sense of Paul's opinion on slavery, though, in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, because in verses 20 and 21, he addresses slaves. And he writes: "Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it."

In other words, continue in it. Don't rebel; don't try to escape. "But," he adds, "if you are able also to become free, rather do that." And slaves could do that. So in some ways, slavery in the Roman

world differed from slavery in our history and what we normally think of in terms of slavery.

But there were occasions when slaves were given an allowance by their masters. And if they were careful with the money that they had been given, they could accumulate enough to buy their freedom. And there were many freedmen in the 1st century. So they could do that. And if they could do that, if that was the possibility that was presented to them, then Paul says, "By all means, take it."

So that implies that Paul was not favorable towards slavery. But he evidently did not feel that it was his duty or it was his mission to attack it. Paul did not see that as the mission of the church. He didn't see the church's mission as overturning the institutions of society but of calling sinners out of a fallen world, out of fallen society to faith in Jesus Christ and into His church. That is the concern that governs his counsel here in verse 1, to avoid bringing dishonor on the name of God and on the gospel.

And so to do that, to avoid that, to promote the gospel, he instructs the slaves to show respect and submission for his or her master. For the slave with the Christian master, there was the problem of resentment – that which I suggested a moment ago – or the problem of taking advantage of his situation, as his position as a fellow Christian and that new relationship that he had with the master in which the discipline that he had been under, or a slave was normally under, would have been relaxed, would have been tempered by a relationship of love on the part of the master for the slave. And so he instructs these slaves to be respectful and to be diligent, and not to take advantage of their situation or not to be resentful in their situation. They were to be respectful. They were to be diligent in their work.

In fact, he was to give even better service to his master because he was a believer. As Christians, we are to do everything that we do to the glory of God. Paul makes that very clear in 1 Corinthians 10 in verse 31. And he does that by taking the most simple, mundane, basic

things of life and saying we're to glorify God in them. Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we're to "do all to the glory of God."

Well, if we're to eat and drink to the glory of God, if that's to be our concern, the very fundamental things of life, then, of course, everything else would fall under that category as well. And that certainly would apply to work to be done to God's glory. And that, for us, is the main application of this text. We don't need to worry about slavery. It doesn't touch our lives in this part of the world in this day and age.

But we are employed. We do have tasks to perform wherever they may be. Whether they're in the home or whether they're in the labor force, the marketplace, wherever. And we are to be diligent workers. That's Paul's exhortation, at least by implication, to us.

We are to be diligent workers. People are watching. And we're to be concerned about God's name and the doctrine that we hold. The way we work, the way we live, the way we eat, the way we drink, whatever we do reflects on God's name and the gospel. Since the church is the pillar and support of the truth, we must behave differently and not bring the church into disrepute.

And the truth is what is at stake in the next section of the chapter. In chapter 6, Paul deals with various issues, and the chapter doesn't seem to have any clear sequence of thought. He seems to be dealing with various issues toward the end of the letter. Each one seems to be self-contained.

He deals with false teachers in verses 3 through 5, those who reject the truth. So truth is very much the issue here. But before that, at the end of verse 2, he tells Timothy to "teach and preach these principles." It's not clear if that refers to the principles that Paul has just given about slaves or if it refers to what follows about the false teachers. Either way, of course, he should do it.

He's to preach and teach these things about slaves, and he's to preach and teach these things about the false teachers, that which Paul

is about to speak about. But this does make a good introduction to what follows because it gives a contrast between Timothy, who is to teach all the things in this letter, and the false teachers who advocate different doctrines. And Paul explains in verse 3 the reason they advocate false doctrine. It is because they do "not agree with sound words." They don't agree with orthodoxy.

Literally, Paul says, they don't approach or they don't draw near to it. The idea being that they don't attach themselves to this truth, to the doctrine, to orthodoxy. The expression, "sound words," which is qualified by the statement, "those of our Lord Jesus Christ," do not refer simply to the words of our Lord that are contained in the gospel. They refer to the whole of the New Testament. You may remember during the upper room discourse, the Lord said he had many more things to say to them.

In fact He says that in John 16:12-13. I'll read it. "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

Well, who's going to speak to the Holy Spirit and tell Him the things that He must say? It's Christ. So those are His words, which is a good text for the deity of Christ. He has many more things to say. He can't say them now. Why can't He say them now?

He doesn't have time. He's about to die. After His death He will speak, and He will speak through the third Person of the Trinity. And so this is the revelation of Christ. The New Testament is His Word, His revelation.

And so I think that's what Paul is referring to here. All the revelation of Jesus Christ is given. In fact, we could say it's the entire Bible, because He is the Word of God and He has spoken through the prophets as well. The word, "sound," here, when he speaks of sound word has the idea of wholesome or healthy, signifying that the truth of Scripture imparts spiritual well being. It sanctifies the person who

listens to it. It sanctifies the person who draws near, who doesn't turn away, but who lays hold of it.

And it makes men whole. It gives them spiritual health. So when healthy words, sound words, when orthodoxy is rejected, then a person cannot avoid deviating in his teaching. And he cannot help but have a character which is deviant as well, which is spiritually unhealthy. So such people become spiritually sick.

And in verses 4 and 5, Paul describes the characteristic features of these men, what they are like now that they don't have healthy words, spiritual health. He speaks of these teachers as "conceited and understanding nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain." So these are conceited men, these false teachers who allege to have special truths, deep truth, esoteric knowledge, knowledge that they don't get from the apostles or from the teachers of the church.

These are men who are conceited, but they're really ignorant men. They don't have the truth. They understand nothing, Paul said. Now, to be fair, be evenhanded, the reality is Christians can become proud. Paul tells us that we face that danger when we have the knowledge of the truth.

He tells us that in 1 Corinthians 13. And being what we are, sinful people, we know that pride can take root in our heart if we have great knowledge, that that is a problem and we need to guard against that. But these men as described as conceited. And I think there are a couple of ways to understand that. They're arrogant.

They're proud of themselves. They're sinful men and that's a characteristic of sinners. But also it is conceited for an individual to place himself and his sense of authority over the Word of God, to deny the truth of it and claim to have truth in and of himself. That's

conceit, that's arrogance to reject the revelation of God. And so these men were that; they were conceited.

The subjects that interested them are called controversial questions, idle speculation. It's not the Word of God. It's other things. They don't attach themselves to wholesome or sound doctrine but have a morbid or a sick interest in subjects which don't lead to edification, lead to disputes, dissention. Paul stigmatizes their arguments as nothing more than a dispute or battle about words.

That's what the word, "dispute," literally means. It means word fights, the **combination** of two words. And they battle with words; they fight over words. I think we've all known people that are like that. They enjoy engaging in arguments. They like getting into disputes.

It's just the nature, I guess, of their personality, these verbal battles. They are argumentative types. And I'm speaking of Christians. There are Christians who are like that. I've known them, probably been guilty of that a little bit myself.

And that's good to be able to enter into a discussion, to be able to engage someone in a discussion over the Scriptures, and be able to meet the challenge that someone might raise to the doctrines of the Word of God. We must be able to answer them. And the more we do that, the more skilled we become in answering challenges that are raised. It's good to be able to debate, debate with a proper spirit. But certainly not to be argumentative and caustic.

That doesn't further the gospel and it doesn't convince anyone. We don't argue people into the Kingdom of God. That's spiritual work. We use the truth, but the Spirit of God gives it power and He brings about that good result. So we need to be careful about that.

But what characterized these men was that. They were argumentative types. They liked to engage in these kinds of disputes. And out of these disputes "arise," Paul says, "envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions," and so on. Nothing good comes of it.

And all of this is the product of men with, what Paul calls in verse 5, a "depraved mind." Their whole metal and moral attitude, or their way of thinking and their perspective is corrupt, deviant. As a consequence of their twisted thoughts, they are described as being "deprived of the truth." They don't understand Christian doctrine. They don't understand the Word of God that they claim to be teaching.

And without the truth of God, people have a very distorted idea about life. They have a distorted perception of life. And in this case, since these men are ministers – claim to be – claim to be purveyors of the Word of God, they have a distorted view of the ministry. "They suppose," God writes, "that godliness is a means of gain." So for them, the ministry is a business.

They collected a fee for their religious instruction to those who were devoted to them. And that's the bottom line in what they did. What they did, they did for money. And they found plenty of people willing to give them their money. And I think as we read it, we see how contemporary this really is because the world really hasn't changed much in 2000 years.

There are still lots of people more than willing to give people like this their money. And you don't have to know a whole lot about what's going on in the external visible church, even what would be called the evangelical church, to know there is a lot going on that has to do with money. Some of it is more blatant than in other places. But is very much the bottom line with many ministries. It has to do with money.

Now, having said that, there's nothing wrong with contributing to the ministry and supporting those who teach in the ministry. Paul gave instruction on that in chapter 5, verses 17 and 18. But, as I said last week – and I repeat again – money should never be the motivation for ministry. It should never be that. Well, the false teachers love money, and their love of money leads the apostle to address the problem of wealth and the dangers of it in the next section of chapter t.

He introduces the subject by taking the false teachers' concern for monetary gain and reinterpreting it in a Christian way to talk about where great gain is in godliness. They thought that they would gain monetarily in godliness. Paul says, "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment." Godliness is profitable, but its benefits have nothing to do with money. The pursuit of godliness and laboring and striving for the promise of life that God has given has temporal benefits; it has eternal benefits when, Paul says, "accompanied by contentment."

The word, "contentment," can be translated "self-sufficiency." It was a word that was common among the Greek Stoic philosophers and referred to being independent of circumstances. It is an attitude which accepts gratefully the gifts that God has given and is satisfied. In fact, understands that whatever comes to us in life ultimately is a gift. We know that from Romans 8:28.

So if we are a child of God, we are under the constant never-ending care of God. His eye is never off us; he never slumbers or sleeps. Everything that comes into our life should be understood as a gift. And so there should be this self-sufficiency, meaning this contentment that should characterize our life. Paul is an example of that.

He wrote to the Philippians, you'll remember, in Philippians 4:11. And remember Paul was writing to them in a Roman prison. He writes: "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." Well, that doesn't come naturally. How do you explain a man being in a Roman prison and being content?

How do you explain being a Roman prisoner when you're innocent, and being content? And Paul was. What he had done though is he had learned that. How do we have contentment like that? Well, we learn it. It doesn't come naturally.

It is a discipline, and to have that attitude and to learn that discipline, to have it, well, it helps to have good theology. That's a

necessity to understand the very things that I just said, that God's sovereign. He governs everything in our lives. Well, that's sound doctrine that is healthy. Those are sound words that lead to spiritual health.

Paul gives a good reason, in verse 7, for a Christian having an attitude of contentment and not being influenced by selfish or monetary gain or motives. From the standpoint of eternity, none of the things that people aspire to or strive for, none of those things last. They're all transitory. They are all, at best, temporary. Paul reminds us, "We have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either."

Now, that's put in different words to Job's statement in Job 1:21 where he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there." And that was said by him after learning that he had lost all of his possessions and lost his children as well. And after that, after he makes that statement, he says, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

God knows what to do with the things that we have. We didn't bring anything into this world. They're not ours. If you've earned them from your labors, if they've been given to you as gifts, the only reason you could gain them by your labors is because God gave you the life and the health and the opportunity to obtain them. And if they're a gift – well, they're obviously a gift.

But nothing is permanent. At least nothing is permanently in our possession. Ultimately, they all belong to God. And He gives and He takes according to His will, and His will is **life** and Job understand that. He had sound doctrine, and so he was able to bless the name of the Lord, even though he lost everything.

So these things aren't ours and we can't keep them. And people who hope that they can or live with that as their hope – everybody knows they can't keep things. You sit down and talk to them – I guess I can't imagine anyone thinking, "I'm keeping these things forever."

The Pharaohs thought they could do that, but we know we can't do that.

But people live as though they can do it. They live as though they're never going to come to their last day, and so they can just keep accumulating and having. People who do that will never have happiness in this life. They can't have happiness in this life. Their happiness, their joy, their contentment is invested in things that cannot give contentment.

For one thing, there are never enough things. People who have always want more. And we know that from our own experience; we always want something more. And for those who have a lot, there's always the very real possibility that what they have's going to be lost. It's going to be stolen; it's going to be destroyed; it's going to be lost in the stock market.

And so I assume people who have much must spend a lot of time worrying about their assets. Are they going to have them tomorrow? When's the stock market going to go back up? Is it going to go back up? There are so many things that can plague the mind if your hope is in the things that you possess.

Paul makes it clear it's not in that. In fact, he defines Christian contentment in verse 8. "If we have food and covering, with these things we shall be content." So we obviously do need some things to be content. Our lives are not purely spiritual. We are material beings as well and so we need some things.

But we don't need a lot, he's saying. We need the necessities of life. And that's a hard lesson to learn, a hard lesson for us to learn. It's contrary to everything that we see, everything that we hear. Everything around us would tell us just the opposite, that we need a lot. And there's a lot to have, and it's all very attractive.

And Paul here is prescribing the simple life so that we can pursue godliness and not be hindered by other things. That's to be our prime interest. Our prime interest is not to be in the things of this world, but it is to be in the spiritual things of God. Now, that is not

to say that wealth is evil. That's not to say that businessmen shouldn't work for and accumulate wealth, as they should.

And I think men who work and whoever works should be wise with his or her money and with our assets. And if God blesses one with wealth, it is that, It is a blessing. And great good can be done, and has been done with the wealth that Christians have been given. There may not be many wealthy Christians. Most of the wealth may be invested in the lives and the bank accounts of the nonbeliever.

But God has given wealth to Christians, and many have used it very well. And that should be done. The point is that it is not to be our prime pursuit in life. And when that is the emphasis, and particularly here with a minister, then that should seem to us to be wrong. There's something not right with that.

When a man has a love of money, whoever he is or whoever she may be, but particularly when it's a minister of the gospel and money seems to be very important to that individual, something should seem to be wrong to us. And what Paul makes very clear is the results of that are always disastrous. Verse 9: "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction."

It's not the wealth that Paul condemns here. It's not the possessions that Paul is against. It's "those who want to get rich" that he criticizes. That can be a very dangerous ambition. It can lead to a terrible destructive trap. In two other places in the pastoral epistles where the word, "snare" is used, it's used of the devil. And that likely is the meaning here.

It's a snare that the devil has laid. And the devil traps a lot of people very easily with money, with the lust for money. It turns people aside like animals who are in a safe secure place but are lured from their safety and fall into a trap. That's what the devil is able to do. And that's at least what happens with money and the love of it.

The interest in that, in the possession of things, the possession of wealth blinds people and it becomes a kind of controlling influence

on them as if they could keep it anyway. That's what they live for. That becomes the great ambition. The end of it all is destruction. The desire to get rich "plunges men into ruin and destruction," Paul says.

The word, "plunge," has the idea of drowning. Guthrie, in his commentary, writes that "The desire for wealth is a personal monster which plunges its victim into an ocean of complete destruction." The quest of wealth can do that, can lead to spiritual ruin. The word that Paul uses here, "destruction," means perdition. It is eternal damnation.

This is the word that Peter used when he was speaking to Simon Magus in Acts 8:20. Simon had seemed to become a Christian. He seemed to have joined with the church in Samaria. He had shown a great interest, so he was following Philip. And then he saw the gift of the Holy Spirit given when Peter came up to Samaria, and he wanted that.

He wanted to purchase the authority to give the gift of the Holy Spirit. He wanted to corner the market on the Holy Spirit. He saw this whole thing of monetary increase and power and all of that. He saw this very much as a businessman. It was blasphemy.

And Peter told him, "May your silver perish with you." In other words, "May your silver go to hell with you." In Philippians 3:19, Paul is speaking of false teachers. "Enemies of the cross," he calls them; he says, "whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite." His end is damnation whose god is their appetite.

It's really no different from the people that Paul is speaking of here who love money. Their god is their appetite, their god is their money. It basically comes to the same point of satisfying self, of living for self, of living for one's appetite and one's pleasures. It's basically the same problem and the end is the same. It's hell, it's destruction.

That's the direction that lovers of money are headed for. Paul's not describing Christians, born-again people who are going to be destroyed because of love of money. You can't lose your salvation.

He's describing false teachers and their followers. But this is a warning to us.

Christians who pursue money often end in great disappointment. They waste their lives on the things of this world without investing in the Lord's work, without investing in the treasures of heaven. So we must be very careful about what we think is important and what we live for. Well, these are strong words that Paul uses. And to justify them, he cites what some think was probably a maxim, a wise saying in the ancient world, in verse 10.

"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." The word, "root," in the Greek text doesn't have the article, so it's not "the root." So the proper translation is "Money is a root of all sorts of evil." The love of money is not the source of every evil. We know that.

But it is a source of one. It is one root of all kinds of evil. And it was particularly the root of evil for those people to whom Paul was writing. By grasping for money, people wander away from the faith. Actually, they have been led away. They've been led astray.

The verb is passive, and so it describes what was done *to* them. They were lured away. They were duped. They were fools; they were foolishly drawn away. They are to blame for what happens to them.

They're to blame for the consequences because the piercing that takes place as a result is what they did to themselves. So Paul doesn't use a passive verb and remove culpability. They're to blame for what happens. They have "pierced themselves with many griefs." They severely, painfully wounded themselves with the thorns of disillusionment and remorse that come from this kind of life which takes one away from the faith, takes one away from sound words.

It will always end in bitterness. Those who pursue the things of the world will always end up with dust and ashes in their mouth, a bitter, bitter experience. The greatest example of that, of this

individual, this kind of person is Judas. He was the treasurer of the 12. He kept the purse.

And John tells us, in John chapter 12, – after the incident in which Mary anoints the head of Jesus with the perfume, Spikenard – that he complained about that. He was very indignant. What about the poor people, he was saying. We could have given this to the poor people. It sounds very noble, but John gives us a clue of what was going on, because he was a thief.

He kept the purse and was stealing. That's all he cared about. And of course, that **issued** into his great betrayal of our Lord, where he betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver. His motivation was money. I think it was nothing more than that.

Nothing great, no revolutionary trying to provoke a revolution on the part of Judas. He was just a man interested in money. And he saw that this thing wasn't going the way he thought. "So I'll get something out of. I get 30 pieces of silver at least."

That's what he valued the Lord, 30 pieces of silver. But the end of it was that he was so pierced with guilt that he hanged himself. Money is a great gift. It's not evil, but it does pose a great temptation for sinful people. And we are all sinful people.

And so we must all take account of that and be very careful about the things of this world and beware of those things. It doesn't mean that we become ascetic, that we deny all kinds of things and we live a very spartan kind of life. That's not what Paul is calling us to. But what is the priority in our life?

What do we love? If we love God and we pursue godliness, then we'll have a very contented life. Well, may God give us the grace to do that and to invest our lives, which are all too brief, in the things of God and in His ministry and His life. Well, let's conclude with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for the instruction that Paul has given here and the instruction that he gave to Timothy; that he was to preach and to teach to the congregation at Ephesus. But it's very

much for us as well. And we pray that you would give us the approach to life that Paul has set out here. That we would be diligent in the tasks that we've been given; that we would draw near to and we would hold on to sound words, healthy doctrine, and that we would love the things of your Word; that we would pursue godliness and we would find our contentment in that life.

Help us to do that, Father, and not be swept away by the temptations of this world which are great, but that you would give us wisdom to see what we should do. And may we have the resolve to do it. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.