



Blackfoot

Church of Christ

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Managing Multiple Priorities

By Gary Henry

“And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things’” (Luke 10:41).

EVEN IN THE SIMPLEST LIFE THAT ONE CAN LIVE, THERE ARE STILL MANY THINGS TO BE DONE. Those who would grow strong spiritually must learn to work energetically and productively without being eaten up by the time pressure that characterizes so many of our lifestyles. We must discover how to manage multiple priorities without sacrificing that which is our highest priority: the glorification of God. This is a discipline that we can learn but learning it will be anything but easy in this age of the world.

It is possible to be very busy and not suffer from the corrosive stress that most of us feel when we're busy. Jesus, for example, was extremely busy, and He certainly knew what it was to be tired (John 4:6), but His activities were always surrounded by the peacefulness of complete surrender to the will of God. Although He was busy, He was never frantic. He felt no need to “make things turn out” according to selfish demands. Our anxiety, on the other hand, is often the result of an urge to control certain outcomes. It springs from the desire that things should happen as we wish, rather than as God wills. Yet if we can let go of this desire, much of the compulsiveness that drives our activities will disappear.

Having said that, however, we should also say that most of our lives would profit from some serious simplification. As a people, we are over-committed and strung out. We try to do more than one human being can do effectively. And the result is one that ought to alarm us greatly: we are at a disadvantage when it

comes to the devil. Richard J. Foster, who has written perceptively on the value of the simple life, has said, “Our adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in ‘muchness’ and ‘manyness,’ he will rest satisfied.” Spiritually, we are never more vulnerable than when we are, like Martha, “worried and troubled about many things.” Thus, one of the most constructive spiritual steps that we can take is to simplify our interests and our activities. But even when we do, there will still be many matters to claim our attention. We must learn the art of God-centered restfulness.

Contentment

By Phil Arnold

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim 6:6-10).

One of the most desired and yet elusive goals in life is this matter of contentment. Truly, contentment is one of great treasures of life and he who has contentment is truly rich. The word Paul uses here in 1 Timothy 6:6 for contentment is “autarkeia.” This was one of the great watchwords of the Stoic philosophers of Greece. By “autarkeia” they meant a complete “self-sufficiency.” they meant a frame of mind that was completely independent of all outward things and which carried the secret of happiness within itself. He who had “autarkeia” (contentment) needed nothing else. The thought being that true contentment never comes from the possession of external things (material wealth) but from an inward attitude in life. A Greek philosopher named Epicurus was asked for the secret to happiness and reportedly replied, “add not to a man’s possessions but take away from his desires.” It is not what a man possesses but what truly possesses him that produces contentment. God has provided all that man needs to be happy. Yet, God brought us into the world without any possessions. Thus, possessions cannot be the root of

happiness. They are transitory. "There are no pockets in a shroud" and "you can't take it with you." "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Timothy 6:7). All we can take to God is ourselves and the history of the lives we have lived whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

It is not that Christianity pleads for poverty. There is no special virtue for poverty. There is no special virtue in being poor or in having a constant struggle to make ends meet. In this same sixth chapter in fact, Paul speaks of Christians who are rich and does not condemn them for their wealth. He does warn about trusting in "uncertain riches" and encourages them to be "rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:17-19). It is not sinful to be rich nor righteous to be poor. But we must realize that it is never in the power of things to bring lasting happiness. Paul pleads instead for concentration upon the spiritual things which are permanent. For contentment can only come when we escape the servitude of things. "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). Contentment will be ours when we find that our wealth is in the love and fellowship of God which has been made possible through Jesus Christ. Truly, having God we have all things.

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare.... For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:9-10). Again, money in itself is neither good nor bad; but the love of it – the "desire to be rich" – leads to evil and "many foolish and harmful lusts." With money a man may selfishly serve his own desires or answer the needs of a fellow human being. With money a man may facilitate the path of wrongdoing or he can make it easier for someone else to serve God. No, money is not in itself an evil, but it is a great responsibility. It is a powerful tool that may be used for good or evil, and it brings with it special dangers if it is loved. If it is loved: 1) It tends to be a desire which is never satisfied (Ecclesiastes 5:10). 2) It makes for a life founded upon an illusion that security is found in possessions (Luke 12:16-21). 3) It tends to make us selfish and proud (Luke 16:19f). 4) It promises security but tends to produce anxiety (Ecclesiastes 5:12). 5) It may even lead to dishonesty (Proverbs 30:9).

To seek to be independent of financial reliance upon others and prudently provide for the future is a Christian duty (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10), but to make the love of money the driving force of life cannot ever be anything other than the most perilous of sins and will rob us of the "great gain" – the contentment that is found only in Christ.

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Ben Palmer will be traveling, returning this week
- Porters will be traveling this week
- Brenda, Richard Empey's sister, biopsy on a mass they found, awaiting test results
- Carla, Brenda's Cousin is recovering in the hospital from a fractured pelvis
- Sylvia Ward, Ross's Mom, continues to improve
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) cancer treatment have not been successful
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Worship Assignments

Today

Song Leader – Tom Mitchell

Lord's Table – Chad Mitchell

Wednesday

Song Leader – Ben Palmer

Invitation – Tom Mitchell

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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