

THE FIRST 15

Friday, June 21, 2024

Today is Friday, June 21 and we are studying what the Bible says about contentment.

OPENING PRAYER

In the quiet stillness of a dawning day, I seek the Lord who loves me. I calm my restless thoughts, slow my breathing and center myself upon God's holy presence. Come, Holy Spirit, teach me to rest in your loving kindness. Help me discover the secret of contentment and peace in this earthly life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:6-10

REFLECTION

The Christian's spiritual journey begins with understanding one's inner desire. Desire drives us to get out of bed in the morning and inspires us to strive and live. The human heart is driven by desires, but when we pay close attention to our inner cravings we realize we are never truly satisfied. No matter how much we get, it never seems to be enough. Chronically unfulfilled desires are at the root of the human soul. This problem of human nature is manipulated by a culture of consumerism which causes us to always want more. We are not content until we have more money, more food, more drink, more clothing, more accomplishments, more relationships, more status, more everything.

We are driven by a culture of "more" that causes us to continually work and strive to accomplish and accumulate. God invites us to a culture of "enough" to live in a way that finds contentment, satisfaction and fulfillment. When we constantly chase more money, more fashion, more experiences, more square feet in our home, more places to travel, more technological gadgets, more activities, more relationships, more accolades, it is never enough. Rest is always just out of reach. Sabbath is a practice which wages war against the restlessness of our age. God invites us to find rest for our souls.

I consider my current level of contentment. Is my soul at peace? Am I longing and striving for more? Or do I have "enough?" Behind the idea of Sabbath is rest for my soul, rest for the whole person, rest for all of me. When I observe Sabbath time with God I not only rest from my labor, I rest from my constant cravings and longings. I rest from my errands, my goals and my to-do lists. I rest from my need to do more and be more than I currently am. I rest in God knowing that he loves me just the way I am. Who I am as his child is more than enough. I can simply "be" in

my Sabbath place with the God who loves me and the community who celebrates me. Contentment is a Sabbath heart.

Ask: What would it mean for me to be “content” with what I have and say it is “enough?” How is God inviting me to stop and rest?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed and Holy Lord, teach me the secret of contentment. I came into the world with nothing and I will leave with nothing. Reveal the worldly desires that cause me to strive after “more” and resist the rest and peace you want for me. Teach me to turn off the voices of the world and tune into your voice speaking to my soul. Show me how to live a godly life with contentment and peace. Remind me that I have enough and I am enough. Give me your vision for what holy rest really is and give me a Sabbath heart. Amen.