



APPNOTES

Date: September 24-28, 2018

Series: The Comparison Trap

Luke 12:13-15 In this passage, Jesus warns of the danger of finding contentment in possessions. This wisdom is so countercultural! We live in a society where judgement relies on not who we are, but what we own. We also often base our own happiness by the same measure. Consumerism is rampant. We are bombarded with ads, commercials, social media posts, etc. that sell us on how we can be “happier.” Companies play to our self-conscious, critical nature to make us feel “less than”. If only we had less wrinkles, the perfect car, designer clothes, the perfect body, the world’s best waffle iron. Maybe then we could find joy in this world. But, this attitude leads to greed, self-loathing, and constant discontentment. It takes our focus off our relationship with Christ and turns it to worldly desires. Our deepest needs are only met in the abounding love of Christ! Once we accept Jesus as Savior, we no longer need the stuff of this world to fill our emptiness!

John 12:1-6 Before His crucifixion, Jesus was in the home of Martha and Mary. While there, Mary poured out a bottle of very expensive perfume and anointed Jesus’ feet. Judas objected saying, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” On the surface, this sounded like the “responsible” thing to do, but Judas was the treasurer of the group. He was skimming off the funds, so his only real motivation was to take care of himself - not the poor! Our discontentment can often drive us to greed and dishonesty. We fool ourselves into thinking that we can find happiness in things. We justify our behavior by telling ourselves we “deserve” it. The truth is, we deserve nothing! Our full worth comes from the sacrifice and love of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Make the commitment to live for the Lord, then begin to understand true freedom and contentment!

Hebrews 13:5 “Keeping up with Joneses.” This familiar idiom describes our current cultural atmosphere. The benchmark for social class and worth is set by what we own. We must have what our neighbor has to be happy and accepted. Failure to do so is social inferiority. We spend so much time worrying about appearances and comparing our lives to others. We spend precious time on the pointless, endless pursuit of collecting wealth. This preoccupation with obtaining more is often driven by a spiritual emptiness. There is a hole in our lives that we need to fill. Misdirected by the world

around us, we seek to fill that hole with more “stuff.” It is not until we find ultimate satisfaction and security in a relationship with Christ that our drive for more begins to fade. He is that puzzle piece missing from our lives. And how glorious and comforting to know that God will never leave us. This is where we find true contentment!

Philippians 4:11-12 It’s funny to me when I hear one of my children use the words “I NEED” when asking for something. My response is always the same. “The pantry is full, there are plenty of clothes in the closets (and laundry), and bills are paid every month to keep a roof over your head. What else can you need?” But because we live in a society where contentment is elusive, our mindset is to always want more. Even sadder, we trick ourselves into believing we actually “need” it. The truth is, we are already rich by global and historical standards. It is our culture that tells us that we don’t have enough. This thinking turns our focus away from Christ and places it either on pride (in plenty) or envy (in want). This passage reminds us that we need to have gratitude in all circumstances. When we live within our means, we resist the pull toward wanting more. Gratitude and contentment bring peace to our lives!

Matthew 6:19-21 Most of us spend our lives in pursuit of more money and possessions, thinking we will someday have “enough.” We build garages and buy safes to protect our prized possessions. We display our treasures so everyone can see our worldly accomplishments. Our lack of contentment drives us to work more hours, borrow more money, buy more stuff. Ironically, these actions create more stress for our lives and families. In this passage, Jesus reminds us we need to store up heavenly treasure. The things of this world will pass away. We take nothing from this world when we die. Our hearts and minds need to focus on the eternal. Once we make the decision to accept Christ’s free gift of salvation, our lives change. Our focus changes. Our thinking changes. Our desires change. Our hearts change. When we belong to God, our treasure is found in Him!

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