

Spiritual Maturity - Prayer and Contentment

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the journey from spiritual immaturity to maturity through understanding God's desires and the importance of surrendering all aspects of life to Christ.

Duration: 1:18:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21, John 5:19, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, Ephesians 5:3, Philippians 4:11-13, 1 Timothy 6:6-8, Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 13:5-6, 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: "Maturity", "Prayer and Contentment", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the journey towards spiritual maturity through prayer and contentment, urging believers to shift their focus from self-centered desires to God's needs and intentions. He highlights that true maturity involves recognizing God's sufficiency and the importance of yielding to the Holy Spirit, moving beyond infantile faith characterized by self-interest. The sermon calls for a deep introspection regarding our prayer lives, challenging the tendency to approach God with personal agendas rather than seeking His will. Beach Jr. stresses that spiritual growth requires a commitment to contentment and a willingness to surrender all aspects of life to Christ's lordship. Ultimately, he encourages believers to embrace a life that reflects God's glory and purpose.

Transcript

I'd like to read an excerpt from Corrie Ten Boom's book, *Amazing Love*, as we're quiet before the Lord in our spirits. I want to pray that the Lord will speak to us tonight and minister to us in the depths of our heart and enable us to catch a greater glimpse of his glory, a greater glimpse of his majesty, a greater glimpse of his person, a greater glimpse of his desires, what he's after, what he's longing to realize in us. If we could only get from the Lord this vision of how the Lord has a need.

Now, this need does not indicate that there's a lack in his person, in his character. God is all-sufficient. He's completely and entirely adequate in himself, but this need that he has springs out of his own design.

It's not a need that indicates a lack in his character. It's a need that indicates a purpose of his own design. He has intentioned, he has purposed to have a need, and in having a need, he has done the necessary thing in order for that need to be met.

And of course, that thing that he has done is send his lovely son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the full ramifications and the full implications of the Lord Jesus Christ and his coming and the fulfillment of all that

the Lord Jesus wants to do in the church is in fact that which the Lord longs to realize. That's the Lord's need. The Lord himself has caused his own heart to long for a place where the fullness of his Son in all of his splendor, in all of his eternal perfections, in all of his glory might be expressed.

How emancipating and liberating it is when we are aware by the Holy Spirit working in our life and through the Word of God working in our hearts. How wonderful it is when we become aware more so of what the Lord is after rather than what we're always after. There's such a man-centered, such an eye-centered inclination in Christianity today, where the believer is in pursuit after God based upon something the believer wants for himself, something the believer feels to be in need in his life.

Perhaps there is a place for this in our Christian life. Immaturity is characterized by always perceiving our world as it relates to us, always perceiving everything as it affects us. And we know that the Word of God makes place for Christians in the earlier stages of their life as being babes, children.

And the Lord is understanding and compassionate in regard to the mentality and mindset that children have. But beloved, the Bible clearly teaches in Hebrews chapter 6 that the Lord's thought is not that we would remain children, that we would remain in infancy, but that we would go on unto perfection. And in Hebrews, we'll read very quickly before we read this section from Corrie Ten Boone's book, because this section that I'm going to read relates to some of the kinds of dealings that the Lord will bring in our life when we are progressing on in our Christian life and are advancing to the maturer stages of our walk with the Lord, where we are so desirous to be free from anything that is not pleasing to the Lord, anything that is not like the Lord Jesus Christ, which brings us to a threshold where we can lose sight of ourself and lose sight of our struggles and lose sight of that I, that wanting, that coming to God with only me in mind, and be emancipated from that and come into a place where we are aware of the Lord's need, we're aware of the Lord's desires, we're aware of what the Lord is longing for, and our life gets lost in His desires, and in His interests, and in His passions, and we pass out of the stage where everything revolves around us, and we bear a heart that wants the Lord's glory.

And the Lord so longs to be able to bring a people to this place. And in Hebrews chapter 6, the writer, or Hebrews 5 verse number 11, the writer is speaking of the Melchizedek ministry in verse number 11, it says, Of whom we have many things to say and are hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. For when, for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. So here, the scriptures speak very, very clearly that these believers were to be more advanced than they were.

So therefore, it wasn't God's will for them to be in the condition that they were in spiritually. God would have had them to be more advanced, even to the point where the writer says they should have been by that time teachers. That is, they should have had such an inward, in-wrought work of the Lord in their lives, so deeply that they were so dealt with inwardly by the Lord, and had such an inward knowledge of the Lord that had been wrought through experiences, and through pressures, and testings, and trials, insofar that they were able and capable by the grace of God and by the Spirit of God to actually be teachers.

The scripture says for the time you ought to be teachers, they should have been instructing and teaching others. Now, this idea here of being teachers is not at all simply the ability to communicate facts, or theory,

or to educate people. But when the scriptures speak of being teachers in the New Covenant, it's talking about the ability to communicate the life of the Lord Jesus Christ that has been in-wrought inwardly in the vessel through the power and spirit of the living God.

This idea of being a teacher is not to be understood as teachers in secular society or in the world are, just simply communicating facts. There's something gathered up in this thought of being teachers that far exceeds the ability to communicate facts. But to have this inward knowledge wrought in us, to have this inward knowing of the Lord so deeply in us that enables us to be teachers, it necessitates being willing, it necessitates desiring with passion and intensity to the point where it becomes that which means more to us than anything else, and that being to pass out of the stage of babyhood and infancy in the Lord Jesus Christ and go into the stages of adulthood and spiritual maturity where, in fact, we are able to digest strong meat which belongs to them who are of full age, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

So this issue of spiritual maturity is one that is far more, I don't want to use the word complicating, but it has far more implication than simply maturity as being defined as, well, many years serving the Lord. You can serve the Lord many years, you can acquire a whole lot of Bible doctrine, you could possibly even hold a position in the church as an elder or a leader or a pastor or a teacher. You may have read many, many, many Christian books, but may still be an infant spiritually.

So the Lord longs for a people, the Lord longs for a people who will respond and yield to the working of the Holy Spirit in their life to the point where they begin to long for spiritual maturity so that they can be emancipated from the self-centered, self-relating, man-centered perception of God and basically the whole Christian life. They can get out of that realm and come into a realm where their life and their mind and their heart and everything that they are spiritually is revolving around the Lord and a passion for the Lord to get what He's after. Not, I want to get what I want.

No. Oh how I long for the Lord to get what He's after. And such a place necessitates, as I mentioned a little earlier, a dealing of the Holy Spirit in our life, a strong dealing, a very powerful dealing, at which time we come to grips with the sovereignty of His Lordship, the sovereignty of what His Word says, and we bow before it and it becomes that which we live by.

The Word of God, the Holy Spirit, quickening the Word of God to us becomes the absolutely final authority in our life. We cast down human reason, we cast down human understanding, we cast down human preference, we cast down our own desires, we cast down the things that we think are right and wrong, and we bow down to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His will becomes our will. The testimony of Jesus Christ, not my will, but Thy will be done.

The crisis that must come as a means to which we enter into the beginning stages of adulthood in Christianity is a crisis where we come to where we realize the Lord has got to conquer me. The Lord has got to triumph over me. The Lord has got to overcome me.

The Lord has got to be the chief. The Lord has got to be the boss of my life. The Lord has got to be the master of my life.

The Lord has got to be everything to me. I can no longer bargain with the Lord. I can no longer make deals with the Lord.

I can no longer continue to do what I know is wrong, knowing that the Lord will forgive me. The crisis that must come that brings us only to the beginning stages of Christian maturity is that very thing. Recognizing in a very real way, in a very life-changing way, in a very devastating way, that is devastating to our own will, that Christ must be headed.

He can't be number one as we mentioned several weeks ago, because oftentimes when Christians make Jesus number one, well, they have number two, number three, and number four for themselves. And the Lord has nothing to do in those areas of their life. So we profess Jesus is number one, and then when I fulfill those obligations that relate to the number one Jesus that's in my life and to those things that pertain to it, then I do my own thing.

Of course, we confess that the things we're doing aren't as important to us as the Lord, but there are things, and the Lord doesn't have any say most of the time in those areas of our life. So Jesus can no longer be number one in our life if we want to come to spiritual maturity. Jesus has to be everything.

Jesus has to have a say. He has to have the place of lordship and preeminence in everything that we do and everything that we say, in all the plans that we make. And it's as we come to this crisis and see that this is why we've been saved.

The Lord saved us not to make us forgiven sinners, shouting that we're going to heaven, although that is true. The Lord didn't save us just to rescue us from hell and get us to heaven. The Lord saved us so He can realize something in us.

The Lord saved us because He has a need. Not a need indicating a lack in His character, but a need that He Himself has subjected Himself to. A need to be satisfied in a people who perfectly demonstrate and express the eternal perfections that are found in His Son.

That's the need that God has. That's the longing that God has. Know how emancipating it is when we come to this revelation.

God has saved us not just to rescue us from hell, not just to have us say, praise God, there's a place for me in heaven. No, God has saved us because He wants us to become something. And becoming something is God's ultimate intention.

Not through striving or through self-effort, but through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit reproducing in those who are yielded and cooperating with the Holy Spirit, reproducing in them the very stature, the very spiritual manhood that Christ Himself in glory possesses. That's the magnificence of what God is doing. And beloved, we can never let the heaviness and the urgency of what the Lord is doing and what He's after slip from us.

We can never do that. Now, in light of all that, I'd like to read a section from the book *Amazing Love*, Corrie ten Boone. And this particular section that I'm going to read indicates the kind of dealings that the Lord will bring to our life when we are prepared to come into the first stages of adulthood.

And I read, I once heard a sermon by the Reverend Oswald Smith at a conference in Switzerland. The following made a deep impression on me. He held four books in his hands and asked, Is everything on the altar? Have you lost your life for Christ's sake, your money, your time, your family, your home? He placed the four books on the table.

This is my money, this is my time, this is my family, this is my home. Yes, my money, all of it, except a small savings account, which I've laid aside for my vacation. So not all of my money.

And he took one book from the table. My home, yes, except that I cannot take the children of my sister who is ill. They are so unruly that I just can't have them as guests in my home.

So not my home. And he removed the second book from the table. My time, yes, it all belongs to the Lord, but my two weeks vacation.

I have a right to that and I've already reserved a room at the hotel. So not my time. A third book disappeared.

My family, yes, but I have not allowed my daughter to become what she so eagerly wishes to be, a missionary. We have a large family and she must stay at home to help her mother. So not my family.

He picked up the fourth book. The altar was empty. I left the conference room and went out to walk alone and I searched my heart.

Was everything in my life on the altar? I was deeply touched. Now I believe that that little section from this book is a very telling, very searching that would do us all very good to respond accordingly as Corrie Ten Boom did. This is what the Lord is after.

You could see how this perfectly illustrates the idea that Jesus can't be number one. He has to be everything. Initially there were four books at the altar representing those four areas that so often we want to believe are on the altar.

That is, we want to believe that the Lord has full say in all those areas. Our money, our time, our family, and our home. We want to believe that the Holy Spirit would ask us to take each one of these items and place them on the altar and give the Lord preeminence in each and every one of them.

And perhaps in some ways much of those areas of our life have been handed over to the Lord. But the Holy Spirit is after those things that we are yet holding on to for our own self. Those things that we are yet wanting to rule and govern by our own wishes, our own desires, our own reasonings.

And it's the possessing of those areas in our life that really annuls the whole sacrifice and renders it not on the altar. If he's not everything, he doesn't consider to be anything. And see, that's what the Lord is after.

A work in such a way that would be characterized by believers longing for spiritual maturity, believers longing for spiritual adulthood, that would indeed resolve in seeing the Lord Jesus Christ as all and all. So I think those things are thoughts that we can consider and ponder. And it would be very helpful if we would ask the Lord, have a dealing with the Lord, have a transaction with the Lord, insofar that we would say, Lord, I want the Holy Spirit.

I want the Word of God. To become the final authority in my life. I want things to be subject to You.

I don't want to take anything into my own hands. And I pray, Lord, that You will do such a severe dealing, such a severe dealing in my life, so that You can have Your way in everything. Now, a few weeks ago, we had been discussing the subtlety of how the enemy gets a place in our prayer life.

And it seems appropriate tonight to touch on that for a short time. Because this entrance that the enemy has in our prayer life is directly related to our immaturities, to our tendencies to yet be governed by our own desires, our own wants. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, we read that the Apostle Paul, having loved the Corinthians deeply, considering them to be his spiritual children, had some very, very firm, very frank, very curt words for them.

And it was essential for them to understand these things, and that's why Paul had to write them, because it was only in apprehending these things, and understanding these things, and seeing things the way they really were, that there was any hope for them to advance spiritually. Now, Paul mentioned in chapter 3 of 1 Corinthians, beginning in verse 1, And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. That word carnal means fleshly.

Even as unto babes. That word babe means an infant. So they were fleshly, and therefore they were infants.

So being fleshly is something that Paul called being an infant in Christ. I have fed you with milk, verse 2, and not with meat. For hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither were you now able.

For you are yet carnal. For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men? Verse number 4 is a very, very eye-opening verse. For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Paulus, are you not carnal? Notice in verse 4, one says, I am of Paul, and another says, I am of Paulus.

The very problem of these Corinthians was that eye. There was too much of the eye in their life. Too much of the eye, and all the desires, the self-related desires that come with eye.

So, just briefly, one could conclude from chapter 3 here, that the Lord is trying to teach us that to be a spiritual infant is one who is governed by carnality, or one who is governed by their fleshly nature. Their fleshly carnal nature. And in such a condition, Paul said that they were not able to be fed with meat, but could only drink milk.

Now, that's the same condition that plagued the Christians that were being addressed in the book of Hebrews. They were babes. They were infants.

They should have been. They should have been able to teach, which meant they should have been spiritually mature, or spiritual, but instead they were only babes. Now, here Paul said that these believers were babes, and they were carnal.

So, to be governed by our fleshly nature is to be carnal, is to be an infant. And this is directly related to the foothold that the enemy has in our prayer life. The foothold that the enemy has in our prayer life, that so many times renders our prayers very weak spiritually, is that carnal fleshly tendency that we have when we go into prayer with the Lord.

And that is expressed in our praying prayers, when in reality we're praying things to the Lord that we want to do. That we would desire. So, we're bringing into our prayer life our own desires, and bringing them to the Lord, and in a way talking a lot of prayers, and saying a lot of prayers, but really, in fact, we're determined inwardly to do what we want to do anyway.

And that's how the enemy gets a foothold in our prayer. Now, oftentimes, as we mentioned before, this is seen by a particular pattern that is evidenced in our prayer life. And that pattern is this, that so often we go to the Lord, and in going to the Lord regarding His will for our life, we oftentimes find ourselves mentioning I, I, I, so many times.

We say, Lord, I am willing to do this. I am willing to do that. Lord, what is it that you want me to do? Lord, what is it that you want me to say? Where do you want me to go? And oftentimes, such a condition is very telling.

It's an indication of something that's deeper. The scripture says that, out of the heart, the mouth speaks. And oftentimes, our words indicate a state in our heart.

And the very fact that we are so inclined to go to the Lord, and the word I is so much in our mind, and so much in our words as we're praying to the Lord, indicates that our hearts are preoccupied with ourself and our own desires, even though we're in the presence of God, praying to God. And consequently, we pray prayers, Lord, what is it you want me to do? Lord, I'm willing to do this, or I'm willing to do that. And in reality, what we're doing is we're expressing to the Lord things that we really want to do.

I hope I'm making it understandable. It's, it's, it's a, it's a, it's a subtle, subtle condition that I believe the Lord wants to really deliver us from. Now, if you'll turn your Bibles to the book of John, I just want to show you something about the Lord Jesus Christ.

John chapter 19, or John chapter 5, verse number 19. Jesus said, Then, then, then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself. Now notice this, but what he seeth the Father do for whatsoever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Now, I want you to see the difference between the Lord Jesus Christ and the way that he prayed and the way that he quote unquote was directed, because we're all so desirous to be directed of God. We all want the Lord to, to show us his will for our life. But notice here the Bible says that Jesus of himself did nothing, but whatever he seeth the Father do.

So, by this scripture, we can see something of the prayers of Jesus, something of the prayer life of Jesus. That when he came to the Father, it wasn't so much Jesus telling the Father what he was willing to do, or what he wasn't willing to do, and what he could do. Father, I, I'm willing to do this.

I'm willing to do that. Would you want me to do this? Do you want me to do that? He wasn't going to the Father in that posture. But he was going to the Father with all of his attention focused on his Father, seeking to discern the movement of his Father.

And in that direction, he simply was prepared to move. He didn't come with a preconceived I, I, I, I. He came quietly before the Lord. His soul was still before the Lord.

And he simply saw the Father. He simply discerned the movement of the Father. Father, which way are you moving today? Father, which way are you moving? Where are you going? See, it's so important that we make this transition by God's grace.

You don't see Jesus saying, God, I'm willing to do this today if you want me to. I'm willing to do that, Lord, if you want me to. He's simply coming and saying, Father, what is your movement? The I is not even coming into picture.

It's just the Son looking to the Father, seeking the Father's movements and then following those movements. That indicates a deep spiritual principle working within the Son. And that also indicates something that the Lord wants to work deeply within us.

He wants to deliver us from the many, many wants and desires even regarding his work and regarding his will for our life. We have so many things that we want to do. And basically we come to God and are looking for God to place his blessing upon what we want to do.

And that's the snare of a prayer life that is filled with predominantly, I will this, I will that. Lord, do you want me to do this? Do you want me to do that? And you get so caught up in that, so caught up in that mentality, you don't realize that really what's happening is your own desires are very much alive. Your own desires are very much being inflamed and you're just simply bringing them to God, hoping that God's going to place his blessing upon what you want to do.

But we see in the Son a completely different picture. We see the Son who says the things I speak unto you, the Father has given me. The things I teach you, the Father has taught me.

The Son can do nothing of himself, but whatsoever he seeth, the Father do. We see something where the I and the desires of Christ are out of the picture, out of the picture. And he comes to Father seeking to know the Father's heart, the Father's will, the Father's movements, the Father's pleasure, the Father's plan for the day.

And oftentimes when we begin to pray this way, we might not have a certainty about Father's will. He might not clearly show us specifically what his movement is in a particular area, but one thing we know, that we will go about our day walking very softly. We will not begin to demand, we will not begin to say, well, I'm going to do this, and I'm going to do that, and I've determined that this is the way that I'm going to go.

We walk very softly so that at any time the Holy Spirit can make us to know Father's moving in this direction, not this direction, and we simply are able to turn about with the movement of the Spirit of God in our conscience, in our spirit, and we're able to follow Him then and go along the path that He's moving in. This is what happens when the Lord works the cross in our prayer life. We find that the very qualities that we're working in the blessed Son of God begin to work in us.

And beloved, a predominant feature of this quality is my desires, my will, my preferences don't come to God in prayer. I learn by the power of God, I place them at the cross. I place them at the altar.

I come to Father not preoccupied with my desires, hoping He will bless them, but I come to Father not considering my own desires, not communicating my own desires, but I come to Father seeking to know what His heart is, what His thoughts are, what His mind is, what His movements are, and as I discern them, I willfully, lovingly, and joyfully submit to them and move by the power of the Spirit in that direction. What emancipation comes? What liberty comes when God can work this in our prayer life? The I-motivated prayer life must be crucified and in its place must come a prayer life where we are predominantly looking to know what the Lord's thought is. Do you know how dangerous it is to go to prayer with an agenda? You go to prayer with an agenda.

You go to prayer already wanting something and looking for a way to convince yourself that God is giving you permission to do what you want. And how the Lord would rather us learn to go to prayer not with an

agenda, but to go to prayer seeking only to know what Father wants. Now, the question I want to ask is what's behind the I-me-motivated prayer? What's behind it? What is really going on when our prayers are, generally speaking, filled with the I- me- my- mindset when we go to God with these words coming from our lips so often? Well, I'd like to, if I may, show you in the scriptures what's behind these things.

First John, chapter 2. First John, chapter 2. Now, remember when we initially began this little talk tonight, we were speaking about the need for what? The need for the Lord to get a people who become willing and desirous, passionately longing to come into spiritual maturity. Beloved, this is one of the dealings of the Lord that will occur when spiritual maturity and winning Christ becomes the passionate longing of our heart. This is the way to spiritual maturity.

The Holy Spirit will have to deal with this prayer life that is essentially earthly, carnal, fleshly, and I-me-motivated and bring it through the cross and out the other side will come a prayer life that's really effective for God, that really brings glory to God. All right. So what's behind the I-me-my motivated prayer life? First John, chapter 2, beginning in verse number 15 through 17.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passes away and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Beloved, that which is behind the I-me-my motivated prayer is nothing more, nothing less than the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

The lust of the flesh are those desires that are in the flesh. The lust of the eyes are those things that we see and then desire. And the pride of life consists of the word pride means to be puffed up and to brag.

So the pride of life is the tendency we have to glory and be proud of something that we have in this life, the pride of life. To take security in something that we have, to take confidence in something that we have, to brag in something that we have, to glory in something that we have. When the I-me-my principle is behind our prayer life, what's behind that is one or all of these three things.

And when that is present, there is great limitation and spiritual weakness in our praying. Now, mind you, beloved, the Lord is very sympathetic. He's very loving.

He's very compassionate. He understands that babes are babes. He understands that infants are infants.

He understands that immature Christians are immature Christians. And the Lord doesn't really expect anything differently. But the point of issue tonight is this, is the Holy Spirit speaking to me saying, Beloved, it's time to begin to set your mind and your heart and your affections and your desires on spiritual maturity.

It's time to go to the Lord and make a transaction with Him. Lord, I'm ready. I'm longing.

I'm desiring more than anything for you to do a deeper work in me so that I can get on the way to spiritual immaturity. And Lord, I realize that in going down this path, you're going to put the axe to the root of this I, me, my self-centered prayer life. And you're going to put your finger on these things in my life that are nothing more than the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

And you're going to sever me from being controlled by them. You're going to sever me from bringing these desires in prayer to you. And you're going to bring me into a selfless prayer life where my prayers focus around you and what you desire and what you're worthy of and spending my time praying that your will, your kingdom, your righteousness would be fulfilled.

Now, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the power of these things working in us all spring out of a condition which also is an indication of spiritual immaturity. Guess what that condition is? I'll tell you. This condition is the lack of contentment.

Spiritual infancy, spiritual immaturity is characterized by a constant lack of contentment. So, when the Lord begins, listen closely, beloved, when the sovereign Holy Spirit begins to shine brightly into your heart and enabling you to see the reality of these things that we're sharing tonight, and you begin to see the Lord in a moment's time will bring before you your prayer life. And you'll see how so many times your prayer life is revolving around the I and the me and the my desires.

You're going to find that as the Holy Spirit shows you that, He's going to show you that these I, me, and my desires are directly rooted and connected to the desires of the flesh, the desires of the I, and the pride of life. And then you're going to see by the Holy Spirit revelation that that in itself has power over you because there has not been wrought in you a grace empowered and spirit wrought contentment. The lack of contentment with such things as you have is the foothold through which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are fanned into an uncontrollable flame that leads your soul down a road that is characterized by lusts and that drown men into perdition, the scripture says.

One example of a lack of contentment is found in First Timothy. This is just one example, beloved. First Timothy, chapter 6, talking about men who do not consent to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.

This person is proud, verse 4, chapter 6, First Timothy, knowing nothing but doubting about questions and strides of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness from such withdraw thyself. In First Timothy, chapter 6, verse 6, the Holy Spirit is saying that gain, great gain, is seen by possessing an ever-increasing measure godliness and living in the state of contentment with such things as we have. Now, you've got to admit, beloved, that such a mindset is alien from most people, but that is what the Lord is after.

Listen to verse number 7. We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. I don't ever recall seeing a U-Haul behind a hearse. We brought nothing into the world and it is certain we carry nothing out.

And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. You see here the need for contentment? But they that will be rich, that is, they that are desiring to be rich, fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. So this contentment, listen, beloved, contentment is directly connected with spiritual maturity and the absence of contentment is directly connected to spiritual immaturity which is characterized by being governed by the fleshly nature, by the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes and the pride of life and carrying these desires over into our prayer life.

So the Holy Spirit would want to do a real deep, real thorough and real complete work in our life. The absence of contentment breeds greed and covetousness. Why does the spirit of greed and covetousness have such a stronghold in the church today? Because there is a gross lack of contentment among God's people.

The lack of contentment breeds covetousness and greed. How much prayer inspired by these lusts would completely cease if believers awoke to the need of a deep work of grace in us, making us fully content with the things we have and not seeing those things as necessary to pray about any longer? How much prayer would cease? Well, remember the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 6, verse 19. Very powerful words, very piercing words that would do us well to meditate on and ask the Holy Spirit to shine light.

Remember, beloved, earlier we said that the crisis must come where we no longer go to the Word of God and reason it away. Do you know how you can reason the Word of God away? You can reason it away. You can talk the power of the Word of God right out of your life by not believing what it says wholeheartedly.

Now notice what it says as we read it. May the Lord cause these scriptures to become life to us and help us see how the working of these scriptures in our life by the power of the Holy Spirit can free us from discontentment, can free us from greed and covetousness, and can really, really set us on the path to spiritual maturity. Verse 19, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye.

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. If your eye is single, that word single means the absence of duplicity, no folds. So if your eye, that is the thing you're focusing on, be single, your whole body will be full of light.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? All of these scriptures go together. No man can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

He cannot serve God and mammon. And then Jesus goes on, therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life. Jesus says take no thought in verses 25 through 34 five times.

Take no thought, take no thought, take no thought, take no thought, take no thought. He's referring to the basic necessities of life. He's not referring to extravagant excesses.

Indeed, we're not to take thought for them, but he's referring to the basic necessities of life. So Jesus is getting to a root here that goes so deeply that we can even have desires for lawful things, things that we need such as food and raiment and shelter. We can even have a desire for them that hinders our prayer life.

And Jesus is telling us take no thought five times. And then we get all the way down to verse number 32 for after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Your heavenly father knows that you have need of all these things, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Do you see the transition that Jesus is trying to make here? He's trying to get us from going to God and praying about things that relate to us. Even if they're lawful things. Not to mention how terrible it is when we are going to God praying about things that we ought not even to be praying about.

Things that are excessive. Things that are indicative of real lusts and real indications of greed and covetousness. But you know, most believers feel justified in praying about those things that they need.

But Jesus here five times says don't even take thought for those things that you need. See, he's trying to get a people to make this transition from infancy to adulthood where they realize father knows what I have need of. I'm going to seek first the kingdom of God.

See, Jesus wants a people to make the transition from thinking about themselves and what they need to thinking about God and what he longs for and what he desires. But seek first the kingdom of God in his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Oh, what power.

What power if the Lord can get this in our life. Just that we might be able to have opportunity by the Holy Spirit to truly be confronted by the by the terribleness of this lack of contentment. I want to just give you some information that I believe the Holy Spirit can use.

First of all, I want to give you the definition of what covetousness means. The word covetousness actually means the desire for having more or for what one does not have. The desire for having more or for what one does not have.

Now, here's a perfect example of how the word of God has been made of no effect in a lot of Christians lives. How many Christians do you know that really have a deep conviction that it is wrong for them to desire to have more or to want something they don't have? How many Christians do you know really have a deep conviction that the presence of that in their heart would be wrong? Very few. But according to the Bible, such a condition is covetousness.

And you know what the Bible says about covetousness? Ephesians chapter 5 verse number 3. Now see, beloved, this is an example of what happens when the Holy Spirit gets us to where we accept the finality of His authority in our life. The finality of what God says. If you govern your life by what people say, by what the church is saying, by what the neighbor thinks, by what your Christian friend thinks, and you let their principles govern your life, you're going to miss the prize.

You're going to miss what God's after. I have never... God, help me if I'm exaggerating. I don't think I am.

If I am, God, forgive me. I've never met a Christian that I really know that has sat down personally. This doesn't mean that they're not there, but usually Christians talk about things that really mean something to them.

I've never met a Christian that has sat down and looked at me right in my eyes and said, you know what, Phil? The Holy Spirit has showed me that my desire for having more or what I don't have is sinful in His eyes. I don't think I've ever experienced a Christian doing that. Now, I've had Christians come down and say the Lord showed me that I have a terrible attitude and He wants me to repent or I'm engaging in this activity and I know it's wrong or you know, something more obvious.

But to come right down and say, brother Phil, the Lord has shown me that I have a desire to have what I don't have. And it's covetousness and it's wrong. Now, why isn't that happening? I think predominantly, for

the most part, it's not happening because the Holy Spirit is no longer being given in the church the place of absolute Lord, absolute sovereign, the final authority.

And it's only the Holy Spirit that can make this word living to us. I believe that's why it's not happening. We have disregarded the word of God and we have made it of no effect through our own traditions.

We've made it of no effect. Now, look what it says in Ephesians chapter 5 verse number 3. Beginning in verse 1. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children. I tell you, we can start right there and go on for an hour, beloved.

Be followers of God. You know what that means? Follow God. That is, make it your goal to act like God would act.

Make it your goal to be like God would be. You say, well, who would know that? Well, that's what Jesus did. Jesus showed us what God would do if he had a place 100% in a man.

Jesus showed us what God is like. And now we're to follow God as he was exemplified in his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now watch this.

Walk in love as Christ also has loved us and has given himself for us an offering, a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. Now, but fornication and all uncleanness or what? Covetousness. Now, you know what most Christians do when they read that? Yeah, covetousness.

Yeah. But how many Christians get on their knees and begin to pray, oh, Holy Spirit of God, I beg you to show me the areas of covetousness in my life. Now, you might say, well, how do I know that I'm guilty of covetousness? Well, what does it mean? Covetousness.

The desire for having more or for what one does not have. Yeah. Now, if language means anything, that's a good start to pray.

Lord, is there any covetousness in my life? Now, the word of God says fornication, uncleanness or covetousness. So covetousness is right along in the same list as fornication or uncleanness. Let it not be once named among you as becometh saints.

Now, do we really, really have a measure of the Holy Spirit working in us in so much that we can read these words and we can sense a need to pray and go to our head, go to the final authority and let him be the one, not me, not your neighbor, but let him be the one to to finalize this issue in your life. Let him show you, is there covetousness in your life? See, this is one example of how the word of God becomes quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword when the Holy Spirit gets a place in our life. Greediness.

Basically, the word greedy or greed and covetous or covetousness are used interchangeably in the New Testament. The word greed comes from two words, comes from two words. The first word is pleon in the Greek language and that means more.

The second part of the word is echo, e-c-h-o, and that means to have. So, greedy is what? You want to have more than what is what, nifo. The root from which all the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life grows is greediness and covetousness, which springs out of a lack of contentment.

How many times, beloved, do we pray, oh, I want to be like you, Lord Jesus. Okay. This little talk tonight is a very super down-to-earth practical example of the implications that will come to us by the Holy Spirit if we really mean what we're saying.

It's so easy to pray that prayer in heavenly platitudes. Oh, I want to be like you, Lord Jesus. Oh, make me like you.

It's so easy to pray that prayer and be untouched in our practical life. And when we do such a thing, the Lord is very sad. But when we pray that kind of prayer and the end resolved are these kind of dealings in our life where we're really broken over these issues and we really have strong dealings with God in these areas and we get devastated and we can't sleep at night until these things are settled, then we know that God has heard our prayers and that he's putting us on the road of spiritual maturity.

This is what the cross means, practically speaking. This is the cross. The cross brings to an end that which is in us that's not of Christ.

And let me tell you something, beloved. A life governed by greed and covetousness is not Christ-like. And we can't continue in such a lifestyle if we intend to be like Jesus Christ.

Now, we're going to close. All right. Let's all turn to Hebrews chapter 13.

This is a beautiful place to close. This will sum up the spirit of this message tonight in a beautiful way. Hebrews chapter 13, verses 5 and 6. I will read verses 5 and 6 and then I have chosen three key words in verse 5 that I want to talk about for a very short time that will very, very clearly sum up the whole matter of what the Holy Spirit is wanting us to see tonight.

Beginning in chapter 13, verse 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness. There's that word again. And be content.

There's that word again. Be content with such things as you have. For he hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Might I say before we go into verse 5 that being able to say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear is directly related to verse number 5. Is it possible that there is very little ability for Christians to say boldly the Lord is my helper? I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Is it possible that we are not able to say that boldly with a confident heart because verse number 5 and the truth of verse number 5 has not been worked in us? It is possible. It's probable.

You see, beloved? Verse number 5. Let your conversation. The word conversation is translated in other translations such as let your way of life. That word conversation does not entail simply the words that you speak.

It's a bit misleading, the King James Version. And other translations are good, your way of life. But the literal meaning of the Greek word conversation means the style or mode of a thing.

The style or mode of a thing. The totality of one's life, character, deeds, words, and actions. The root word for this particular word conversation has a meaning of revolution.

Now, we know what a revolution is. Not a revolution in the fact of a war, but a revolution meaning a complete circle. So, that entails the complete, all comprehensive circle of your whole life, which includes your life, your character, your deeds, and your words, and your actions.

That is what this word conversation is entailing. So, now that the Holy Spirit has got our attention in what He is wanting to include, in this commandment, we read, let that be without covetousness. Now, we know what covetousness is.

We already defined it. To want more or to have what we don't have. Be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have.

Now, this word contentment is a very interesting word. Now, look what we're involving here. The revolution of our life, that is the totality of our life, is to be without covetousness.

This is made possible through contentment. The word content comes from the idea of raising up a barrier toward something off. To raise up a barrier toward something off.

So, in musing and thinking about this definition, here's the translation that I came up with. This is my translation, based on the root meanings of what I found. To be satisfied, to be content, to be sufficient, and to keep things that way by a raised barrier to prevent the entrance of greed, covetousness, or inordinate lust.

So, the idea of possessing contentment has with it a raised barrier toward off. Toward off what? Anything that contradicts the essential meaning of contentment, which is to be satisfied. To be enough, to be sufficient, and to keep things that way by a raised barrier.

Now, how many Christians do you know practice contentment in that way? That is, they maintain, by the grace of God, a posture of contentment by an invisible, to the natural eyes, barrier that's raised up in their life, warding off any tendency toward covetousness, or greed, or striving for that which the Holy Spirit is not permitting them to strive for. Wow. Now, these are the things that the Holy Spirit wants to do.

Lastly, firstly we saw that our conversation entails everything about our life. It is to be free of covetousness, wanting more, or that which we do not have, we are to have contentment, which is to be satisfied, to have enough, and to maintain that position through a raised barrier toward off. And that raised barrier is the power of the Holy Spirit guarding our hearts.

And now, lastly, be content with such things as ye have. Now, what does that word mean, such things as ye have? Those things which are near at hand, available at this time. Be content with such things as ye have, or rather, be satisfied with those things which are near at hand.

My definition, after looking through this, such things as ye have is being, those things which are near at hand, available at this time. The now, and not what may be in reach tomorrow. Being content with such things as you have is coming to grips with it is sufficient, with what I have now, and I will not begin to look toward and let my heart reach after what may be in reach tomorrow.

Now, beloved, these are some powerful words from the Holy Spirit's heart that we have looked at tonight. And I believe that the Lord would want us to see these things and be deeply gripped by our own spiritual inability to produce them. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who see they are spiritually bankrupt. But I don't believe the Holy Spirit wants us to stay there and just wallow in the fact that, oh my God, this is so impossible, so out of reach for me. I believe the Holy Spirit wants us to make the next transition that cannot come until we make the first.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, or theirs is the kingdom of heavens. Once you see that you are utterly spiritually impotent, the kingdom of heaven is yours. That is the spiritual realm in which Christ is all and all.

And you can understand that these things can be wrought in us as we become willing and ask God to do it by the power of His Holy Spirit. Now, this is one practical application. Our prayer life and the implications of the I-I-I that will occur in our life, just one of many areas of practical application that will come when we settle it with the Lord and say, Lord, is it time that I should be going on to the road of spiritual maturity? May the Holy Spirit stir our hearts tonight as we bow our hearts and let's pray together.

And then we'll spend time together praying one for another. But let's pray this prayer in closing. Father, we are so aware tonight that these words must be backed up.

These words, Lord, that are in your word must be backed up by the quickening, energizing power of the Holy Spirit. And Lord, for this we pray that this energizing power of the Spirit would make these words real and write them on the depths of our hearts. Awaken something in us, Lord.

Stir something in us, Lord. Quicken something in us, Lord, through this thy word. And help us, Lord, to cry out and say, Lord, have your way.

Do these things in my life, Lord, whatever it takes, Lord, I'll be willing to do. Whatever inconvenience, whatever dealing, Lord, I want to come as servant, acknowledging your Lordship, Lord, in my life. I want you to have these things take place in my life.

I commit the entirety of my life into your hands. And the working of these things, I commit to you. And I bow before you and say, Lord, do it for thine own sake and for thine own glory.

And we give thee praise, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen.

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