

*Recap of 8/23/26 message by Steve Plank
("Sweet Contentment") 1 Timothy 6:1-8*

Instead of denouncing slavery, Paul says that believing slaves should honor their masters, all the more if the master is also a Christian. Instead of demanding the equality granted them in Christ (Gal 3:28), Christian slaves are to work hard for Christian masters. Many people struggle with the Bible's lack of condemnation for the institution of slavery. A careful study of scriptures regulating slavery (Ex 21, Lv 25, Dt 15, Ep 6, Col 3-4, Tit 2, 1 Pt 2) reveals that although slavery was allowed, treating God's image bearers as less than human, is always sin. As in all things that go wrong in this world, the problem is not in the Biblically allowed institution of slavery, the problem is in man's heart. As Christ followers, we are called to love God and love our neighbor; i.e. treat others with dignity and respect, regardless of how they treat us and regardless of our social position in relation to them.

Paul informs us that anyone who does not agree with Biblical doctrine is a false teacher. He then lists several characteristics and results of false teaching. This list includes pride, divisiveness (controversy, strife, disputes), lack of understanding, abusive language, evil suspicions, depraved minds, lack of truth, and taking advantage of others for material gain. If we find ourselves displaying any of these qualities, we are the victims of false teaching. Pray for God's wisdom and run back to His truth (the Bible).

Paul then goes on to tell us that godliness, displaying the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control), does bring gain when accompanied by contentment. To be content materially, we must first be content spiritually. If Christ is not sufficient (every physical, emotional, and spiritual need fulfilled in Him) for us, we will never be satisfied materially regardless of how much wealth we obtain. Contentment doesn't preclude us from gaining more. When content, we are satisfied with our current material situation, be it little or much. Focus on what we do have instead of longing for what someone else has. Be grateful. Though it seems counterintuitive, Paul tells us this contentment is the means of gaining more.