

- Are we content with what God provides, or are we always seeking more material things? Particular dangerous overlap of those who seek through ministry to profit - how does that apply, without merely casting stones, in our day? Would it be helpful to deal with 6:17-19 in this section too?

Exposition

Negatively

(3) If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, (4) he is conceited and understands nothing.

- Three points:
 - its serious!
 - conceited - self, not Christ, centred; thinks too highly of himself
 - reality is he doesn't understand the truth... his teaching false doctrines actually says something negative about himself...
- This isn't principally to condemn, but to warn

He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions (5) and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

- This unhealthy interest has unhealthy consequences:
 - **envy** - I want to know more than you, I want to have more than you (money, followers, influence, status)
 - **strife** - conflict, battle
 - **malicious talk** - talking to or about others in a way that is not loving, that is rooted in malice, in wanting, ultimately, something bad to happen to them
 - **evil suspicions** - once motives are in question, then we become suspicious, trust rots....
 - **constant friction** -
- Remember, these are **some of the key potential consequences of false teaching**:
 - if you see these, we might want to check whether there is false doctrine is around somewhere - though the root of these evils might actually be in something else
- Note that once an allegiance, ultimately to God, expressed in trust in his truth, breaks down, then religious life, **godliness**, can degenerate into merely something for personal gain, not service of a Saviour:
 - often financial...
 - but can be other ways of measuring status or success

Positively

(6) But godliness with contentment is great gain.

- Living a godly life, content with what God has given is, is good:
 - previous verse shouldn't make us give up on seeking to live godly lives because some do it for financial gain...!
 - godliness is of value - steady Christian living doesn't win our salvation, but it does align our lives with God's kingdom, with his purposes, and puts us in places where he can use us, where our lives will positively bear witness to him
- Are you content?
 - practise thankfulness!

(7) For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

- Statement of the obvious - but more, a reminder of what we choose to consider valuable
 - are things valuable to us...?
 - are people valuable to us, relationships...?
 - are character traits valuable to us, integrity, reliability, generosity, hospitality,

compassion...?

(8) But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

- Declaration of intent!
 - enough is enough...
 - knowing when to stop...
 - knowing when to give away...

(9) People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

- The pull of wealth:
 - (leisure, security, power/influence)
 - which are truly found only in God...
 - wealth pulls us to do things, or seek things, that are dangerous for our spiritual lives
 - temptation to work-aholism
 - temptation to take the wrong job
 - temptation to steal or deceive or be less than honest in tax or benefit arrangements

(10) 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.

- Summary: loving money (implied: more than the Lord) is a root of all kinds of evil
 - comes with a warning that many have been tripped up by this danger!
- *Note slight repetition of theme in 17-19, but we'll touch on that again next week...*

Conclusion

- Guard ourselves:
 - particularly easy to self-deceive round issues of sin in our lives, and this is no exception!
 - and there is a particular danger for God's people if the preacher, teacher or leader becomes deceived into loving money more than the Lord...