

# Laying hold on Eternal Life: By Contentment

I watched the World Population Clock again this week. It is a very moving sight to see each second as the numbers changed. The math of this UN site is simple -- the number go up by five births and down by two deaths for a net gain of three new immortal souls on this Planet Earth *per second!*

Then the details listed and counted around that clock are overwhelming:

I was watching the World Population Clock again this week. If you want to get a feel for the immensity of the world -- just watch it and see that 3 new souls are arriving and surviving every seconds 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

We have about 6.289 billion souls alive at this moment

Now as we sit here alive and relatively safe in Tulsa, relatively prosperous in the American heartland, we need to look again at our world. According to the International Programs Center, U.S. Bureau of the Census, the total population of the World, projected to Thursday 2/15/01 at 16:41:59 GMT (2/15/01 at 11:41:59 AM EST) is **6,128,760,974**. That was by the way up 70 million living souls from last year this time!

But if we were to reduce that unimaginable number of 6 with nine zeros after it to just this room, and we distilled all the inhabitants of earth down to a representative group of 100 chairs in this room here is how the world looks this morning. Our world shrunk down to a community of 100 persons we would have a town which:

- 1/7<sup>th</sup> or about 13 of us live high on a hill called the developed world – that would be the balcony;
- 6/7<sup>th</sup>s or about 87 of them live on the rocky bottomland called the rest of the world.
- Those of us in the balcony are the world's richest. We have houses, which provide us with an average of more than 2 rooms per person; while those in the rest of the world have housing that averages 5 people per room.
- The people in the rest of the world outside the 815 million in the developed nations (code for wealthy countries) live on much less than we do. 1 Billion or 1/6<sup>th</sup> are in complete poverty existing on less than US \$1 per day. 3 more billion are better off, they live on US \$2 each day. 3/4<sup>th</sup>s of these poor people will not ever live to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

Wealth	GDP	Population	Pop totals	
33%	\$ 10.2 Trillion	4%	281,404,500	USA
21%	\$ 6.6 Trillion	5%	329,000,000	Europe

17%	\$ 5.2 Trillion	3%	205,000,000	NIE (Jap, Kor, Taiwan, Korea)
71%		13%		
29%	\$ 31.2 Trillion	87%	6,273,358,993	World

We, the fortunate 13 on the hill hold 80 percent of the wealth of the whole town,

- Up in our balcony we own over half of all the homes in town
- Our homes average over two rooms per person,
- We own 85 percent of all the automobiles,
- We own 80 percent of all the TV sets,
- We own 93 percent of all the telephones,
- And we make an average income of over \$ 27,000 per person per year.

The not-so-fortunate 87 people on the bottom

- They get by on 1/40<sup>th</sup> of our incomes or roughly \$700 per person per year,
- But many of them on less than \$75.
- They average five persons to a room, and most will never live to see their 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

**How do we the fortunate group of hill-dwellers use our incredible wealth? Well, as a group we spend less than 1% of our income to aid the lower land. In the United States, for example, of every \$1 we earned (averages of 1997-2002):**

20%	is spent on taxes
26%	is spent on our homes
18%	goes for food
17%	is for health care
12%	we spend on transportation
08%	is spent on recreation and amusement
07%	buys clothes
02%	is given for religious and charitable uses (and only a small part of that goes outside the U.S).

Veteran Missionary to India and noted author Dr. Paul Brandt once asked, "I wonder how the villagers on the crowded plain (a third of whose people are suffering from malnutrition) feel about us folks up there on the hill?"<sup>1</sup>

Now listen to Christ's words from the Bible in I John 3.12-19

What was Christ's most frequent emotion? Compassion<sup>2</sup>, right. He was moved with compassion. When we aren't there is usually one cause – we are rich and satisfied and not sacrificing.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup> Eleven times noted in the Gospels by Matthew 9.36; 14.14; 15.32; 18.27; 18.33; 20.34; and Mark 1.41; 5.19; 6.34; 8.2; (9.22); and Luke 7.13; (10.33; 15.20).

Laying Hold on Eternal Life means we are alive and thinking and motivated by the fact that we are already immortal. We are thinking Eternally when we start seeing what our moments look like when they are observed from God's Throne. All of a sudden we see that our life span and our resources were all given us by Another who owns us and wants a return on His investment.

Parenting is life long. Praying keeps us on the front lines of our children's lives – all through our lives. Successful parenting of a godly family only has two requirements: get started in prayer and never quit that praying.

Before we are parents ***we are praying***, while we are up to our ears in those child filled years ***we are praying***, and after they launch out into their own lives ***we are praying***.

My philosophy of great parenting is that you raise a godly family – one prayer at a time.

Prayer is the key to raising, nurturing, and launching children that please the Lord. This morning is a practical, how to lesson in learning how to pray for our children.

1. **Living like Christ's Child** – means to pray for REALITY IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE: is seeing them genuinely saved, loving God's Word, living in victory, thinking of heaven, finding sin repulsive, staying tender toward God.
2. **Looking Christ like** – means to pray for INTEGRITY IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE: is seeing them maintaining a clear conscience, learning to stand alone, seeking to stay pure, cultivating a servant's heart, never becoming bitter in trials.
3. **Loving One Another** -- means to pray for STABILTY IN THEIR RELATIONAL LIFE: which is seeing them cultivating a love for their brothers and sisters, learning to trust God with hard situations and not to rebel, each loving the way God made them as men and women, waiting to meet God's chosen life partner for them.
4. **Laying Hold on Eternal Life** – means to pray for VITALITY IN THEIR ETERNAL LIFE.
  1. **THIS MEANS SEEING THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF CONTENTMENT.**

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for ***I have learned***, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. (KJV) CONTENTMENT is a habit of life that helps us avoid things that deeply offend and grieve our Heavenly Father.

The desire for things more than God

The desire for pleasure more than godliness

The desire for satisfaction through things more than to be satisfied by God.

The desire for better things and other things that others have more than thanking God for what we have.

The desire for the rewards of the physical world more than a desire for eternal rewards.

2. **THIS MEANS SEEING THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF CONSECRATION.** 1  
 Timothy 6:9-12 But *those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare*, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, *flee these things and pursue* righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, *lay hold on eternal life*, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NKJV)
3. **VITALITY IN THEIR ETERNAL LIFE MEANS SEEING THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF PERSONALLY KNOWING, SERVING, LOVING AND OBEYING THE LORD.**
  - 1 Chronicles 28:9 " As for you, my son Solomon, *know the God of your father*, and *serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind*; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. *If you seek Him, He will be found by you*; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (NKJV)
  - 1 Chronicles 29:19 "And *give my son Solomon a loyal heart* to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision." (NKJV)
  - Acts 13.3b
  - 3 John 4 *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth*. (KJV)

The New Testament mentions contentment five times. Two different Greek words are used. Let's look at them and learn a lesson on being content.

1. Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content [#714 satisfied] with your wages. (KJV)
2. Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content [#842 independent of external circumstances]. (KJV) **(Being willing to accept where God has placed me in life and willing to devote my energies to the advancement of His kingdom and not my own.)**
1. 1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment [#714 satisfaction] is great gain. (KJV) **(“Contentment lies not in what is yours, but in whose you are.”)**<sup>3</sup>
4. 1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content [#842 independent of external circumstances] . (KJV) (Not wanting too be like, have or do what others are doing!)
2. Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (NIV) **(“It means to be free from inner turmoil, satisfied with one’s**

<sup>3</sup> Swenson, p.198.

***material and financial state, and in possession of a sense of peace regardless of one's circumstances or feelings.”***<sup>4</sup>

How do we learn and teach contentment to our families? The best way to start is to do a study of the Seven Keys To Promote and Protect Contentment from I Timothy 6. Here they are, why don't you jot them into your Bibles?

1. **Always remember things are only temporary.** 1 Timothy 6: 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
2. **Only seek necessities, wait for the rest.** 1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.
3. **Avoid a consuming desire for prosperity.** 1 Timothy 6: 9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
4. **Flee materialism.** 1 Timothy 6: 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.
1. **Cling to eternal life.** 1 Timothy 6: 12, 15, 19 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
6. **Pin your hopes on God.** 1 Timothy 6: 17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. **(I hope we have enough to...I hope that this investment will...I hope this job will last...)**
7. **Give until it hurts.** 1 Timothy 6: 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,

Finally, What can be the result of living by the Bible's definition of contentment? Let's look at just three:

1. If you are content, you can enjoy the present rather than being anxious about the future. Mt 6: 25
2. If you are content, you can be liberated to truly enjoy the successes of others around you without envy. Ps 37: 7
3. If you are content, you will be able to let the Lord build a true sense of thankfulness about everything. I TH5: 18

CONTENTMENT is a habit of life that helps us avoid things that deeply offend and grieve our Heavenly Father.

- The desire for things more than God

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<sup>4</sup> Swindoll, p.99.

- The desire for pleasure more than godliness
- The desire for satisfaction through things more than to be satisfied by God.
- The desire for better things and other things that others have more than thanking God for what we have.
- The desire for the rewards of the physical world more than a desire for eternal rewards.