



## ENJOY THE GOOD THINGS THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU

9

For the most part, there's nothing wrong with *things* but rather the *place* things occupy in our lives. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these *things* shall be added unto you." Here the Lord does not speak prohibitively of things but rather the *place* things occupy in our lives.

In the preceding verses, the *things* He refers to are food and clothing, the basic necessities of life. There's certainly nothing wrong with having food and clothing. One should enjoy both. But even the basic necessities of life can become sinful if we give them the wrong place.

The text clearly teaches that we're not to seek food and clothing but rather "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"---- that is, seek the control of God over your life and the character of God in your life; or to put it another way, seek the rule of God over your life and the righteousness of God in your life. And Jesus promises that these other things—food and clothing—will be added unto you.

A man who lives only for fine clothes and good food has his priori-

ties wrong. A diamond ring on a lady's finger is a beautiful thing to behold. But put that same diamond ring in her high-heeled shoe and let her walk a few steps, and the thing that brought pleasure on the finger brings pain in the shoe. It's the same diamond ring. The only difference is the place it is occupying.

As long as a person keeps his or her priorities right, there's nothing wrong with enjoying *things*. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a good baseball game, but you wouldn't want to go to a baseball game when you should be in church on Sunday morning or Sunday night. There's nothing wrong with using one's money to buy something that he or she would enjoy as long as it's not the tithe, which belongs to the Lord.

Some Christians seem to think that it is sinful to enjoy anything. Somewhere they evidently got the impression that you have to be miserable and unhappy to be a good Christian. The Devil has sold them a false bill of goods. The happiest people in the world ought to be Christians. Dr. John R. Rice once said, "A long face is a poor sign- board for Jesus."

Look at creation. Have you ever seen anything more beautiful than a sunset or a sunrise on a clear morning? Have you ever seen anything more beautiful than wild flowers in the early spring? What about a bird in flight or a swan upon a lake? These are all things that God made, and He made them beautiful for us to enjoy.

How sad, then, that we should go through life and not enjoy things! You're only going to be here for a few years as you are now. Of course, we're coming back someday to reign with Christ, but it will be different then. So while we're here, let's enjoy the things the Lord has given us.

Use the good china. Don't let it sit in a cabinet and then forty or

fifty years from now pass it on to your children, who will pass it on to your grandchildren, and no one will ever enjoy it. Use the good silver. Why have it if you can't enjoy it? You're better off to sell it and use the money for something else.

Buy yourself a good mattress and box springs. You spend nearly one-third of your life in bed. That's about twenty-four years. Why should you spend it on a broken-down mattress and springs and get up with a backache every morning? If the Lord has provided so that you can have a nice automobile, enjoy it. If you can afford it, buy a nice easy chair in which to sit, relax and enjoy reading or watching your favorite programs on TV.

I would suggest that periodically you go through the house, collect all the things you're never going to use, have a big yard sale or an auction, then take the money and put it into something you can enjoy.

First Timothy 6:17 says, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*" God said that we are to charge them that are rich that they trust not in uncertain riches. In other words, they're not to put their confidence in things, because things are uncertain. They are here today and gone tomorrow.

But the same verse says God gives us "all things to enjoy." The purpose of having things is not to trust in them but to enjoy them. To paraphrase the verse: 'Trust in God and enjoy things.'

Money is neither moral nor immoral; it's amoral. It is our attitude toward money which is moral or immoral. The Bible says in I Timothy 6:10, "The love of money is the root of all evil [all kinds of evil]." I know men who have money, but they don't love money. I also know men who do not have money, but they love

money. They collect money the way a person collects postage stamps. They would go hungry and do without things they need before they would spend a dime.

A man who has enough money to live in a comfortable home but lives in a shack, and his family does without, is not conservative; he's greedy. I'm not suggesting that one be wasteful, but I am suggesting that a person learn to enjoy the things God has given him.

Remember, that's why they were given.