

Contentment

- *Peace and contentment go hand in hand. One builds on the other and just as peace is essential for us to produce a fruitful life, so is contentment.*

Philippians 4:10-13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.

¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

- *In verse 10, Apostle Paul rejoiced that the Philippian church had shown care for him. “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again.” However, the reason Paul rejoiced was not because his needs had been met but that they once again had an opportunity to express their love for him.*

¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

- *Paul then shared a principle which enabled him to live an overcoming life, “for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”*
- *The Greek word for “to be content” that Paul used in this verse is αὐτάρκης (autarkēs) and it means “pertaining to being happy or content with what one has, content with the circumstances in which one exists, sufficient in oneself, strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support, to be content with one’s lot and independent of external circumstances.”*
- *Contentment gives us strength and the inner resources to be happy and satisfied independent of circumstances.*
- *Paul then stated how he received this unshakeable contentment that is independent of circumstances, “for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.” Contentment is not a gift, a personality trait, or a special impartation. Contentment must be developed, cultivated, and learned through our relationship with Christ.*

- *The Greek word for “learned” used in verse 11 is μαθηάνω (manthanō) and it means “to learn from experience, often with the implication of reflection; to learn, to come to realize.” As we meditate and reflect on God’s Word we begin to realize more and more who He is and His perfect character which develops a deep contentment in our hearts.*
- *Paul described in verse 12 the amazing depth of contentment he had developed. “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”*
- *When Paul said in verse 12, “Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry” he employed a completely different Greek word for “learned.” The Greek word is μυέω (myeō) and it means, “to learn the secret of something through personal experience or as the result of initiation— ‘to learn a secret’; to initiate into the mysteries.”*
- *Paul then described the mystery He had discovered that empowered him with unfailing strength to be content no matter what he faced. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” In other words, Jesus is always enough!*
- *We need to learn this mystery that Jesus is enough no matter what we face, whether it is life or death, gain or loss, joy or sorrow.*
- *came to Jesus with a request: “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” (John 14:8). Jesus responded by describing a mystery that Philip needed to discover. “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9). We can know God the Father because Jesus perfectly reveals the Father to us. “Jesus is the image of the invisible God.” (Colossians 1:15). Jesus is enough!*
- *When Philip came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us,” the Greek word for “sufficient” means “content.” In other words, Philip was saying, “show us the Father and we will be content,” but Jesus’ response was “I am enough” and if they would come to know Him they would discover true contentment that would carry them through all the questions and challenges of life.*
- *Many times Christians are discontent because they are seeking Jesus plus something else. Some say, “I would be content if I have a better job, a nicer*

place to live, better health, a miraculous sign ...” However, the reality is that if we do not discover the mystery that Jesus is enough, then no matter how many miracles or blessings we receive from God we will never be content.

Hebrews 13:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

⁶So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

- *The writer of Hebrews tells us to live our life in such a way that we are “free from covetousness” which in Greek literally means being free from the love of money. Money, success, or abundance will never produce contentment and in fact will actually breed discontentment. “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10) and “Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.” (Proverbs 27:20).*
- *The writer of Hebrews continues on to explain why we as believers in Jesus should be content with whatever God has provided for us, “be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Contentment is founded on the reality that God is faithful to us and we as His children are saved solely based on God’s grace through Jesus’ sacrifice at Calvary.*
- *The contentment we receive in knowing He will never leave us nor forsake us blossoms into a boldness to be able to face anything and everything in life. “So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?””*

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- *In 2 Corinthians, Chapter 12, Apostle Paul related a time in his life when he was discontent because he was struggling with “a thorn in the flesh.” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Three times he asked the Lord to remove it. However, when God revealed to Paul the mystery of His grace, “And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” he understood that the source of his contentment was God’s grace.*

- *God revealed to Paul that through weakness His grace is perfected. Paul's response to this wonderful revelation was that not only did he become content in his weakness but he was filled with joy and boasting because he understood through his weakness Christ's power was resting upon him. "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

Isaiah 55:1–2 (NKJV)

¹**“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.**

²**Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.**

- *The world is frantically seeking contentment and finding none. “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?” Paradoxically, God is offering true and lasting contentment freely. “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.” All one must do to find true contentment is turn their hearts and ears to God. “Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.”*

Proverbs 19:23 (NKJV)

²³**The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.**

- *Satisfaction and contentment are really the same concept, just expressed in slightly different ways. The fear of the Lord is knowing that God is real and wonderful. This revelation produces a deep and abiding satisfaction and contentment. God is good!*
- *The mystery of contentment is Jesus Christ and learning to abide in Him. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” (John 15:7).*

1 Timothy 6:3–12 (NKJV)

³**If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,**
⁴**he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,**

⁵useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

- *Verse 3 speaks about the importance of wholesome words and doctrine which reflect the true teachings of Jesus, “even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- *The importance of healthy doctrine is that if we apply it to our lives it will change us— “the doctrine which accords with godliness.” When it says “the doctrine which accords with godliness, it could be rephrased as “doctrine which is in harmony with godliness.” In other words healthy doctrine produces harmony and contentment.*
- *Verses 4-5 describe the condition of a person who is discontent and the bad fruit they produce: “proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.”*
- *Paul summarized the false belief of those who are causing so much discontentment and turmoil, “who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.” Viewing the Gospel as primarily a way for us to get rich and live a comfortable life will lead to discontentment and disappointment, which will result in conflict.*

⁶Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

- *In contrast to those who see the Gospel as a means of gain is understanding that “godliness with contentment is great gain.”*
- *Paul indicated that if God blesses us with the basic necessities we should be fully content, “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”*

⁹But 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.

¹⁰For 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.

- *Paul then warned about the sin of discontentment and greed. He stated how discontentment can destroy the very things God wants to accomplish in our lives. The sin of discontentment and covetousness is not rooted in material*

objects, but a heart that is covetous. “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation” and “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”

- *It is so easy to become deceived and entrapped by the bobbles of this world and give up the crowns and rewards that Christ is offering us for faithful service. Instead, those who are discontent with God’s promises take hold of worthless temporal possessions resulting in eternal loss. “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” (Revelation 3:11).*
- *“for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” The Greek word “greediness” can mean “to eagerly reach out in order to grasp something.” The picture painted here is of someone who stretches out his hand and tightly closes his fist in order to grasp something only to realize he has grasped a thorn bush and its thorns have pierced his hand.*

¹¹But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

¹²Fight 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.

- *Instead of being caught up in covetousness and greed we are to pursue righteousness, all the fruit of the Spirit, with the end result of “laying hold on eternal life.” Instead of finding a hand pierced through with painful thorns we take hold of abundant life which brings true contentment and joy.*

Psalm 23 (NKJV)

A Psalm of David.

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

³He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

- *Psalm 23 could easily subtitled “A Psalm of Contentment.”*

- *Psalm 23, like much of Hebrew poetry, is written in the form of inversions, contrasts, and parallelisms. While poetry in English is written using rhyme and rhythm, Hebrew poetry is written with comparisons and contrasts of thoughts.*
- *Hebraic thought often takes the form of chiasms which simply means thoughts that are either repeated or reversed.*
- *An example of a chiasm is found in Matthew 6:24.*

Matthew 6:24

A No one can serve two masters;
 B for either he will hate the one
 C and love the other,
 C or else he will be loyal to the one and
 B despise the other.
A You cannot serve God and mammon.

- *The first three verses of Psalm 23 parallel and contrast the second three verses.*
- *The first three verses provide the internal view of the peace and contentment with the focus being on God and the second three verses provide the view from the circumstances of life with the focus on the psalmist's experience.*

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
 For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

- *The psalm begins with contentment, "I shall not want," knowing God, as our faithful Shepherd, the one who is guiding us.*
- *Verse four contrasts verse one by revealing that sometimes the journey that our Good Shepherd is leading us through is difficult. However, in the midst of difficulties and dangers He is there to guide and comfort us. "For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."*

²He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

- *Verse 2 reveals that God leads us to be fed and rest in green pastures and beside quiet waters where there is nothing to disturb us.*

- *Verse 5 contrasts this picture where sometimes our enemies surround us, but God sets out a banqueting table where we can enjoy His presence and His provision while our enemies look on helplessly, unable to disturb our contentment and fellowship with Christ.*

³He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

- *Verse 3 speaks about the healing and restoration to our souls as He teaches us how to walk in His righteous paths.*
- *Verse 6 declares that no matter what we go through His goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and we can be fully confident that “And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” In His presence is fullness of joy where we experience unbroken contentment!*
- *Philippians 1:21 summarizes contentment. Whatever God does in my life is the very best for He is faithful, loving and good, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*