

Contentment

by

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From the beginning of time, mankind has not been content with what God has provided. God made a perfect, beautiful world He described as very good. He made a garden in that world, and placed the man and woman within to keep and enjoy it.

Yet with all the blessings God gave, Adam and Eve were not content. Gen. 3:1-6 tells the sad story, *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”* Satan tempted them to be discontent. What God gave was no longer enough. They wanted to be “as gods” and brought sin and death into the beautiful world God gave them. They wanted more and ended up with much less.

To be thankful and content (happy) with what God has provided is thus one of the great keys to living a Christian life. When we are not content we are, in effect, saying that what God has given us isn't good enough. Let's not blaspheme God like that. Let us be content and thankful, praising God for His great gifts.

Let's look at several areas of our Christian life that contentment applies to.

Be Content with the things God has given us

In Luke 3:10-14 we read the teaching of John the Baptist on contentment, *“And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no*

more than that which is appointed you. 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 with your wages.”

Each group was instructed to be content. The people with two coats or plenty of food weren't to worry about getting more, but share. The tax collectors were not to cheat people out of more taxes than allowed. And the soldiers were to be content with their wages. All of this applies to us as well.

Don't be greedy, be content. Heb. 13:5, “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

Don't be dishonest, be content. 1 Pet. 2:12, “*Having your conversation (lifestyle) honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*”

Be content with our wages. 1 Tim. 6:6-8, “*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*” Verses 9-10 then warn about the dangers of not being content, “*But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*”

In Phil. 4:13, the apostle Paul wrote, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” Men sometimes use this verse to say we can gain any possessions we want, but Paul is actually using it in the context of being content. Verses 11-13, “*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*”

In Matt. 6:31-33 Jesus reminds us we don't have to worry about things. We should be content because God will take care of us. “*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all*

these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Well, our money and things is not the only area of our life in which we need to be content. Let's consider some others.

Be Content with our spouse

Eccl. 9:9 says, *“Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.”* Our portion is our own spouse, and to live joyfully with that person. Not another, or even to be distracted by others. Again, if we are not happy with our spouse, we are saying that God's gift is not good enough. Prov. 18:22, *“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.”*

In Prov. 5:15 we read, *“Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.”* He is speaking of a husband and wife in this verse. Note verse 18, *“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.”* Verse 20 asks, *“And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?”* If we do turn to another, it leads to death, verse 23, *“He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.”*

In Matt. 5:27-28, Jesus applies adultery not just to our flesh, but to our eyes and heart as well. *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*

Let us be content with our spouse, and thank God for His wonderful gift.

Be Content with Christ's Church.

In Matt. 16:15-18, Jesus asked His disciples, *“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus*

answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Since Jesus Christ built His Own Church, why would we even consider following some other man's church, or starting our own? And yet how many people do exactly that?

Jesus died for His church, that He might have it a beautiful church of His own. Eph. 5:25-27, "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*"

Christ's church is His body. Col. 1:18, speaking of Jesus, reads, "*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*" Eph. 1:22-23, "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*"

It is His body, His church, that we are baptized into, I Cor. 12:13, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*" Thus, in His church we are members of His body. Verse 12 reads, "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*" Verse 27, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*"

Christ's church was begun by His apostles (and so built by Jesus Christ) on the day of Pentecost, read the first and second chapters of Acts. It was Christ's Church that His apostles belonged to and recognized, Rom. 16:16, "*Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.*" So, when we are members of His church, we find in Eph. 2:19-20, "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,*"

Why would we turn to any different church? Would it be because like Adam and Eve we desire to be “as gods”? What arrogance. Let us humble ourselves, and be content with the church Jesus built. 1 Pet. 5:6, “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*”

Be Content with God’s Word.

When the apostles were beginning Christ’s church they were also delivering God’s Word to mankind. Jesus first gave them God’s Word both during His ministry and after He rose from the dead. Acts 1:1-3, “*The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*”

The Holy Spirit then reminded the apostles of what Jesus taught them, and led them into all truth. In John 14:26 Jesus was speaking to His apostles, and said, “*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*” John 16:13, “*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*”

Jesus never personally told me anything. The Holy Spirit would have nothing to remind me of. The Spirit led the apostles into all truth. What does that leave for me?

The apostles then taught the word of God, and wrote it down for us, so that we have it even years after they are dead. In 2 Pet. 1:12-15, the apostle Peter wrote, “*Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.*” And he continued in 2

Pet. 3:1-2, *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”*. And the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 14:37, *“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”* 2 Pet. 1:3, *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”*.

So why would we turn to our own way? Why would we not be content, yea ecstatic, with God’s Word as delivered? To be “as gods” ourselves? Let us not be so foolish. Prov. 28:26, *“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.”*

How do we walk wisely? By hearing and doing God’s Word. In Matt. 7:24 Jesus said, *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”*

In John 8:31-32 we find, *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* Let us be content with God’s Word, and thankful for it.

How do we develop contentment in our lives?

Here are a few quick ways:

Thankfulness

Recognize the gifts of God as such, and express thanksgiving for them. Psa. 100:3-5, *“Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”*

Humility.

Don't try to be "*as gods*". Try to serve the one true and living God. James 4:6-8, "*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*"

Serve God with our very best effort.

Don't do things our own way. Give God our best effort instead. Psa. 119:2-3, "*Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.*" See how when we seek Him with our whole heart we walk in His ways, not our own? That is contentment. Phil. 4:4, "*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*"

Seek to grow in Him.

We must be content with all the gifts God has given. The only thing we need to not be content with is who we are. Seek to grow. Remember how we read in Phil. 4:12 that Paul was both full and hungry, both abounding and suffering need? If we are content, what do we need or hunger for? To grow. I Pet 2:2, "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*". II Pet. 3:18, "*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*"

There is an old song that says: "Contentment reigneth eternal in Heaven our home sweet home." It must first begin here in this life.

Offered in Christ's name,
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