

Learning Contentment *(Philippians 4:10-14)*

Definition of Contentment: Sufficient Satisfaction within the heart through the fellowship with and power of Jesus Christ apart from external circumstances and people

I. The Picture of Contentment Painted by the Apostle Paul (v10-v14).

- A. Paul rejoiced in the Lord when others came through for him yet his state of mind was not conditioned upon their gift (v10-v11).
- B. Paul learned to live with what he had and let it be enough for him (v12).
- C. Paul learned to live without anticipating the provision of God (v12).
- D. Paul adjusted his desires to match his condition and circumstances (v12).
- E. Paul depended on God's power from within to cultivate contentment in his condition and circumstances (v13).
- F. Paul had fellowship with God in his condition and circumstances (v13).
- G. Paul showed appreciation when others came through for him yet he did not live for or by what others may or may not do for Him (v14).

II. The Perspective of Contentment Promoted in the Scriptures.

- A. A content person is able to accept their condition (Philippians 4:11-13)
- B. A content person is able to accept their contents (Hebrews 13:5)
- C. A content person is able to endure their circumstances (2 Corinthians 12:10)
- D. A content person is depending on Christ (Hebrews 13:5)
- E. A content person is pursuing Christ-Likeness (1Timothy 6:6-8)
- F. A content person is not a complainer (Philippians 4: 11-13)
- G. A content person has an attitude of consideration (Philippians 4:11-13)

III. The Process to Contentment Presented in Eight Key Steps.

- A. Enjoy the good and perfect gifts that God provides in your life through the means of people, circumstances, and tangible things of this creation.
- B. Grieve the disappointments in your life that come through the means of sin, suffering, and unrealized expectations in relation to people, circumstances and tangible things of this creation.
- C. Give thanks for your condition and circumstances knowing God will use it to bring about His glory and your good through your condition and circumstances.
- D. Accept and endure what God has allowed in your life through the means of sin, suffering, unrealized expectations, people, circumstances and tangible things of this creation through seeking the making the most of it without complaining about it.
- E. Adjust your desires to fit your situation in relation to people, circumstances and tangible things of this creation.
- F. No longer demand that people satisfy you but seek to help people glorify God.

- G. Function according to your roles and responsibilities in relation to people and circumstances as assigned and commanded by God out of your covenant with God and not your mood of the moment.
- H. Embrace the character of God that is befitting for the moment, leading to worship and enjoyment of God according to that character.
- I. Overall, we must enjoy every pleasure that God allows, endure every pain that God allows, while living from Him, through Him, and to Him in our condition and circumstances focusing on His Covenant to us. (Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, 12:13-14, 1Corinthians 13:7, Hebrews 13:5-6).

Summary: Jesus is the doorway into the life that is truly life. Confidence in Him leads to become His apprentice in eternal living. Those who connect with Jesus Christ will find all they need to have life and life to no limit. We must increasingly integrate our lives into the spiritual world of God at every point of our lives. We must live our lives in interactive dependence upon God and interactive submission to His kingdom rule. The condition of life sought by human beings through ages is attained in quietly transforming friendship of Jesus. We must learn what is real, discover how well off we are in Jesus and begin to live according to this reality.

We are supposed to groan because there are things that we have been promised but do not yet have. We are supposed to groan because the full expression of God's kingdom has not yet come. We are supposed to groan because we are not yet all that God shed the blood of his Son for us to become. We are supposed to groan because the temporary pleasures of this physical world do not satisfy us; they always leave a void in our hearts. We are supposed to groan because in every situation and circumstance we see the damage that sin has done and is doing. We are supposed to groan because we recognize how we each give in to the temptation to seek in the physical world what we can only find in the Lord and what will only be fulfilled in eternity. This side of eternity, groaning is meant to be the default language of the big kingdom.

When we groan for these reasons, we get it right. This kind of groaning is only present in people who are submitting little kingdom desires to big kingdom interests. Where does one find ultimate fulfillment, satisfaction, and contentment? In God and God alone. Living for God is indeed fulfilling, but we don't find Him fulfilling because we are too busy being satisfied with the temporary pleasures of the physical world. Before we ever come to God we have already decided the things that we want in order to be fulfilled. We tend to seek God so that He will deliver some kind of physical, relational, or circumstantial fulfillment. Rather than working to satisfy us with these, God wants us to experience hunger so deep that it drives us to forsake these things and finally find our satisfaction in Him.

(Adapted from The Divine Conspiracy pp.94, 103-104, The Divine Conspiracy Participant Guide pp. 26,29, 37, 94, and A Quest for More: Living for Something Bigger than You Kindle Locations 1492-11547.

Questions to Consider this Week

1. What do I want that I cannot control getting?

2. What am I getting that I don't want and I can't control it?

3. How am I responding in attitude to this?

4. How am I responding in conversation to this?

5. How am I responding in actions to this?

6. How am I treating others as a result of this?

7. According to Scripture how would God view my attitude, conversation, actions, and relational patterns in relation to this?

8. What do I need to accept that God has allowed?

9. How do I need to obey God in this situation?

10. What has God promised in His Word that I can rest on in accordance to this situation?

11. How can I adjust my desires to match my situation?
