

Contentment

The Freedom of Contentment

May 19, 2019

Best-Selling Author of *Margin*

RICHARD A. SWENSON, MD



CONTENTMENT

The Secret to a Lasting Calm

Culture of Discontent

Our society is built around two values:

1. Accumulation

2. Achievement

"Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content." - Ecclesiastes 1:8

Contentment is Not...

Settling for “less than”

A hall pass for doing whatever you want

A destination to arrive at... later

Contentment is...

When we tell the Shepherd that *His provision* is enough for all our physical and material needs.

When we tell the Shepherd that *His presence* is sufficient for all our emotional needs

When we tell the Shepherd that *His providence* is perfect for all our future needs.

Psalm 23

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

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

3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

- Psalm 23:1-3 ESV

Content in His Provision

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” - Psalm 23:1

“I shall not want” means, “All my needs are supplied by the LORD, my shepherd.”

“I shall not want” also means, “I choose to not desire more than what the LORD, my shepherd gives.”

“We were actually created to feast on glory. But we have sinned and fallen short of it (Rom. 3:23). It has become unattainable. No wonder, then, that those made for the eternal are by nature discontented with the temporal. We try the broken cisterns, but their waters fail and mock us until, in God’s providence, we learn that there is “none but Christ,” - Sinclair Ferguson

Content in His Presence

“He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.” - Psalm 23:2, 3a

“the broken depths of my soul are healed and re-integrated in a life in union with God.” - Dallas Willard

Content in His Presence

14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me,
15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my
life for the sheep. - John 10:14, 15 NLT

“We seek solutions for our emptiness in many directions, all of them
lacking. But those who go deep with Jesus discover He is always
better. The greater our intimacy, the greater our contentment.”
-Contentment, The secret to a lasting calm, p. 15

Content in His Providence

“He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.” - Psalm 23:3

Contentment means I am open to receive whatever blessing or hardship God sends because I know He sends both as needed with Fatherly care and precision.

Freedom of Contentment

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” is God speaking code about a secret path (yes, it is a secret) to freedom. Freedom from wanting more than is good for us. Freedom to wish blessing on everyone we meet without the slightest tinge of envy. Freedom to redefine wealth and possessions in biblical rather than cultural terms. Freedom to gladly surrender our strife and have it replaced by His rest. Freedom to be biblically authentic in an age of financially-forced compromises. Freedom to understand that one heart, inhabited by Christ, is enough to take on the world’s opinion machine.” - Richard Swenson, *Contentment: The secret to a lasting calm*, p. 14