

2-20-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: Content or Complaining?

Purpose: Provoke people to be content in their circumstances and not complain about what they don't like.

Spiritual Truth: Am I content in my circumstances or do I complain about what I don't like?

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:1-11

Topic: Content, Complain, Character, Attitude

Series: What's Inside?

Series Purpose: Provoke people to develop godly character and personal values that reflect a Biblical worldview.

Content or Complaining?

I. Introduction

A. Review series, "What's Inside?" Series video

A.1. Listen to messages @ChurchOnTheRock.org or on the COTR iPhone/ Android app

A.2. This is a series about character, personal values, attitudes and the principles that guide us. Each week we'll contrast godly character and values with a worldly counterpart and ask ourselves what character and values we want to have.

A.3. Last week we talked about being Responsible or Irresponsible and asked the question, do I take care of my responsibilities or do I expect someone else to do it?

B. The question we'll ask ourselves today is, "Am I content in my circumstances or do I complain about what I don't like?"

B.1. Def. content: to be satisfied; to be at peace in your present circumstances; to be happy with who you are and what you have.

B.2. Def. complain: to express your unhappiness about your circumstances, especially about what you don't have; to murmur, whine, gripe, and grumble.

C. Video: Wing Clips, *The Family Man*

D. Title: Content or Complaining?

E. Purpose: Provoke people to be content in their circumstances and not complain about what they don't like.

F. Sp. Truth: Am I content in my circumstances or do I complain about what I don't like?

II. Complaining undermines our relationship with God

A. Context: In spite of the privileges and blessings God had given His chosen people they disobeyed Him and were judged. 1 Cor. 10:1–11 (NCV) Brothers and sisters, I want you to know what happened to our ancestors who followed Moses...5...God was not pleased with most of them, so they died in the desert. 6 And these things happened as examples for us, to stop us from wanting evil things as those people did. (*Craving worldly pleasure, idols, sexual sin, questioning God's plan, rebelling against Moses*)...10 **Do not complain** as some of them did; they were killed by the angel that destroys. 11 The things that happened to them are **examples**. They were written down to teach us...

A.1. Numbers 11:1 (NLT) Soon the people began to **complain about their hardship**, and the LORD heard everything they said. Then the LORD's anger blazed against them... Nu. 11:4–6 (NLT) Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to **complain**. “**Oh, for some meat!**” they exclaimed. 5 “We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. 6 But now...all we ever see is this manna!” Nu. 21:4–5 (NLT) ...the people grew impatient with the long journey, 5 and they began to speak against God and Moses. “Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness?” **they complained**...6 So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many were bitten and died.

A.1.a God was taking them to the Promised Land but the trip was hard; God fed them with free food/ manna but that wasn't good enough; giants lived in their Promised Land and they felt helpless; they were impatient because they wanted God's promises to be answered NOW! They complained about everything.

B. We tend to complain a lot, too. We wish our skin was darker or lighter, we don't like the way we look, we're upset because we don't have enough \$ to buy what we want, we drive an old car or we drive a new car without GPS screen, we live in an old house or a new house with a small closet, I don't have anything to wear as we stare at 25 shirts.

B.1. Instead of being grateful for who we are and what we do have, we look at what we're not and don't have and complain. Like Israel our complaints are really directed at what God has allowed. Our complaining can get us in trouble with God.

III. Contentment is the secret to happiness: 3 lessons about contentment

A. I can choose to stop complaining and be content with my circumstances.

A.1. Context: People baptized by JB. Luke 3:14 (ESV) Soldiers also asked him, “...what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and **be content with your wages.**”

- A.2. John the Bapt. told the soldiers, if you're going to follow Jesus stop complaining and be happy with what you have. The implication is (1) we can be happy with less than we'd like to have and (2) being content is a choice. E.g. Tator tots in Palestine.
- A.3. This doesn't imply we can't desire a better life. Psalm 37:4 (ESV) Delight yourself in the LORD, and **he will give you the desires of your heart.** Mt. 7:11 (NLT) So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father **give good gifts** to those who ask him.
- A.4. Lesson: It's ok to desire a better life but I can be happy before I get what I want.
- B. If we love money more than God we'll never be content.
- B.1. 1 Timothy 6:6–10 (NIV) But **godliness with contentment is great gain.** (*NCV serving God NLT with contentment is itself great wealth.*) 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But **if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.** 9 Those who want to (*crave*) get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money (*to desire money more than God*) is a root (*source*) of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
- B.1.a This passage is addressed to people who think more money and nicer things will make us happy. The reverse is actually true; the compelling desire for more, bigger and better can destroy me. It's better to be happy/ content with less and serve God than have more money/ stuff and less of God.
- B.2. Def. envy: the pain and resentment we feel when someone else has something we don't have; To be jealous and crave what someone else has.
- B.3. Def. covet: to long for/ be greedy/ earnestly desire what another person has especially wealth or possessions, Exodus 20:17 (NLT) "**You must not covet** your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."
- B.3.a E.g. Toyota van "LE"
- B.4. American consumerism, media and worldly role models make us unhappy because they show us what we don't have and tell us we need it. E.g. status symbols.
- C. We can learn to be content
- C.1. Context: Phil. 4:10–13 (NLT) How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again...11 Not that I was ever in need, for **I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.** 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. **I have learned the secret** of living in every situation, whether it is with a full

stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything **through Christ**, who gives me strength.

C.1.a Paul had good reasons to complain. He was serving God and hungry, homeless and under attack. He probably felt like God had forgotten Him but he tapped into a supernatural ability to be happy in spite of his circumstances.

IV. Conclusion: How do we learn to be content?

- A. 1 Thes. 5:18 (ESV) **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Def. thankful: to be grateful for who I am and what I have, e.g. race, gender fixed at birth. Culture promotes envy, jealousy, unhappiness.
- B. Hebrews 13:5 (ESV) Keep your life free from love of money, and **be content with what you have**, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Contentment is linked to our relationship with God. The closer I am to God the happier I am. The farther away I get the more I try to find happiness thru \$ and things.
- C. 2 Corinthians 12:10 (ESV) For the sake of Christ, then, **I am content** with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. **For when I am weak, then I am strong**. Need and pain can compel us to find God and that's good. E.g. anxiety problem.

V. Response

- A. Prayer/ Souls: Do you complain a lot? Are you unhappy with your life?
- B. *** *Logos Bible Software and library, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, A Handbook on Paul's 1st letter to Timothy were used to prepare this message.*