

Learning Contentment in Christ- Charles R. Biggs- Nov. 2002

Summary Statement: True contentment comes when we become “selflessly self-satisfied” in Jesus Christ, and meditate upon all of his benefits and the riches that are ours because of his life, death, resurrection and ascension.

FCF: We complain. We are discontent as much as anyone else in the world. We think about what we do not have, rather than the blessings that are ours. We are so rich, yet act so poor.

Introduction

We seek health and happiness as American people. Even as the people of God, there is a tendency to seek out our greatest happiness and our health in what the world offers. We have the great privilege of being united to Jesus Christ, have been adopted as sons of God, and await an immeasurable inheritance in the Age to Come -- yet we don't think on this great grace given to us in Jesus.

We not only worry, complain, and lack in prayer to God as Paul says in Phil. 4:4-9, we are extremely discontent with our circumstances. Think about what we truly believe will bring us contentment and peace -- right now! Jesus said, “Where your treasure is (that is, where you find contentment and peace) -- there your heart will be.”

The world's offerings (the constant buzz of voices around us, like the crowd at a college basketball game) sell to us -- appealing to our discontentment.

Magazines --> Telling us what we do not have!

Advertisements --> (Some 1500 a day) Telling us what we do not have!

I. Learning Contentment in “Selfless Self-Satisfaction”

Here in Philippians 4, the Philippian Church has taken care of a need that Paul had. They provided to him out of love in their giving to further the gospel. What we want to see is that they would have never known of Paul’s needs if they had been concerned with their own needs! That’s the same with us...

Paul was thankful for the gift given by the church. But he wanted them to understand that contentment was the goal of the Christian life (whether they had sent the gift to him or not). Paul wanted them to learn how to be “selflessly self-satisfied” in Christ alone, which is the literal meaning of contentment v. 11. Paul wanted them, as well as us to know that God is our provider and will use others to meet our needs in his time.

Whatever your worry or your need today, remember that Jesus has promised to give us all things we need when we seek God and His Kingdom first. True contentment is found in the promises and provision of God.

It is a learned contentment. In v. 11, learning refers to through Paul’s experience in relying solely on God. In v. 12, learning refers to the knowledge of contentment.

Illustration:

II. Learning the Secret of Contentment

So often we pursue so many things in this world that cause unnecessary discontentment in our lives. We must *learn* to be content. This will not happen immediately. Remember: **It is not obtaining something from outside us that will bring us contentment; rather it is a removal of something within us. Namely, a false way of thinking** as Phil. 4:8-9 reminds us!

Also: We must remember that discontentment blinds us.

When we are discontent, we don’t see what other’s around us do not have! (their true needs).

When we are discontent we don’t see what we do have (our blessings).

- ◆ When we are discontent, we are blind to the needs of others, because we are concerned about ourselves. We are not considering others better than ourselves and thinking about others first as Phil. 2 teaches. We are thinking about what we **DO NOT HAVE, RATHER THAN WHAT WE DO HAVE.**

If all of our energies and attention is on finding contentment in our own lives – finding one more thing that might bring peace, we are not looking around to see the needs of others. We are self-centered and blind. We will go about a day missing all of the needs and hurts of the people around us. If the Philippians had been worried about what they did not have, they would have never been concerned with Paul's needs. And Paul in prison, if he had merely been looking out for himself in trying meet his own needs and to get out of prison, he would have never seen the needs of the Philippians in penning his epistle and encouraging them to rejoice in their faith!

- ◆ When we are discontent, we are not only blind to what others do not have, we are blind to what we do have~ -our own blessings.

Illustration: Rainy day, having to go out of the house...you have a house! Traffic jam and all of your heart is being vocalized and pressed through your lips in comments and thoughts you would not have anywhere else~ - you complain, wish you were somewhere other than this traffic jam...you complain that you have to be in traffic, yet you have a car!! You wish you had a better job, somewhere else, doing something else, etc. At least you have a job!

- ◆ When we are discontent, we are not only blind to what others do not have and blind to what we do have, we are blind to the great riches of being united to Jesus Christ and his inheritance which is to be received by all those who love him.

III. I Can Do "All things" through Christ Who Gives Me Strength!

If we want to be a fulfilled people, we cannot do it in our own strength, but we must do it in the strength given to us in Jesus Christ. Being selflessly self-sufficient in Jesus!

Think about this where you are: you are probably not imprisoned, or any similar condition as was the Apostle Paul. However, here are 3 places where we get the most discontent:

- a. Possessions
- b. Potential
- c. Position

We must draw our strength from Christ, remembering that what we have, what we can do, where we are in the world, as well as... Is all been carefully and providentially planned by God who knows us better than we know ourselves. It is not the lack of possessions, potential, or position that makes us discontent, it is questioning the possessions, potential, and positions God has given to us graciously and selfishly desiring more! More! More!

God knows more about what you really need than you do!

IV. A Good Kind of Discontentment~ There is a good kind of discontentment we ought to appreciate!

Discontent with the world's pleasures~ - the world is passing away and the lusts thereof, but the one who abides by the Word of the LORD will live forever!

Discontent with our present level of holiness, not healthiness or happiness as the culture around us is so concerned about. Growth in Christ!

Conclusion

◆ **Remember: Real Contentment is being discontent with the things we so often are tempted to believe bring us contentment!**

◆ Philippians 4:19—Great riches provided in Christ.

“Go this day in the strength of Jesus, knowing He who:

Loves you

Redeemed you

Strengthens you

Provides for you

Cares for you

Died for you

Was raised for you

Never leaves you, nor forsakes you

Gives you grace and mercy

The One whose Name is above every name..

And the one who will supply all of your needs according to HIS riches in glory!

