

Contentment

Lesson #1: The Source of Contentment

I. Introduction

Philippians 4:10-13:

The Book of Philippians was written 10 years after the church was founded by Paul (Acts 16). The primary theme is “rejoicing.”

This is a section that might be entitled “The Church that Remembered”. On three separate occasions in this letter, Paul specifically says thank you for the gift given him. In the middle of this thank you note, Paul outlines the secret of contentment. You might call it the “joy of serenity.”

II. Contentment

A. What it is:

1. Biblical term for contentment means “to be self-sufficient,” not requiring something else. It conveys the idea that we are “happy enough with what we have or do, not desiring something more or different.”
2. It implies satisfaction, submission and pleasure with what is at hand. It is a peace separate from circumstances.
3. “It is an inner sense of rest or peace that comes from being right with God and knowing that He is in control of all that happens to us.” (Steven Cole)
4. “The word content actually means ‘to be contained.’ It is a description of a man whose resources are within him so that he does not have to depend on substitutes without.” (Wierbe)
5. It is happiness that circumstances cannot change.
6. It is a soul at rest.

B. What it is not:

1. It is not indifference or complacency

2. It is not being covetous or greedy – (Deut. 5:21)
3. It is also the opposite of a worldly materialistic mindset. (Luke 12:15)

III. The Lack of Contentment is evidenced by:

- A. Consumer debt
- B. High rate of mobility
- C. Divorce rate
- D. Clamoring for rights
- E. Prevailing discontentment and hunger for MORE of everything

IV. The Source of Contentment-Definitive Focus on the Lord

- A. Focus on Him as the **SOVEREIGN ONE** to whom I must submit (I Peter 5:6-7)
 1. Paul, sitting in prison “because of corrupt officials, awaiting possible execution over false charges, tells us how to find contentment.” He can not earn a living as a tent maker. He is getting by on very humble means (“affliction” in 4:14 literally means “pressure”). And yet, he trusts the sovereign hand of God to meet his needs.
 2. Sovereignty: Consider the unlimited power of God who has control over the affairs of nature, men, history and the future. (Isa. 45:9-13)
 3. Paul has “LEARNED” to be content

“Manthano” means to learn by experience, to discover and so genuinely understand and accept a teaching as true and to apply it in one’s life. Literally it means “I have come to learn.” It’s the entrance to a new condition.

Paul “had to go through many experiences, easy and difficult, in order to learn who was the Source of true contentment.”

He is no longer dependent upon worldly things for satisfaction.
 4. Consider the “training classes” Paul went through
 5. The result: I MUST SUBMIT TO CHRIST

Hab. 3:19 “The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.”

B. Focus on Him as the SAVIOR whom I must serve

1. In spite of Paul's circumstances, He is clearly focused on what Christ has done on his behalf. His lofty perspective raises him above his difficult circumstances. He savors the nugget of his salvation.
2. Savior: "The one who rescues another from evil, danger and destruction." (Isa. 45:21, 1 Tim. 4:10)
3. The result: **I MUST SERVE CHRIST**

2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

C. Focus on Him as the SUFFICIENT ONE to be trusted

1. Paul has no resources and no legal recourse. His trust is in Christ alone.
2. The Sufficient One El Shaddai: The God who is enough
3. The result: **I MUST TRUST CHRIST**