



The Christian's Attitude Toward Contentment

By Keith Greer

If a Christian learns but one lesson to help him live a faithful life that pleases God, that lesson must be the true understanding of contentment. "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound..." {Philippians 4:11,12} During Paul's life, he learned the true meaning of contentment. Is happiness the same thing as contentment? Not really, but the one who would be truly happy must be content. The word "content" means: "independence from outside circumstances -- the opposite of unrest, stress, and anxiety." Paul learned to be self-sufficient in a good way. Whether he had much or little, whether he was persecuted or free from persecution, it made little difference to Paul. He had Christ. No matter what, he was content. The one who walks with Christ and lives in Him can cope, no matter what the world throws in his path. True, it may not be easy, but we won't be overcome if we keep Christ in our corner.

The elements of true contentment.

Realize that nothing on this earth is lasting or, in and of itself, brings true happiness. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." {2 Corinthians 4:16-18}

Develop a loving, deep confidence in the constant providence of a caring and just God. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." {Romans 8:28}

Develop the knowledge and assurance that accompanies the confidence that God is in your life. "... Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" {Hebrews 13:5,6}

Some things with which we should not be content.

Being satisfied with living sinful, disobedient lives. Such will lead to eternal punishment, separated from God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Having a "sit around and do nothing" attitude. Complacency will cause us to lose our souls. The Christianity is a religion of action -- not missing in action.

Being self-satisfied. "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on... Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." {Philippians 3:12-14}

Being content to move backward, or stay in place. Christians must strive to move forward. God's people must continue to learn and grow so they can help themselves, and others, learn what it means to have true contentment in Christ.

Things with which we should be content.

Prosperity. If God blesses you with prosperity, live with its blessings, but remain faithful to Him

Lack of prosperity. If you are not prosperous, learn to live "without" and still be content.

Problems. Understand that all people must deal with struggles and problems -- you're not alone.

How can I learn to be content? I must will it to be so. Contentment is produced by discipline, trust, and having more faith in God than I have in myself! Dear reader, how hard are you working to master the secret of contentment in your life? Consider the heartache of living eternally discontent if you do not learn to be content now!