

SERVING CONTENTEDLY

Week 7: The Source of Contentment

If asked for one word expressing what is wanted most from life, many people would say, “contentment” or some synonym with much the same meaning. There is a tendency to look ahead to the next phase of life and hope that in it, contentment will be found. But unless we know the Lord, we will find that is not the answer. How sad that so often we see people seeking in every avenue except the right one to find the satisfaction for which they are looking. If we submit our lives to the will of God, He has promised to give us peace. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We can be assured that the individual who truly seeks the Kingdom of God and His righteousness will find contentment.

1. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, He indicated that laying up treasures on earth would not bring contentment. In the Sermon on the Mount He told His listeners to lay up treasures in Heaven. Many people seem to think that accumulating the things of this world will bring satisfaction. But even when they gain these things, they find that contentment is as far off as ever. Others strive to find satisfaction in power, prestige, education, sports, or various amusements. They may attain a measure of fulfillment from these, but they still do not find complete contentment. Why do you think the advice given in the Sermon on the Mount is still applicable?

2. Matthew 6:31 tells us to take no thought of what we shall eat or drink or how we shall be clothed, even though these are very important necessities of daily living. Most people give a great deal of thought to them! Does this verse mean that we should sit at home and let

the Lord provide us with food as He did the Children of Israel or Elijah? Explain.

3. Moses spent the first forty years of his life in the court of Pharaoh. He undoubtedly had the finest luxuries obtainable in that age. Without question he had prestige, education, and honor, and was possibly in line for the throne. He had to flee from Egypt because he slew one of the Egyptian taskmasters who was mistreating an Israelite, and so he went to the land of Midian. We are told that he was content to live with the priest of Midian (Exodus 2:21) and spent many years tending sheep. Then God called him to lead the Israelites from the land of Egypt. If God should call us to do some seemingly impossible task, it will bring real satisfaction if we trust God and do it. What do you think was the source of Moses’ contentment as he made the transition from prince to shepherd, and then from shepherd to leader of God’s people?

4. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 the Apostle Paul tells of some of the things he endured for the cause of Christ. In spite of the challenges he faced, we see no diminishing of his optimism or enthusiasm for the Gospel. We may never have to endure what Paul did, but we will face

trials along our Christian pathway. In writing to Timothy, Paul says, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Read 2 Corinthians 4:17 and explain what Paul had to say about the trials and persecutions that he suffered. How does this verse and other statements of Paul’s show that he was truly content in whatever state he found himself?

5. In writing to Timothy, Paul says, “And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” Most of us have a great many more material blessings beyond basic necessities. In view of this verse, how should we regard these extra blessings that the Lord has allowed us to have?

6. It is a real blessing to be content. We see by studying the history of the Children of Israel that God severely punished them because they became discontented. No doubt they felt justified for their complaints, because they faced many situations that were impossible from man’s viewpoint. But they seemed to forget the great things that God had done for them. See Numbers 11:1; 14:27; 16:31-35,49; 21:5,6, and note how God reacted to their complaints and discontent. What lesson can we learn from these examples?

7. Our key verse instructs us to be content with such things as we have. Whether we have little or much in the way of material things, as children of God we have peace and contentment that the world cannot provide. Why is this the case? See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

8. Often Satan will do his utmost to tempt us to murmur and complain about our challenges. At some point we may face afflictions, employment issues, financial pressure, relationship concerns, and the list could go on. At such times, if we don’t overcome Satan, we could become discontented, irritable, touchy, and grumpy—not at all evidencing the sweet and gentle disposition the Lord is looking for. Read Jude 3 and describe how following the admonition in this verse could help as a defense against Satan.

Scriptures used in this session:

Exodus 2:21; Numbers 11:1; 14:27; 16:31-35,49; 21:5,6; Matthew 6:32; Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 5:17; 11:23-27; 2 Timothy 3:12; Jude 3

Supplemental Scriptures:

Acts 18:3; 1 Corinthians 10:10; 2 Corinthians 12:10; Galatians 5:22,23; Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 5:8; 6:6; Hebrews 11:26

Suggested verse for memorization:

Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. - Hebrews 13:5