**Contentment- the Key to True Happiness**

Our English word “contentment” is defined as “the state of being satisfied.” It is somewhat illustrated biblically through an example of its opposite in Luke 12:13-21. The Greek word translated into *“contentment”* (in 1Tim.6:6) is *autarkeia,* which means *a mind satisfied with its lot; contentment.*

If you think about it, and I hope you will do just that, *contentment* is the only way to become truly “happy” in this life. Otherwise, when will we ever have “enough” whatever- money, pleasing relationships, possessions, etc.? You see, that is the trouble with seeking happiness from “things”- there is always something better, or something more, to drive our desires and keep us from true contentment.

**I. Common Areas of Lacking Contentment**

1. **Money: Poverty/Plenty, Phil.4:10-13**

It may surprise some folks that Phil.4:13 is not a unilateral promise of God to allow us to achieve anything we desire, but it isn’t anything of the sort. It is, instead, a statement of Paul’s contentment- even in times of poverty, knowing that God would sustain Him.

Heb.13:5 is as needed today as it was when originally written. While we may *think* we are *“free from the love of money,”* how many of us would/could truly be content with only *“food and covering”* as per 1Tim.6:8? Or, would be content with our children having only the same? Let’s read carefully, thoughtfully, and introspectively, 1Tim.6:6-12.

1. **Relationships: In/Out or Married/Single, 1Cor.7:1-17**

Admittedly, this one is or at least can be hard. But with regard to relationships, we humans are kind of like women and their hair: Those with *curly* want *straight* hair, and those with *straight* want *curly* hair! Meaning, those *unmarried* want to be *married,* and often those that are *married* want to be *unmarried.* It sure sounds like some contentment might be in order!

There are some “truths” in regard to these things that should not be ignored:

* If we marry someone “just because we don’t want to be alone,” we may well get a lot more than we bargained for! Few people in the world either comprehend or are willing to learn what it takes to be biblical spouse. Make sure they do so BEFORE you marry them! There is no “hell” (other than Gehenna, of course) like “married to the wrong person hell”!
* Learning to be content in regards to being single will allow you to fully focus on being the person God wants you to be rather than “finding the Mr./Mrs. Right,” cp. 1Cor.7:32-35.
* Learning to be content in marriage will allow you to become a better, and more godly, spouse, 1Pet.3:1-4,7.

Contentment, instead, allows us to be happily devoted to God if *single,* or happily devoted to God through marriage if *married.*

1. **Servant/Master or Employee/Employer, cf. 1Cor.7:17,20-24**

Though sometimes motivated by the desire for *wealth* (as covered above), there can also be great misery associated with a lack of contentment regarding *position.* Some of us “have problems with authority” or “taking orders.” Think about that. If we cannot learn contentment as a *servant/employee,* how will we ever learn to be content as *disciples/followers of Christ,* cp. Luke 16:10-12?

Contentment, instead, allows us to be happy on either side of the paycheck- whether *receiving* one for services rendered, or *giving* one for services received, cf. Col.3:22 – 4:1.

1. **Weakness/Strength or Sickness/Health, 2Cor.12:1-10**

How could we possibly be content with physical *weakness* or *sickness?* Please understand how little control we really have over such things, Matt.6:27! Human frailty, and the fragility and fleeting nature of life itself, dictates that *weakness, sickness, disease,* and eventually *death* comes to us all, Jas.4:14. But our “end” sometimes comes slowly and with great travails, rather than quickly and painlessly. How can we be content with such prolonged and/or painful demise? Remember what is important from 2Cor.4:16-18. Whether the *physical* body is healthy and strong or weak and diseased, it is the health ( *“being renewed day by day”* ) of the *spiritual* body/soul that is important! Therefore, *“look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,”* and know that with each day we get closer to eternity with God- which should be celebrated, rather than to death and mourning.

Learning contentment enable us to face whatever sickness, disease, or trials await us with grace rather disgust, cf. 2Tim.4:8.

**II. The Liabilities of Lacking Contentment**

1. **It makes us miserable and unhappy (often in regards to things beyond our control!), as well as unproductive servants/stewards.**
2. **It contributes spiritual *myopia* (short-sightedness) and *tunnel vision*** **by preventing us from “seeing” and “counting” our blessings and being grateful.**
3. **Generally, and perhaps most importantly, it keeps us focused on *physical* rather than *spiritual* things- and can thus cause us to miss heaven.**