

Choosing Contentment... Or Not

We usually think and speak of 'content' (ken-tent' rather than kon'-tent) as a state of "being," as in "being content." But what if we're not, but want to become so? How do we "become" content?

First, it's important to realize "contentment" is up to us. It's not something that you're either born *with* or *without* as an inherited trait. Nor is it necessarily *circumstantial*- we don't have to "have all we want" to be content with what we have, cf. Phil.4:11-2.

Secondly, "contentment" is a decision we make (or conversely choose not to make). We must "decide" to be content, or Satan and the world will entice us toward envy, covetousness, "*and many harmful and foolish desires,*" cf. 1Tim.6:9.

And thirdly (and most importantly), we must learn to really "trust" God. Trust that He "*knows what you need, before you ask Him,*" Matt.6:8. Trust that He not only *knows* but will *bestow* "*every good thing*" and "*every perfect gift*" (Jas.1:17) that we need- and if He doesn't, then its either not "*good*" or at least not good for "me" right now. We won't ever become "content" until we learn to trust God in this way and to that extent.

But there's something else we need to consider. We typically think of "contentment" in specific terms- regarding money, and/or the things it can buy. So, *food, clothes, houses, autos, phones, and things* like these. But are these the only areas in which "contentment," or the lack thereof, tempts us toward covetousness and envy? For instance can't we be envious/covetous rather than content with our:

- **Spouse?** How many marriages are either damaged or destroyed- not because of some fault or lack in a spouse, but simply because he/she is not someone else that is deemed more desirable for whatever reason? There were good reasons that the 10th commandment of God's Law through Moses included "... *you shall not covet your neighbor's wife...*" along with his *house, servant, or ox or donkey,* Ex.20:17!
- **Personal Relationships?** Pretty much everyone likes to be liked; to feel needed and wanted even in friendly relationships. But some people want to be liked by everyone, and often become very jealous of personal relationships that don't include them. Lacking contentment with the perhaps numerous relationships they have and from which they benefit, they set about to undermine and destroy other people's happiness in hopes of bettering their own. *Jealousy* and *selfish ambition* is part of the "*wisdom*" not from God, but that which is "*earthly, natural* (in an *unspiritual* sense), *and demonic,*" cf. Jas.3:15-16.
- **Occupational Positions?** While there is certainly nothing wrong with wanting to improve oneself "on the job" and be appreciated for such, how much conniving, underhanded, and dirty dealing takes place in the workforce through excessive competitiveness? Rather than being "*content with your wages*" (cf. Luke 3:14) and *position,* and "*knowing that whatever good thing one does, this he will receive back from the Lord*" (cf. Eph.6:8), envy, jealousy, and covetousness- and all their associated back-stabbing and undermining activities, abound in the workplace.

I'm not suggesting that learning to be "content" is easy, it isn't. But to get to a place of "contentment," we have to realize that it comes from a **decision "I" make to trust God** and the provisions He makes for "me." (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)