

Biblical Counseling Sunday School
“Contentment”
February 18, 2024

Christian Contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God’s wise and fatherly disposal in every condition. ^{Burroughs}

¹¹ I don’t say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³ I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:11-13 HCSB

Additional truths on Contentment from last week’s study:

1. Contentment leads to confidence. See Philippians 4:13

2. Discontent contributes to anxiety, fear and distress. See Philippians 4:6-11 and its proximity to Philippians 4:11-13

“When we are discontent, we are in a constant state of distress, anxiety and regret. Failing to trust God’s essential goodness, we become suspicious of Him and cannot enjoy Him or His many blessings. We are focused on our own circumstances and do not love others well.” ^{M. Hill 31}
day devotional on Contentment

3. Contentment and the abundant life are linked inseparably. Discontentment rots away at the bones and robs the believer of the vitality and abundant life that God intends.

A tranquil heart is life to the body, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones. Proverbs 14:30 HCS

A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot. Proverbs 14:30 ESV

Question #1 Do you find yourself repeatedly convinced that a change in circumstances will make everything better and finally bring the sought after Contentment? Do you find your contentment is subject to your circumstances?

In what seems like upside-down counterintuitive logic, the Scriptures make it clear that a better life consists not in chasing something new but in being contented with the way things are. The way to abundant life is a tranquil (contented) heart. M. Hill Contentment

For further reflection, make a list of the ways you notice “rot” in your “bones” as a result of discontent.

4. We are in union with Christ and Christ is our encouragement.

See the blessings/promises associated with our union with Christ. Ephesians 1:3-14

So if there is any encouragement in Christ... Philippians 2:1

Our union with Christ and the fact that we are “in Christ” should bring us encouragement and comfort (or contentment). He has loved us enough to give himself for us, and he will continue to love us to the end. He has given us his Spirit to help us, and he has showered us with affection and sympathy. When we are disappointed by the way things have turned out, when we are frustrated by situations that don’t seem to change, or when we are baffled by circumstances that change without warning, we are not alone but are in eternal union with Christ.

Our union with Christ allows us to love others. The rotten fruit of discontent is rivalry and covetousness. Focused on ourselves, we envy the seemingly better circumstances of others. To a discontented heart, our neighbor is not an object of kindness but a symbol of the life we wish we had. But, secure in the eternal love of Christ for us, united to him by faith, and reminded of his sacrifice on our behalf, we can trust him with our circumstances and freely love others.

M. Hill 31 day devotional on Contentment

Application of Contentment to Seven specific circumstances

1. Work and responsibilities. Colossians 3:23-24

Larry hates his work and work place. He is convinced that he needs to change his circumstances and find employment at a competitor company. He believes the grass is greener over there. What questions would you ask him? What counsel would you offer? How might you counsel Larry to be faithful in his job although an undesirable one?

Some Truths to keep in mind in regards to work:

Any work that is not inherently sinful- whether paid or unpaid, skilled or unskilled, full-time or part-time or occasional- is good.

Work is good- Genesis 2:15 and 1:31

Work is fallen- Genesis 3:17-19

Work is redeemed for God's glory and our good. Colossians 3:24

2. Money and possessions. 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Hebrews 13:5 and Acts 2:42-47

Tom is wealthy by any standard. He is discontent and doesn't quite know why. He comes to you and wants help for his unhappiness. Meantime, his wife Jill is also discontent and restless. She shops endlessly but never gets satisfied nor is it enough. What questions might you ask and how would you use God's word to bring them to a restful and contented state?

3. Health and physical abilities. 2 Corinthians 12:9

How would you minister to someone who has poor health (with which they are discontented) or has limited physical giftedness?

4. Beauty and outward appearance. 1 Peter 3:4

Glenda comes to you and is convinced that she got overlooked when it came to looks. Additionally, she thinks it is also unfair that her body shape is undesirable. She is stressed out, depressed and convinced that she will never be content with how she was made. She points to her sisters and longs for their outward appearance. Thoughts? Counsel? How would you minister and encourage your sister in Christ?

5. Gifts and opportunities. 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:1-8

Terry meets with you and admits to disappointment, again, as he believes he was overlooked for leadership of an important ministry of the Church. He confesses jealousy of the giftedness of the appointed leader and a desire for the opportunity for this public role. He is thinking about looking into another Church where his “gifts” and “leadership” will be appreciated. He knows the Church leaders made the wrong call. Take it from here. What questions do you ask? Do you “sympathize” with Terry? Do you rebuke/correct Terry? How do you help Terry get to a place where his gifts can best be used to build up the Body of Christ? How do you diffuse this bomb?

6. Status and Recognition. Mark 10:43-45

How do you counsel yourself or others who feel like that are not noticed or recognized? What encouragement can you offer those whose status seems to be of a lower estate? How do you counsel those who think their contributions are not only not recognized but of a small measure?

7. Contentment in family and relationships (spouse, parents, children, others). Psalm 146:3 and 9. Psalm 27. Romans 8:31-39

What is the source of discontent in our relationships? How can one find satisfaction, have enough, be tranquil/restful in the midst of the billows of interpersonal turmoil?

Resources:

Holy Scriptures

Contentment: Seeing God's Goodness by Megan Hill

The Art of Divine Contentment by Thomas Watson and Jason Roth

Precept Austin

