

## CONTENTMENT THE MAGIC WAND TO LIVING WELL AND LIVING LONG

In our fast pace and on the fast lane material driven world, men rush and push, shove and brush all in a bit to make it. And what are they hustling to make? Make wealth, make name and make fame. Why? Because we think that those pull us from obscurity to the limelight and at the end of the day define us. Yet hear what Jesus says, "Life does not consist in the abundance of our possessions" (Luke 15:12). And I dare say in the abundance of our positions and our societal projectedness is no life.

What then defines the Christian, the believer in Jesus Christ? The Christian is not a lazy and idle person, yet not one who is worn off in restless search of the material things of this world, nor one who wears himself up craving after the comfort of this world. He is not one whose nights are long from a concentrated worry on how to have a full bite and a full chew of the world and as such, lives deprived of heart cheering thoughts. He is one who is settled on Christ and in Christ. He is defined by his tie to and life in Christ. He finds in Christ Jesus such a spring of joy, such a fountain of consolation and such a full cup of contentment that makes him contentedly consistently joyful.

The apostle Paul says in Philippians 4:11 that "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content." Contentment is a rare and excellent lesson that is harder than almost every other lesson in the whole sphere of Christianity. This is a difficult piece of practical knowledge that only pry into the ephemerality of life go for it. Yet it can be learned and has to be learned in the words of the great apostle. Anyone who set his heart to master this lesson, has himself been attracted to and endeared to Christ. And imbibing this principle set the apostle Paul himself apart, got him endeared to and turned him the object of his followers' admiration. To learn contentment is both supernatural and mysterious knowledge, for it is not what comes to us by natural light, for the proud is not at home with it, but one humbled and submissive to and infused by God and taught by his Holy Spirit. God has to let his divine light beam into the soul of man, and this, a special grace from Christ Jesus and backed up by the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit in the heart, without which no true contentment finds a place in a man's life. For to the carnal, the competition is to beat all else and be the one who has most grabbed of the worldly possessions. The humble and learning however, lies on God's workbench and let him rework the insatiable appetite to one given to contentment. And while Christ in his grace and God in his Holy Spirit do the major work of infusing contentment in a person's heart, yet there are subordinate teachers come in, in the form of prudent observation, Christian experience and a daily constant exercise of contentment. Daily subjection to and passage through these, cap up what the primary teachers do and get you standing in the place of contentment. For you are never other than what you daily practice. When God reaches out to all these other secondary teachers in blessing, it gives the human heart a quiet and a calm state in every condition he finds himself. This lifestyle defines the Christian and have them endeared to God and his Jesus Christ.

The virtue of contentment is a mystery and great secret, a hidden treasure that is out of sight, off the common road and not easy to be found and grasped and neither is it an easy pick. It is not open and seen by all, but ever a locked away mystery that a few get to terms with. It is first of all, a cultivation of the heart and then an unleashing of the character. Contentment is an embodiment of art and skill. Art in the sense that it lives on in beauty above every condition, and skill, because it navigates its circumstances nor matter how upsetting to pressing on in stability.

Therefore when you learn contentment, you stand out as one of the greatest artists in the world and one of the most skilled in peddling the waters of life as no water of need no matter how turbulent threatens nor consumes you.

Yet the world and human life itself, remain an irony. You have one who has everything in life, but who is never content but ever restlessly chasing more, and one who has virtually nothing or just a little and lives in great contentment. How else could we explain this puzzle except that it is a mystery!

It is important for us to note that who we are before God and his Christ Jesus, has nothing to do with the houses we live in, the clothes we wear, the cars □ we drive, the positions he hold, the offices we occupy and the titles we parade.

Heaven does not know you as the person with a posh house, posh car, and occupying the posh office. The Godhead does not define you by the title you bear and the name and fame that go with it. Heaven does not identify you by the nice dress you wear. Heaven identifies and defines you by your heart. The kind of heart you wear tells who you are before God. Hear what the Lord said to Samuel when He was looking for a replacement for King Saul. “Do not consider his appearance...for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1Samuel 16:7).

Is your heart in a state of godly attraction or repulsive rejection? Is it stuffed with a righteous content or an unrighteous one? Note that beauty adorned in its custom made dresses are not a substitute to a heart dressed in Christ-like virtues. God’s attraction through the ages has always remained the inner wear of a godly heart and godly character and never the external wear of handsomeness, beauty and wonderful wears of clothing. After all, good looks are not you given but God given, therefore never you let them be a reason for pride and carnality. Coach and have yourself couched in contentment; that is your best bet.

How then may you and I get this excellent frame of heart? How can we stay contented under any and every situation? How can we stand stably contented under anything welfare upsetting circumstance that befalls us?

To be a person of contentment you must be Christ-like. To be shrewded in contentment, you must be a praying person to live content, you must a person deep in consideration. Consideration will do much, but having Christ in grace alive in you however, will do much greater and being committed to praying will do the most for you in the contentment drive bit. And while consideration shows your human strength, your Christian strength is shown in the grace of Christ upon your life, and your ability to pray, demonstrates God’s strength at work in you. The unity of these three, work contentment in you to an unshakable stand and strength.

Important to your knowledge is the fact that when God thinks of you, he thinks of your heart above everything else that you may be. He searches out your heart for your devotion, your tenderness and quick mind, your compassion and does not think of anything materially you are worth, of prime consideration. And when you take thoughts of yourself, you should from the point of contentment, not either. For all material goods, good as they may be, are ephemeral,

while all spiritual good has eternal value. Therefore the apostle Paul says as he writes Timothy that “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1Timothy 6:6).

We want to live well and live long, but we let worry-care and concerns for the things of the world steal the show. Like wisdom, buy contentment and you will live and live long.

Do always remember that nothing will count of your material things when it comes to your eternal placement, but all will count for you of your spiritual wealth and spiritual possessions.

“LIFE IS NOT DEFINED BY WHAT YOU HAVE, EVEN WHEN YOU HAVE A LOT” (Luke 12:15 The Message). BUT CERTAINLY THE HEART YOU HAVE DEFINES YOU BEFORE GOD.

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