

>>The believer longs for peace and contentment. **Barriers to Contentment:** 1) **A List:** believing one more thing or one less thing will make you content. 2) **Fantasy Thinking:** dreaming of what it would be like to have some life changing thing. 3) **Looking to Others:** believing others can provide it for you, others will make you happy. 4) **More Control:** if you could control the situation, outcomes, people, circumstances, then you could be content. 5) **Believing in Our Own Importance:** not possible to be content criticizing others or being the one that matters. 6) **Forgetfulness of the Gospel:** not remembering that we deserved hell. Thankfulness for salvation is enough. 7) **Making Own Rules for Suffering:** realizing that pain and suffering can remain for the rest of your life and doesn't get resolved or answered in ways we choose.

>>**We need to examine in our lives what is keeping me from being content?**

Warnings of Discontentment: 1) We can make up any reason we want to be discontent. 2) It is the root of many counseling issues. 3) It can spread to others. 4) We can seek contentment in improper ways (As seen above) a) Pleasures that won't bring contentment and make us numb, b) Opportunities for discontentment abound, c) There are deceptive pathways to contentment.

>>**2 Tim 3:16-17, Scripture provides us the source of truth for contentment in life.**

Today's Sermon: 6 Contrasts to Understand Contentment:

1. **It is Active not Passive:** V11, Paul is not speaking from want or need, he is not dissatisfied with the Philippians' offering or God's provision. V11, "I have learned," the word learned has the meaning, "take into yourself." What Paul has learned he gives us in the preceding verses:
 - a. **Imitate godly people** V9, Paul's life, but also those in our lives as examples,
 - b. **Direct our thoughts** V8, control and correct our thinking, i.e. things that are good.
 - c. **Pray until peaceful**, V6-7, this would be quantity of prayer, as much as it takes.
 - d. **Demonstrate humility**, V5, forbearance, gentleness, the Lord is near, close, coming.
 - e. **Rejoice as a habit**, V4, thankfulness is connected to joy.

>>**This is a list for Christians to do daily in their lives. For action, not just reflection.**

2. **Contentment is Your Responsibility not Others':** V11, Paul learned to be content. The word is Greek is "autarkés," it is formed from auto (self) and arkeo (self-complacent). It is used one place in Scripture. It is to be independent of others, content. Those who would have listened to Seneca (4BC-65AD, contemporary of Paul) would have found this autarkés in their own strength. Paul uses this word in V11 but qualifies and describes it in V12 and ends with Christ as the source in V13.
 - a. The source of Paul's sufficiency and independence is Christ is him the hope of glory and sustaining power through the Holy Spirit who dwells in him (in us).
 - b. Christians are free to have peace independent of circumstances.
 - c. Contentment not found in others - therefore no one can make us discontent.
3. **It is Present not Future:** V11, I can have it now. In whatever circumstance I find myself in, it is good, it can be present.
4. **It is Unconditional not Circumstantial:** V11, Whatever place God has me, I can be content in that place. Paul learned this in much suffering, 2 Cor. 11:24-28.
5. **It is Theological not Emotional:** V12-13, Paul was able to get along with little or much. Paul is okay living in any circumstance. 1) Paul's self-sufficiency comes from Christ's sufficiency.

Paul's strength comes from the grace of Christ, Eph. 6:10, 1 Tim. 1:12, 2 Tim. 2:1, Phil. 4:13. 2) Paul's strength comes from his union with Christ and knowledge of Him, Phil. 3:10. United with Christ in resurrection, Rom. 6:5. In Paul's weakness the power of God is manifested in him, 2 Cor. 12:9-10. 3) In my union with Christ, I am never alone in circumstance. My union with Christ is unbreakable. Paul endured physical affliction (2 Cor. 11:24-33) but also his deep concern for the churches he has labored for, 2 Cor. 11:28.

6. **It is Duty not Voluntary:** Phil. 4:9, "these do," our call to imitate Paul. Our call is to show these attributes to others. We are to be content with what the Lord has brought and provided. We are to stop grumbling and complaining amongst ourselves and be thankful, content, and grateful for the relationships we have, Phil. 2:14, 1 Pet. 4:9, John 6:43.

Further Discussion and Application

Paul tells us contentment with godliness is great gain, 1 Tim. 6:6. What is the simplicity of being grateful for what you have been given? How is godliness demonstrated by accepting and being thankful for what God has given you? Looking at Phil. 2:5-11 and Hebrews 12:1-2, what did Christ receive from His humility? What did we receive from His humility? How did He demonstrate His contentment in the Father's will for Him?

How can you make your contentment active? What can you do each day to form habits that demonstrate contentment in the life and station of our lives? How does pride and pleasure effect contentment? What change in our hearts and minds will cause us to value the relationships we have in the body of Christ? To love our spouses more deeply and in understanding? What change in heart would change how we view the time we have with our children? How precious to us is our salvation?

Consider The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price, Matt. 13:45-46. The merchant knew the value of pearls. He knew the preciousness of what he had found and sold all that he had to purchase it. Consider The Parable of the Hidden Treasure in Matt. 13:44. What did both of these men find? How could we properly order things in our lives so that we focus on the eternal things? What are the eternal things that the Lord has given us?