

# Short Sermons on Contentment

## Fixing My “Wanter”

Carlyle Marney was a minister who once made a casual remark about being content that became one of his family’s enduring expressions: “Dr. Marney says, ‘We just need to get our wanter fixed.’” It’s so easy to want more than we need and to become more focused on getting than on giving. Soon, our desires dictate our choices.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the followers of Jesus in the city of Philippi, he told them, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phil. 4:11-12). Paul was saying, in effect, “I’ve had my ‘wanter’ fixed.” It’s important to note that Paul was not born with contentment. He learned it in the difficult circumstances of everyday life.

During this season of the year, when shopping and buying often take center stage in so many countries and cultures, why don’t we decide to focus on being satisfied in our present circumstances? It may sound difficult, but Paul, when talking about learning to be content said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (v.13). Contentment begins with having fewer wants.

## Piles of Stuff

Throughout life, people accumulate a lot of stuff. They have boxes of things that at one time were important but over time have lost their meaning or purpose. Collectors seldom realize that the thrill is in searching for and acquiring a new piece to add to their collection. Then their attention turns toward the hunt for the next item.

While we pile up many things that seem important to us, very little of it is really precious. In fact, over time we should learn that the most precious things in life are not material items at all. Rather, it’s the people who have loved us and are part of our lives who are precious. When we find our hearts saying, “I don’t know what I’d do without them,” we can know that they are precious to us.

So when Peter refers to Jesus as “a chief cornerstone, elect, precious” (1Peter 2:6), it should resonate in our hearts that He is truly precious—our prized possession above everything and everyone else. Where would we be today without the constant unfailing companionship of His faithful presence, wise and perfect guidance, merciful patience, comfort, and transforming reproof? What would we do without Him? Of all that is precious, Jesus tops the list.

## The Needs of the Moment Vs. Our Deepest Needs

For most of us, food is more than a necessity—it’s a wonderfully enjoyable part of life. We enjoy sitting down to well-prepared meals, especially when feeling hungry. It seems that the disciples were hungry for lunch when they returned to the well where Jesus was interacting with the Samaritan woman. They urged Him, “Rabbi, eat” (John 4:31). His response? “I have food to eat of which you do not know” (v.32), which made them wonder if someone had already brought Him something to eat (v.33).

Perhaps the disciples were so consumed with thinking about food that they couldn’t see past their lunch plans. They didn’t understand the significance of what was going on at the well. The most important thing to Jesus was “to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (v.34). He was focused on the spiritual needs of this woman who desperately needed what only He could give.

It's easy to become preoccupied with needs of the moment. But Jesus invites us to get beyond our own interests—our own little “lunch”—to open our eyes to the souls who are searching for answers to their deepest needs. Imitate Jesus at the well, and tell others about the spiritual food only He can give. Be hungry to satisfy the needs of others around you.

### **The Meaning of Sacrifice**

In June 2011, when disastrous flood waters chased residents of Minot, North Dakota, from their homes, the people of that community did what seemed to come naturally to them—they helped others who were in need. People from more than an hour away, without being asked, showed up to help. Some loaned their campers to those who lost their homes and others allowed their garages to be used for temporary storage. The people of North Dakota were showing what it means to be good neighbors.

As followers of Christ, being good neighbors—showing love to others—should come naturally to us as well (Matt. 22:39; John 13:35; 1John 4:7-11). Even though we may not have the opportunity to respond in a dramatic way to a natural disaster, we can all look for ways to love those around us. To be good neighbors, we can show others mercy (Luke 10:29-37), treat others fairly (Lev. 19:13-18; James 2:1-8), speak to others truthfully (Eph. 4:25), and forgive others completely (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).

Christians can be the best neighbors around because our love for others flows out of the life of the ultimate neighbor—Jesus Christ—who loved and sacrificed His life for us. Our love for Christ is only as real as our love for our neighbor.

### **I Sing**

I sing, "Give me the Bible."  
How I love that dear old song.  
But a thirty minute sermon;  
Becomes boring and too long.

I sing, "Take Time to Be Holy."  
It gives me pure delight.  
So I attend on Sunday morning,  
But not on Sunday night.

I sing, "I Love Thy Kingdom Lord."  
I'm proud to be a member.  
But by the daily life I live,  
I'm just a dying ember.

I sing, "I Want to Be a Worker."  
It makes me feel so good.  
But, when some work comes along,  
I don't do what I could.

I sing, "I Love to Tell the Story."  
It really plays upon my heart.  
But I'm so busy and afraid,  
I never made a start.

In worship to God I sing these songs,

This truth I'm not denying.  
But by the life which I live  
Do I not prove I'm lying?  
(Author Unknown)

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.
- Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.
- If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.
- The best way to have what you want, is to want what you have.
- There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there.
- Happiness is an attitude of mind, born of the simple determination to be happy under all outward circumstances.