

# Contentment: The Prince of Virtues

Philippians 4:10-14

1Timothy 6:6-8

## Phil. 4:10-14

- “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. 14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.”

## 1Tim. 6:6-8

- “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”

# Contentment: The Prince of Virtues

- “O people of God! I admonish you to observe contentment, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of serenity and is attired with the vesture of uprightness.” (Baha'u'llah)

# Contentment: The Prince of Virtues

- What is the greatest obstacle Americans face in devoting themselves to God?
- It's not sin to be rich, but it interferes with a relationship with God
  - Luke 18:25 - "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

# Contentment: The Prince of Virtues

- We have more than we need, but plenty will not brought satisfaction.
  - Ecc. 1:14 - “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind.”
  - Ecc. 5:10 - “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.”

# Contentment: The Prince of Virtues

- American Christians must break this life pattern and be different from the world
  - Rom. 12:2 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
- One of those changes that makes a Christian different is that he strives to become content
  - Heb. 13:5 - “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you”

# What Does It Mean To Be Content?

- Five things contentment is not:
  - Contentment is not merely external self-control.
  - Contentment is not a state of apathy.
  - Contentment is not fatalism; “whatever will be, will be.”
  - Contentment is not merely an easygoing personality or a sanguine character which does not get excited easily.
  - Contentment is not insensitivity of spirit, unaffected, flat spirit.

# What Does It Mean To Be Content?

- Contentment is an attitude of heart, not just an external response to life. It is a condition that manifests the character of the inner man.
- The contented person submits his heart to the will of God.
- He is at peace with his circumstances, regardless of what they may be.

# What Does It Mean To Be Content?

- Contentment permits one to express his concerns to others.
  - James 5:13-15 - “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

# What Does It Mean To Be Content?

- 2Thes. 3:1-2 - “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.”

# What Does It Mean To Be Content?

- Contentment permits one to change circumstances that can be changed without compromising the faith
  - Matt. 10:23 - “When they persecute you in this city, flee to another...”
  - Acts 8:1 - “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

# Contentment Requires Effort

- Genuine contentment is attainable. God would not command contentment if we were incapable of it.
- However, it must be learned
  - Phil. 4:11 - “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content”

# Contentment Requires Effort

- Learning takes time and demands focus, perseverance, and practice
- Contentment is contrary to our culture and often to our upbringing.
- Contentment demands that we acknowledge that we are discontent before we can learn the lessons of contentment
- True, godly, and lasting contentment is possible only in Christ
  - Phil. 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

# Contentment Requires Effort

- Our help in learning contentment will come through God
  - Phil. 1:6 - “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”
  - Phil. 2:13 - “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”
  - 1Thes. 2:13 - “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

# Contentment Requires Effort

- Contentment requires us to remove ourselves from the center of our universe
- Ecc. 12:13 - “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all”
- Luke 10:40-42 - “But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

# Contentment Requires Effort

- Contentment requires that Christians must accept the fact that earthly prosperity is not a God given right
  - Col. 3:2 - “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

## Contentment Is Knowing Our Place In This World

- We are nothing more than tenants on God's earth
  - Psalm 24:1 - "The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein."
  - 1Chron. 29:14 - "But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You."

## Contentment Is Knowing Our Place In This World

- We rent everything; we own nothing
  - Lev. 25:23 - “The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.”
  - 1Tim. 6:7 - “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

## Contentment Is Knowing Our Place In This World

- 1Cor. 6:19-20 - “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”
- Luke 12:15 - “And He said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

## Contentment Is Knowing Our Place In This World

- Luke 9:25 - “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?”
- 1Cor. 4:2 - “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”

## Contentment Is Knowing Our Place In This World

- Our stay on earth is very brief before we go to our eternal home.
  - Psalm 39:5 - “Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.”
  - James 4:14 - “...For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away”

## Contentment Is Knowing Our Place In This World

- Work for what we need for the journey, not to pile up stuff for the destination
  - 1Tim. 6:8 - “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”

# Contentment Is Trusting God's Promises

- Heb. 13:5 - "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you."
- Matt. 28:20 - "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- Matt. 6:33 - "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

# Contentment: The Prince of Virtues

- “Contentment is the secret of inward peace. It remembers the stark truth that we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it. Life, in fact, is a pilgrimage from one moment of nakedness to another. So we should travel light and live simply. Our enemy is not possessions, but excess. Our battle cry is not ‘Nothing!’ but ‘Enough!’ Simplicity says, ‘If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.’ Simplicity is the first cousin of contentment.”  
(John Stott)