

Contentment – A Fruit of Faith

Text : **Philippians 4: 10-14 ; I Timothy 6: 3-10**

S#1.

A. What's the greatest obstacle to your having an ideal relationship with God ? S#2.

1. The needles eye lies directly between we Americans and Heaven.
 - a. **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.** S#3.
 - b. We're 4.4% of the world's population, but have 41% of the wealth. S#4.
 - c. China is #2 and they have only 10.5 %. (20 % of world population)
 2. Fully 50% of all the houses in the world are located in the U.S.
 - a. In the U.S. our housing averages 2 rooms per individual.
 - b. Worldwide the average is 5 people for each room.
 3. None of us view ourselves as being rich because we live in the land of the rich.
 - a. The U.S. federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour,
but 1 billion+ people live on \$1 a day or less. (cost of living not much different)
 - 1) The cost of living is not significantly less.
 - 2) People live on subsistence level
- * Note : *The majority of the people who self-identify as Christians live in the 3rd world.*
- b. In 87% of the world 75% of the people will die before age 50.

B. It is not sinful to be rich, but it is an obstacle to our relationship with God. S#5.

1. Having the potential to prosper draws us into the quest for physical success.
2. The desire for physical success opens the door to many temptations.
 - a. **I Tim. 6: 10** – **For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.** S#6.
 - b. The quest for success will dominate one's time, his energy and his thoughts.
 - c. Money opens the door to a host of pleasures, many of which are sinful.
3. Americans have so many support groups that few place their trust in God.

S#7.

C. All of this wealth and yet the average American is not satisfied, not contented.

1. We have more than we need, but our plenty has not brought satisfaction.
2. The richest and wisest man on earth found that nothing on the earth can satisfy.
 - a. **Eccl. 1: 14** – **I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.** S#8.
 - b. **Eccl. 5: 10** – **He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.**
 - c. **Eccl. 12: 8** – **"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!"**

3. When asked, a high percentage of Americans say they are unhappy.
 - a. In the past decade sales of antidepressants have risen 400%.
 - b. Many of the rich and famous become addicted and some die of overdoses.
 - c. The American lifestyle creates high anxiety levels.

D. From childhood Americans are trained to be dissatisfied.

S#9.

1. Children ages 2-5 watch 32 hours of TV per week (*University of Michigan Study*)
2. In a year's time said child will have watched 54, 912 commercials.
 - a. Commercials are designed to make the child want a specific product.
 - b. They grow up associating fun, happiness, popularity and success with a product.
 - c. Many children develop brand loyalty by age 3. (*Not just shoes .. air Jordan*)

S#10.

Christians must break this yoke of Satan 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, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1. When one becomes a Christian he must make certain changes.
2. Those changes will make him a non-conformist ... different from others.
3. The Christian's life must demonstrate the will of God for man.
4. One of those changes that makes a Christian different is that he must be contented.

Heb. 13: 5 – Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

S#11.

I. What does it mean to be "content?"

S#12.

A. First let us see five things that contentment is not.

1. Contentment is not merely external self-control.
 - a. Some never complain, but are discontent inside.
 - b. Contentment must be a state of heart.
2. Contentment is not a state of apathy.
 - a. It's not an attitude of I don't care. "*Oh well, whatever.*" "*I don't care!*"
 - b. Not cynically giving up, not thinking anything better is impossible.
3. Contentment is not fatalism. "Que sera, sera ... 'whatever will be, will be'."
 - a. Believing one can do nothing to alter his circumstances.
 - b. Fate is arbitrary; randomly bring about one event or another.

4. Contentment is not to be confused with an easygoing personality
 - a. It's not being of a sanguine character which does not get excited easily.
 - b. Seems content, but not .. just as easygoing in serving God. (*Easy come, easy go.*)
5. Contentment is not insensitivity of spirit. (*A paralyzed person doesn't feel pain.*)
 - a. Some appear contented b/c they don't have capacity to understand circumstances.
 - b. For example, a drug addict or an alcoholic.

B. People define contentment in different ways.

1. Dictionary : happy and at ease, willing to accept something, satisfied
2. Holman Bible Dictionary — “An internal satisfaction which does not demand changes in external circumstances”
3. I prefer : An attitude of heart which accepts and embraces God's providential management of every situation.

C. Contentment is an attitude of heart, not just an external response to life. S#13.

1. It is a condition which determines the character of the inner man.
2. The contented person submits his heart to the will of God.
3. He is at peace with his circumstances, regardless of what they may be.
 - a. It is not lying to one's self about his circumstances.
 - b. It is not the absence of any feeling of being afflicted.
4. Contentment does not forbid one from expressing his distress to friends.
 - a. **James 5: 13-16** ... When distressed (sick) we are to call the elders to pray.
 - b. **II Thes. 3: 1-2** ... Pray for us to be delivered from evil men.
5. This is not to say that we should not do our best to deliver ourselves from affliction.
 - a. **Matt. 10: 23** – **But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; ... #14.**
 - b. **Acts 8: 1** – **And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.**

II. The Christian must put forth effort to learn contentment.

S#15.

A. Genuine contentment is attainable.

S#16.

1. God would not command for us to be contented if it was not within our reach.
2. Contentment does not come naturally, it must be learned.

Phil. 4: 11 – **Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.**

3. Learning requires effort, acquisition of knowledge and practical application.
4. Contentment is contrary to our basic human nature and to our culture.
5. The first step in learning is to recognize that one must recognize he is not content.

B. True contentment is possible only in Christ.

1. **Phil. 4: 13** – **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**
 - a. This does not mean that one can be an Olympic athlete or an astronaut.
 - b. The context is that one can bear up under any circumstance thru faith in Christ.
2. Through the pray of faith one can receive help from God.
 - a. **Phil. 1: 6** – **For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.** S#17.
 - b. **Phil. 2: 13** – **Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**
3. Jesus works on your life as His word works on your heart.

I Thes. 2: 13 – **For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you S#18. received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.**

C. It is incumbent upon each Christian to learn self-denial.

1. Life is not all about me. *We must grow out of the childish focus on self.*
2. One must accept that this world can never fully satisfy.
 - a. When you obsess about getting something, getting it never satisfies for long.
 - b. Solomon was the richest and wisest man who ever lived, **but** said all is vanity.
 - c. **Eccl. 12: 13** – **The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and S#19. keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.**
3. We must learn the one thing that is truly necessary.
 - a. Remember the story of Mary and Martha. *Mary knew what was important.*
 - b. The goal of this life is twofold :
 - 1) Bring glory to our creator.
 - 2) Form and maintain a relationship to God which will cause Him to welcome us.
4. We must accept that earthly prosperity is not a divine right.
 - a. People who preach the “prosperity gospel” are but charlatans. (*Hottest part of Hell*)
 - b. Those who give hoping to get are not contented ... wanting more is dissatisfaction.
5. In order to achieve contentment one must redirect his heart.

Col. 3: 2 – **Fix your mind on things above, not on things that are on the earth.**

S#20.

III. In order to achieve contentment one must accept his position on the earth.**A. Man is but a tenant on God's earth.**

1. This is God's world and we are but His stewards.

a. **Psa. 24: 1** – The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. (cf. **I Chron. 29: 14-15**)

S#21.

b. **Lev. 25: 23** – The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.

2. God allows man to use His land during his sojourn on the earth.

a. **I Cor. 4: 2** – ... , it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

S#22.

b. **I Tim. 6: 7** – For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

3. No matter how much a man acquires during his stay, he leaves it all on earth.

a. **Luke 12: 15** – Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

S#23.

b. **Luke 9: 25** – For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

B. Our stay on earth is but a brief period of testing as we transit to our home.

1. **Psa. 39: 5** – Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.

S#24.

2. **James 4: 14** – Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

C. Work for what we need for the journey, not to accumulate wants.

S#25.

1. We are commanded to be contented with our basis needs.

I Tim. 6: 8 – If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

2. It is not sinful to have more, but it is sinful to desire more.

Heb. 13: 5 – Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

S#26.

IV. The desire to have more of this world's goods questions God's promise.

S#27.

A. Jesus promised us that He will always be with us.

S#28.

1. **Heb. 13: 5** – "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

2. **Matt. 18: 20** – "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

B. You have what God has entrusted to your use for His glory.**S#29.**

1. God owns everything and has the ability to give you as much as He desires.
2. Remember the parable of the talents ? Jesus gives according to ability.
Matt. 25: 15 – **To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.**
3. When our Master returns there will be an accounting of our stewardship.

C. There remains but two questions :

1. Are we using what has been entrusted to us to His glory?
 - a. We are His servants so whatever we have is to be used for His purpose / glory.
 - b. **Luke 12: 47-48** “**And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, ⁴⁸ but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.**” **S#30.**
2. Is our faith sufficient to trust His promises to care for us?
 - a. **Matt. 18: 20** – “**I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” **S#31.**
 - b. **Matt. 6: 33** – **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

CONCLUSION :**S#32.**

- A. The Apostle wrote to Timothy from a prison cell, but was joyous and confident.
- B. The devil does his best to cause us to focus on this world, but that is foolish.
- C. We are citizens of Heaven passing through this world on our way home.
- D. Place your trust in our King’s promised care, not on this world.

INVITATION :**S#33.** *Communion Slide*

Lesson Text :**Philippians 4: 10-14**

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. **11** Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. **12** I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. **13** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. **14** Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

I Timothy 6: 3-10

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, **4** he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, **5** and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. **6** But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. **7** For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. **8** If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. **9** But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.