

# CULTIVATING CONTENTMENT

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## I. THE FOUNDATION OF CONTENTMENT: THE CHARACTER OF GOD

- A. **God is self-sufficient.** He possesses within His own life as God everything that is good. (**Acts 17:24; Psalm 50:7-15**)
  
- B. **God is sovereign.** God plans and carries out His perfect will, over the smallest and largest parts of creation fully, and He does so without failure or defeat.  
(**Daniel 4:30-37; Isaiah 45:6b-7**)
  
- C. **God is all-knowing, or omniscient, and all-wise.** He knows all things; He understands all things perfectly, and He uses this complete knowledge in the best ways.  
(**Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:13-14**)
  
- D. **God is love, and He gives good gifts.**  
(**1 John 4:10; Romans 8:32; James 1:17; Psalm 16:5-6**)

Cycle of contentment: we need – God provides – we thank Him – God is glorified.

When hard times come, and they will, let's determine to judge the hard times BY the character of God, and refuse to judge the character of God by the hard times.

**Contentment is being satisfied in God, His character, His works, and His ways.**

## II. THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTENTMENT: THE URGE FOR INDEPENDENCE

- A. **The Fall of Mankind (Genesis 3:1-7)**
  
- B. **The Desires of Mankind (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Corinthians 4:7; James 4:1-4)**
  - 1. The desires of the flesh
  - 2. The desires of the eyes
  - 3. Pride in possessions

### C. **The Transformation of our Desires**

“... the cravings of the human heart can be changed ... God would have us long for Him instead. To make us truly human God must change what we want, for we must learn to want the things Jesus wanted ... The human life is a great paradox. Those who die to self, find self ... If I crave happiness, I will receive misery. If I crave to be loved, I will receive rejection. If I crave significance, I will receive futility. If I crave control, I will receive chaos. If I crave reputation, I will receive humiliation. But if I long for God and His wisdom, I will receive God and His wisdom. Along the way, sooner or later, I will also receive happiness, love, meaning, order and glory.”

(David Powlison, *Dynamics of Biblical Change*)

### **Intentionally cultivate dependence upon God.**

*Lord, I give up all my own plans and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept Thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to Thee to be Thine forever. Fill me and seal me with Thy Holy Spirit. Use me as Thou wilt, send me where Thou wilt, work out Thy whole will in my life at any cost, now and forever.*

(Betty Stam, Martyred Missionary to China)

## **III. THE CULTIVATION OF CONTENTMENT: THE FRUIT OF THE GOSPEL**

### **A. Remember the Gospel (John 15:5; Philippians 4:13)**

Our growth in contentment (as in all areas of sanctification) is not the **root** of our salvation, but it is the **fruit** of our salvation.

### **B. Practical tips for cultivating grace-wrought, God-honoring contentment.**

#### **1. Monitor your mind. (2 Corinthians 10:5b; Philippians 4:8)**

**Our thought life to a significant degree determines our contentment.**

#### **2. Foster gratitude.**

*“If we do not have what we desire, we have more than we deserve.”*

(Thomas Watson)

*O Lord, I am astonished at the difference  
between my receivings and my deservings,  
between the state I am now in and my past gracelessness,  
between the heaven I am bound for and the hell I merit.  
Who made me to differ, but thee?  
for I was no more ready to receive Christ than were others;  
I could not have begun to love thee hadst thou not first loved me,  
or been willing unless thou hadst first made me so.  
O that such a crown should fit the head of such a sinner!  
such high advancement be for an unfruitful person!  
such joys for so vile a rebel!*

(Valley of Vision, pp. 12-13)

#### **3. Guard your eyes, ears, mind, and ultimately heart from being filled up with things of this world.**

#### **4. Intentionally develop a wider view of the world.**

#### **5. Look for ways to be a giver.**

#### **6. Develop an eternal perspective.**