

The Secret That Will Change Your Life

“*If only ...*” These are two words that are often on the lips of most human beings.

Two words that bring with them feelings of unrest and dissatisfaction.

If only I could have her looks and figure ...

If only I had more money to spend ...

If only she would go out with me ...

If only I could have a place in the first team ...

If we are honest with ourselves, who we are and what we are is never good enough.

We see a model posing in a magazine and want to be like him or her.

We walk into a shop and crave all the great things we know will never be ours.

We watch action-packed films and feel our lives are boring.

It seems we are never, ever satisfied with the life we are living.

Sometimes our lack of contentment can be good, if it drives us to improve our lives.

Members of a football team practice until they are nearly unbeatable.

Computer whizzies like Bill Gates are **not** satisfied with what they have produced and continually strive to create faster and easier programmes.

A Christian who is **not** satisfied with their spiritual growth, digs deeper into God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

Our discontentment can turn ugly –

When we allow jealousy and envy to have their way.

James 4:2-3 [New Living Translation] *“You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can’t possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them...”*

Okay, so maybe you don’t exactly murder to get what you want, but if words and thoughts could kill, there would be a few casualties left in our path.

When we try to fill our emptiness with more emptiness.

When people feel lonely and unloved, their search for “*love*” can lead from one sexual partner to another.

When people feel their lives are boring, they seek excitement [and escape] through alcohol and drugs.

Even “*good things*” are **not** always so good when they are done for the wrong reason.

So how do we find contentment?

Well, to start with, there is nothing on this earth that can truly fill our inner lack of contentment.

On what do I base this statement?

The personal experience of applying a statement made by a famous French philosopher, Blaise Pascal.

“There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every human being which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God our Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.”

If we try to stuff anything but God into this God-shaped hole in our lives, we will end up dissatisfied, restless and discontent.

But if we fill that God-shaped hole with God, what do we find? In one word, “*contentment.*”

Why can nothing physical fill this vacuum?

Job 32:8 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.”*

The hole in our life is spiritual so nothing physical orientated can fill it.

1 Corinthians 2:11 [NIV] *“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

It is only when our human spirit is united with God’s Holy Spirit that we can fill this void in our lives.

Until this happens we will remain discontented in life.

This sounds great, but does it really work?

Philippians 4:12-13 [NIV] *“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

The “*him*” referred to in this scripture is Jesus Christ, see context.

These are **not** just nice, religious sounding words.

In fact, they are the heartfelt words of a man who was in prison when he wrote them the apostle Paul.

They are the words of a man who had once been one of the most powerful people around.

Philippians 3:4-6 [NIV] *“though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.”*

Very few could say this about their accomplishments in life.

Did this bring the apostle Paul contentment?

No!

Philippians 3:7-10 [NIV] *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ*

Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,”

This was how Paul had found and applied the secret of contentment, how he had filled that void in his life.

By a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ this friendship holds the secret to a truly satisfying life.

This friendship leads to a life filled with contentment, whatever our physical circumstances.

Seven reasons why this friendship with Jesus Christ brings us contentment.

1. We have eternal life now

John 3:16 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**”*

1 John 5:11-13 [NIV] *“And this is the testimony: **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.** He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

2. We are loved by our Creator God

Romans 5:8 [NIV] *“But **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”*

3. We are totally accepted by God

Romans 8:1-4 [NIV] *“**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,** because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”*

4. We are adopted into God’s created family

Romans 8:15-17 [NIV] *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.** Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and **co-heirs with Christ,** if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

5. We can talk directly to God the Father

Hebrews 4:14-16 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. **Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence,** so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

6. We have a reason for living

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 [NIV] *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.**”*

7. We have a hope for a great future

Ephesians 1:18 [NIV] *“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,”*

Titus 3:3-7 [NIV] *“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, **so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.**”*

Nothing on earth in the society in which we at present dwell can ever offer us the above.

Only our Saviour and High Priest Jesus Christ.