

Contentment Can Be A Friend Or An Enemy

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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.”*

Paul professed that he had learnt to be content with such earthly goods he was blessed with, the key being putting Jesus Christ and serving Him first in his life.

1 Timothy 6:6-11 [NIV] *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”*

This contentment with the physical conditions we find ourselves in is great gain for it helps us to avoid the pitfalls that the love of money and the possessions it can bring and cause us to be trapped by them.

Paul also tells us to “pursue righteousness” and all the other godly characteristics.

Philippians 3:7-15 [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, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.”*

When it comes to spiritual attainments Paul was far from content and this is the attitude of mind that any maturing Christian must have.

Paul gave up everything, family, friendship, position and freedom, in order to know Jesus Christ and His resurrection power. We, as Christians, also have access to this power and knowledge of life after our change or resurrection. [**1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**]

Contentment with earthly goods is the mark of a mature Christian, contentment with our spiritual state is the mark of inward blindness.

Revelation 3:14-22 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can*

see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

As Jesus Christ told the apostle John to warn all church fellowships to be aware that spiritual complacency can be fatal.

The person who believes they have attained full spiritual maturity will **not** seek to mature, from their standpoint they consider they have arrived when they have not.

To quote scripture to prove we are fully mature may be a dangerous position to be in if we have had **no** personal experience of that scripture.

Matthew 23:2-3 [NIV] *“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practise what they preach.”*

The scribes who sat in Moses’ seat, that is teachers of the law, were **not** victims of error, they were victims of their failure to experience the truth that they taught.

This is why Jesus Christ condemned them as hypocrites. [**Matthew 23:13, 23, 27**]

Religious complacency is encountered almost everywhere among Christians these days, due to the lack of spiritual desire.

The great men and women whom God used in the past to fulfil His will on earth, all had a longing after God and His Word that all but consumed them.

This ardent desire propelled them to a spiritual maturity that less ardent Christians look at and entertain **no** hope of ever reaching.

Seek to experience an increasing intimacy with our Creator God through study of His Word, the Christian Bible, and personal prayer that is the result of that study and meditation.

Refuse to be an “*average*” Christian or to surrender to the chill of your spiritual environment, or allow your love for God and your fellow human beings to grow cold.

Matthew 24:6-13 [NIV] *“You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth-pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”*