

Covetousness and Contentment

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Hebrews 13:5-6 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Philippians 4:11-13 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

1 Timothy 6:5-10 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- I. Covetousness is the direct opposite of contentment.
 - A. Both are a state of mind, or a habit of thought.
 - B. Both are an indication of the state and condition of the heart.
 - C. If we are covetousness we cannot boldly say, “The Lord is my helper” or we are lying.
 1. Only the heart that is content can honestly and truthfully say, “The Lord is my helper.”
 2. Because there is no source of contentment outside of knowing God and trusting in Him.
 - D. Covetousness manifests itself in murmuring and complaining, and murmuring and complaining is also a manifestation of discontentment.
 - E. The covetous gripe and complain are full of envy, quick to anger, frustrated all the time, and constantly pursuing their own desires.
 - F. The content sing and bless God with their whole being and are satisfied with nothing or with plenty.
 1. Their desires for earthly things have taken a back seat to the things that really matter.
- II. The heart is at war with the mind over this matter until we are truly born again and find peace with God.
 - A. In fact, the heart completely prevails over the mind until it is yielded to Christ.
 - B. Our desires spring from our heart and our lusts demand the consent of the mind to obtain what we want.
 - C. This is basically what covetousness is, and that is why it is defined by the Scripture as idolatry; God and truth are cast aside in order to fulfill our lusts, and get what we want.
 1. It is madness when we are ruled by our heart and our mind is only used to try to justify the things we do.

- D. So we are ruled by our desires until we are converted; but after we are born again our desires are governed by truth, which is found in the Word of God
- E. Our mind will not acquiesce to the hearts desires when they are reaching beyond the will of God.
- F. This does not mean that the desires never rise up and try it again and again.
- G. This is the struggle that goes on in the Christian.

Galatians 5:17-18 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

- H. It is a spiritual battle that is constantly carried on by Satan and his devils by exploiting this weakness of our flesh against the Holy Spirit of God that is in us.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

- I. We must turn to the Word of God and fill our minds with its truth in order to fight the good fight of faith.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Ephesians 4:22-24 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

III. So covetousness is when we are controlled by our lusts and desires and contentment is when we are at peace with God and satisfied with what He has given us at any time in our lives.

- A. To covet is to want what you do not have.
 - 1. Covetous is to live that way, always wanting something, and always looking around for something to set your desire upon.
- B. To covet is the first step we take toward sin.
 - 1. It is when we allow our eye to be drawn to something, giving the devil a chance to start his sales pitch to us about it.
- C. If we start with the Ten Commandments at the bottom of the list and go up we see that to covet is first, then next is to lie, then next we will steal, and if we are this far consumed with coveteousness we will commit adultery, and if we are that consumed and controlled by our lusts, we will murder another person.
- D. The first five commandments from top to bottom will lead us to rest and peace and long life, as we begin with God alone, and do not make up any kind imaginary nonsense about Him, and do not dishonor Him by claiming to wear his name but not actually wearing his character and holiness, keep his Sabbath instead of throwing it to the wind for our own pleasure, and honoring those who brought us into this world and showed us the way.

IV. Contentment is a learned art, as well as a state of the heart and mind.

- A. Paul said, "I have learned..."

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

- B. To learn is “To gain knowledge of; to acquire knowledge or ideas of something before unknown.”
- C. To learn how to be content is to learn of the mystery of the matter.
- D. To learn something is a process that goes on in the mind – not the heart.
 1. The heart will yield to the truth if the mind will hold onto it long enough.
 2. We must listen on purpose, and we must gird up the loins of our minds and seek for the truth, and what we find, we must KEEP.
 3. KEEP it before our heart; and bring it to the forefront when our desires are trying to take control of the reins of our life.

Luke 8:15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

- E. Contentment is defined as sufficiency and satisfaction, and the Scripture tells us that our sufficiency is of God.

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- F. True contentment is when I find a sufficiency of satisfaction in my own heart through the grace of Christ which is in me.
- G. Even though I may not have outward comforts and worldly conveniences to supply my necessities, I have a sufficient portion between Christ and my soul abundantly to satisfy me, whatever the circumstances.
- H. Contentment is to know that God has promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”
- I. To have the assurance of God’s presence and his blessing and care for us is the only thing that makes contentment possible for us in this world full of trouble.
- J. Covetousness is the assurance of being discontent.
 1. It is very easy to observe that all the people who have ever lived who had everything that covetous people seek after were never content.
 2. The rich and famous of every generation have taught us that peace and contentment cannot be bought with money or obtained by unlimited indulgence.
 3. Haman, though the favorite of the court, was not content.
 4. Ahab, though he was king, was not content.
 5. Adam, though living in the paradise of the garden, was not content.
 6. Even the angels in heaven were not content.
 7. Yet Paul, when he was forsaken of others, abased, empty, and in prison, had learned, in whatsoever state he was in, to be content, and counted himself as a rich man.

2 Corinthians 6:10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

- 8. All that really mattered he possessed, so whatever the present circumstances appeared to be, he knew they were only temporary.

9. There is a combination of two things that make for true riches, and they are godliness and contentment.

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

- K. People who do not know God assert that gain is godliness; in other words, we know how much God loves us by the measure of earthly comforts, pleasures, and things we have.
- L. But Jesus made it clear that this is just the opposite of the truth.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

1. Solomon also told us that covetousness is vanity and is never satisfied:

Ecclesiastes 5:10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.

- M. Carnally minded people cannot be content, and they reject any advice or counsel that deals with their covetousness, even from the Lord himself.

Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

- N. So the best advice for life you can get is this:

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

“I may look like a beggar but I’m rich as a king,
What I have in my heart gives me reason to sing,
I’m a joint-heir with Jesus so why should I sigh?
For these are the Treasures that money can’t buy.”

“So if you look at my garments, and you notice they’re torn,
Well I’ve a new royal garment that is never been worn,
And the cabin I live in is home till I die,
But I have mansion in glory that money can’t buy.”

MY HOME MAY NOT LOOK LIKE A CASTLE
AND MY CLOTHES MAY BE LACKING IN STYLE.
AND IF YOU COME SIT AT MY TABLE
A MEAGER SUPPLY YOU MIGHT FIND.

BUT OH ITS NOT WHAT YOU SEE
THAT MAKES ME A KING, MAKES ME A KING.
FOR TO ME I'VE EVERYTHING, ALL THAT I NEED
ALL THAT I NEED, I'VE TREASURES UNSEEN.

NOW GOD MADE A WORLD FILLED WITH BEAUTY
OF THINGS WE ENJOY EVERY DAY.
MY SECRET TO HIDDEN POSSESSIONS
IS TO LOVE HIM AND SERVE HIM EACH DAY.