

MAINTAINING BIBLICAL CONTENTMENT PART 6

NINE STEPS ON THE PATH TO BIBLICAL CONTENTMENT

1. GET TO WORK.

The Christian life is always described as a struggle in the NT. It is hard so get to work! The New Testament describes the Christian life with 3 metaphors. A RACE as we look toward our goal of Heaven (Phil. 3:14). This is the metaphor most often used of Christians in the N.T. 1c9, Ph 3, 2Tim4, Acts 20, Heb 12)

2. DIVORCE YOUR THINKING FROM SOCIETY'S RELATIVISTIC STANDARDS.

"God says be content, not be content if...Never allow the affairs of others to rob you of your contentment." Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 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. (KJV)

3. TURN OFF THE ADS AND TUNE OUT THE LIES.

GOD HATES WORLDLINESS James 4:4-5 ⁴ Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? (KJV)

4. DEFER TO GOD'S OPINION CONCERNING YOUR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

A careful look at Hebrews 13:1-7 can give us some enduring guidelines to protect and promote contentment in all areas of our lives: FLEE ALL TYPES OF DISCONTENTMENT Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." ⁶ So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

5. SET NEW STANDARDS.

- give more than receive [Acts 20:35; flying 20]
- others more than self [General Booth]
- seek FIRST God's way: as an old southern preacher shared with me
 - every desire of life must be tested in relation to the King.
 - Every decision must be made in the interest of the King.
 - Every duty must be performed for the pleasure of the King.
 - Every difficulty must be faced by trusting the King.
 - Every danger must be braved for the honor of the King.
 - Every dishonor must be endured for the sake of the King.
 - Every distraction must be ignored for the claims of the King.

6. DEVELOPE COUNTER HABITS.

John Charles Cooper writes, instead of:

getting try giving

replacing try preserving

feeling covetous, try feeling grateful

feeling inferior before men, try feeling accepted before God.

being ruled by feelings, try enjoying the freedom of contentment.

7. SUBTRACT FROM YOUR NEEDS.

Paul said he learned to be content with whatever he had. Philippians 4:11-12 ¹¹

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² 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. (KJV)

Make a list of all the things you need and then start crossing things off.

Remembering the One who said, in Matthew 6:25-34 :

- "LIFE IS MORE THAN EATING AND EXISTING" ²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
- "YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO GOD" ²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?
- "GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS OWN" ²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? ²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not

arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? ³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

- “GOD KNOWS YOUR NEEDS” ³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
- “GOD GIVES EACH OF US THE PRIORITY OF OUR LIVES” ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
- “GOD ASKS US TO GIVE OUR CARES TO HIM” ³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof. (KJV)

“There are two ways to get enough. One is to continue to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less.” G.K. Chesterton

8. ACCEPT FROM GOD'S HAND THAT WHICH HE GIVES.

- Not resignation, complacency, mourning and gloom. An attitude of contentment is always victorious.
- David is fleeing for his life from his wicked son Absalom in 2 Samuel 16:9-14. Listen to the contentment this man after the heart of God exhibits. There is no bitterness, no self pity. He trusts the Sovereignty of God. ⁹ Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. ¹⁰ And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? ¹¹ And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. ¹² It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day. ¹³ And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. ¹⁴ And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there. (KJV)

9. IF YOU STILL DO NOT FEEL THE STIRRINGS OF CONTENT -MENT WITHIN, ARGUE WITH YOURSELF AND TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH.

- J.I. Packer says, “*by learning to talk to ourselves in a good Christian way. You listen to God in the Scripture and then tell ,yourself what He*

said. If your emotions disagree, you argue with your emotions. And if you find unbelief in your heart, you argue with that unbelief and drive it out by appeal to God's truth."

- The list of the characteristics of the select few who get to abide in the presence of God is significant:
- Psalm 15:1-2 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? ² He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. (KJV)

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