

Understanding How to be Content

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Scripture References

Philippians 4:11-13

Philippians 4:11-13, *AMPC*

Philippians 4:11-13, *NLT*

Philippians 4:11-14, *MSG*

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10, *ESV*

1 Timothy 6:6-12

Romans 12:2, *NLT*

Proverbs 14:30, *NLT*

Job 36:11, *NIV*

Proverbs 19:23, *NIV*

Summary

*Contentment is pleasing to God, and it is a spiritual trait we need on our Christian walk. A good attitude is linked to being content; it combines being at peace in whatever circumstances we find ourselves with a willingness to work to keep improving ourselves. We can be this way when we are in Christ, because being in Him gives us the inner strength to face any situation life may throw at us. The apostle Paul suffered great hardship, yet he was completely content regardless of whatever happened; we can be the same way. Contentment does not mean satisfaction with staying the same and refusing to change; it means being satisfied with the temporary situation until God changes it. We were created with a void inside us that only Jesus Christ can fill. He is the source of all truth—therefore, the only true contentment to be found is in **Him**.*

A. Paul regularly faced adversity and hardship. However, he learned to be content.

1. 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 (Philippians 4:11-13).
 - a. Contentment is something that can be learned; this is something every Christian needs to understand. *Paul* learned that he could do all things through Christ, who strengthened him.
 - b. Contentment does not depend on the circumstances; it is based on what we know about Jesus.
 - c. The dictionary definition of being content is to be satisfied, to feel happy, and to have an ease of mind. The mistake most people make here is thinking that contentment and complacency are the same thing—they are not.
 - d. We can be satisfied with where we are in life right now, but complacency is a refusal to work to improve. Contentment is being satisfied while we are *on our way* to improvement.
2. Not that I am implying that I was in any personal want, for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am. I know how to be abased *and* live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty *and* live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a

sufficiency *and* enough to spare or going without *and* being in want. I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency] (Philippians 4:11-13, *AMPC*).

- a. Godly contentment involves having a quiet spirit, so that whatever is happening does not stress us out.
- b. The secrets to facing every situation are having strength for all things in Christ, who empowers us; being ready for anything through Him who infuses inner strength in us; and being self-sufficient in *Christ's* sufficiency.
- c. Nowhere does this Scripture say that we should be satisfied to the point where we do not want to change. We can be satisfied for the time being until God brings change into our lives.
- d. Being content involves appreciating what we have and where we are in life, not wishing that things were different.

B. In good times or difficult situations, we can remain content if we are in Christ.

1. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength (Philippians 4:11-13, *NLT*).
 - a. We may find temporary fulfillment and contentment in material things, but Jesus is the only source for true, real, and lasting contentment.
 - b. True fulfillment does not come through situations that can change, only through Christ.
2. Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. I don't mean that your help didn't mean a lot to me—it did. It was a beautiful thing that you came alongside me in my troubles (Philippians 4:11-14, *MSG*).
 - a. Paul confessed that "the recipe for being happy" is the confidence found in Christ. He is the only source of contentment; searching for it elsewhere is simply a waste of time.
 - b. True contentment is not found in things, people, or circumstances, but only in our convictions. The Bible tells us to allow our convictions, not our circumstances, to govern our sense of contentment.

C. We do not need worldly possessions to find contentment. It comes by the grace of God.

1. 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. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10).
 - a. We need to choose to rest on God's promises despite what may be going on in our lives. Grace is Jesus, Himself. Relying on grace allows us to walk through all types of adversity.
 - b. Rest is the highest form of confidence there is.

2. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10, *ESV*).
 - a. The understanding that God's grace is enough leads us to be content.
 - b. This gives us the power to live in a discontented world.
3. 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. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:6-12).
 - a. Some people look to money for contentment. There is no need to look for contentment in money, or in anything else we did not bring into the world and cannot take with us when we die.
 - b. Fighting the good fight of faith is maintaining our stance in what Jesus has already done.
 - c. The world is restless, and lives in a constant state of discontentment. If we do not have Jesus, we have a void in our lives; many people try to fill that void with material things.
 - d. When material possessions, money, or people become the end goal, we find that they cannot fill the void, and we end up discontent. Discontentment moves us into greed, in which we constantly want more.

D. We will never be content if we think like the world. We must let God change our thinking.

1. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2, *NLT*).
 - a. Contentment begins with renewing the mind; we must learn to think differently than the rest of the world. This protects us from absorbing the discontentment that comes from a worldly way of thinking.
 - b. We escape the world's discontentment by allowing God to change our mindset.
2. A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones (Proverbs 14:30, *NLT*).
 - a. Discontentment robs us of good health, but contentment gives life to the body.
 - b. Anything that costs us our peace is too expensive.
3. If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment (Job 36:11, *NIV*).
 - a. A relationship with God gives us contentment. When we are content, we will obey His directions.
4. The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble (Proverbs 19:23, *NIV*).
 - a. To fear the Lord means to walk in reverence and respect for Him. When we walk in respect for Him, He delivers us in the day of trouble.

Category: spiritual growth

Keywords: content, contentment, attitude, peace, circumstances, strength, satisfied