

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH IT

Philippians 4:11

Introduction: A long time ago there was a game that kids played called "pleased or displeased." Kids would sit in a circle and the person who was "it" would ask each person if he/she was "pleased or displeased" and that person would answer. If the answer was "displeased" then he/she was asked "what would it take to please him/her." Seldom was the person ever "pleased." That attitude has not changed for there is much restlessness today even with all the progress, pleasures, there is discontent everywhere with no exceptions to speak of. Seldom will a person be encountered who is satisfied with things as they are, even among God's own people.

1. Is Contentment only a dream? Is contentment really attainable? Is Heaven the only place where it exists?

- If it is attainable here, then how?
- Paul answers those questions for he said, *"...Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content..." (text)*
 - It must be kept in mind that when Paul wrote these words He was not in some relaxed, enjoyable place, he was in prison, in bonds, chained, yet he declared that he was "content."

2. Contentment can actually be experienced.

- Paul **learned** how to be content in whatever circumstance he found himself.
- It was not through baptism of the Holy Spirit nor his devotion to the Lord Jesus.
- It was not the result of his natural, human nature.
- It was something that he learned through his experiences as a Christian spokesperson for the Lord Jesus.

3. Contentment is thought by most people to be able to be obtained by satisfactory surroundings.

- Most people think that if they have everything they want then they can then be content.
- A prison is not the most likely place to have everything a person wants and therefore be content and that is where Paul spent much of the last part of his life and when he wrote this text.
- Contentment does not come from outward conditions but from within, not from human comforts.

4. What, exactly, is Contentment?

- It is being satisfied with whatever God wants for you!
- It is the opposite of complaining, fussing, which are nothing but rebellion against God.
- A contented person has learned to be thankful for his/her condition and circumstances are not any worse than what they seem to be already.
- A contented person is not greedy, wanting more than what he/she currently needs and is happy that God still cares for him/her. (*Hebrews 13:5*)

5. "Wanting" is a big stumbling block to being Content.

- *"...take heed, and beware of covetousness..." (Luke 12:15)]*
- "Covetousness" has many names such as wanting, thrift, safeguarding, laying up for a rainy day...
 - *"...such covetousness which is idolatry..." (Colossians 3:5)*
- It is the heart being set upon "things" rather than upon God.

6. Advantages of being Content.

- *"...Godliness with contentment is great gain..." (1 Timothy 6:6)*
- It delivers one from worrying and fretting, greediness and selfishness.
- It leaves one free to enjoy what God has given him/her.
- *"...for the love of money is the root of all evil..." (1 Timothy 6:9-10)*

7. Contentment is the result of one's dependence totally upon God.

- It brings peace that passes all understanding.
- It is the assurance that God does all things well and continues to work for one's ultimate good.
- Contentment has to be "learned" by "checking out" the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.
- Contentment comes ONLY as one learns and keeps the attitude of accepting everything that comes into his/her life as coming from the Lord God, who is wise and doesn't make mistakes and loves those who belong to Him.

CONCLUSION:

1. Real contentment comes ONLY by being much in the presence of the Lord Jesus.
2. *"...I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me..." (Philippians 4:12-13)*
3. Only by growing close to the Lord Jesus will a person be content and delivered from complaining.
4. It is by a daily fellowship with the Lord Jesus that one learns the secret of Contentment.