

Contentment is Gain

"Godliness with contentment is great gain"

1 Timothy 6:6

Lack of contentment spoils life regardless of how much we possess. What fuels the spirit of discontent? A fine definition I once heard but cannot source is "Having what we do not want or not having what we do want."

A contented spirit is needed in most societies if a person wishes to be happy and well adjusted. The gnawing desire for possessing something beyond our grasp, or else the abhorrence of some thing we unwillingly possess, will drive us to distraction.

Well, our text tells us the obvious when it says that to be content is very profitable. But how do we cultivate a spirit of contentment when we have a miserable problem in our life or else what we desire eludes us?

It might surprise you but the next couple of verses following our text tells us that if we have food and clothing we should be content. After all, we did not bring anything with us into this world, and for sure we are going to leave behind whatever we managed to accumulate when we depart this world.

In our modern western culture this view of life seems rather harsh and narrow. We indulge ourselves in so many creature comforts. We have a great medical system, pain killers, mood

modifiers for depression, food galore in our supermarkets, and so on. But do we consider how the other half of the world lives? Millions hover around garbage dumps foraging for food in the latest dumps of trash. Some never see a medical person in their lives.

Do we think we are better than those who suffer such drastic privation? Do we not wish to even think of those who live in alternatives that it is hard to imagine? Some individuals wish to blame God for letting people suffer so much but they do nothing to help the poor themselves. Such criticism is sheer hypocrisy. God blesses us in the west in order that we may help those in poorer circumstances than ourselves.

How then do we content ourselves with less in order that others may enjoy more? Can we truly give until it interferes with our standard of living and still be happy? How can we be content when we have what we do not want or do not have what we do want? We can be content and the Bible tells us how. In the letter to the Hebrews we know the first readers were people who suffered much in various ways. Towards the end of the letter the writer tells his readers to be content with what they have because they have God. Heb. 13:5.

So the Bible tells us that regardless of what we have that we do not want, or do not have that we greatly desire, stop fussing and dwell on the reality of God's presence in our lives. If we have God but not health be content. It is better to have God than to be healthy. It is better to have God and be broke than to be wealthy without God. In fact the Bible's teaching makes it clear that the rich person who knows the Lord is no richer than the financially bankrupt person who also loves the Lord. Rhea Miller wrote the following words. Can you honestly repeat them? Is Jesus actually enough to make you content? What are we saying about our Lord if He is not enough?

I'd rather have Jesus
than silver or gold;
I'd rather be His
than have riches untold;
I'd rather have Jesus
than houses or lands;
I'd rather be led
by His nail-pierced hand
Than to be the king
of a vast domain
And be held
in sin's dread sway;
I'd rather have Jesus
than anything
This world affords today.

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