



The Way of Contentment

What makes the difference between a Christian who is frustrated and one who is content?

Philippians 4:11–13; Proverbs 30:8; Psalm 131

Contentment doesn't mean a problem-free life. Paul was in prison when he wrote, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Phil. 4:11). Contentment is a state of mind. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Every man is just as happy as he makes up his mind to be."

Contentment is something not easily or quickly learned. The late Dr. Noel Smith told an old friend from his hospital bed, "Just about the time a man learns how to live, it's time to die." Sadly, for some people, they never learn how to live.

What makes the difference between a servant who is frustrated and one who is content? Here's what I've learned.

- | | <i>True
of me</i> | <i>Somewhat
true of me</i> | <i>Not true
of me</i> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p>1. Contentment comes in exercising your spiritual gifts.
Discontentment sets in when people want to minister, but their gifts don't coincide with their duties. Many Christians are performing tasks that they don't enjoy and are not spiritually equipped to perform.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>I am exercising my spiritual gifts:</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>2. Contentment comes in enjoying your ministry right now where you are. If you cannot enjoy your week-by-week Christian service, it's a cinch you won't enjoy the accomplished goal. If you don't have satisfaction in the journey, you won't be satisfied when you reach the destination.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>I am enjoying my ministry right now:</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>3. Contentment comes in financial stability, not financial security. The number-one killer of contentment is financial instability. Many people never settle into their ministry of Christ because they are married to their credit cards. Financial stability does not come with an increase of money supply. Blessed is the person who learns the art of money management. Regardless of annual income, he or she will know contentment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>I have financial stability:</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>4. Contentment comes in knowing the true value of things. Lack of self-control is a sign of instability, especially in the area of possessions. Perhaps it was necessary for me to move to Kenya and work with destitute tribes before I could understand the meaning of Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion" (Prov. 30:8). Happy is the one who can say with Paul, "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim. 6:8).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>I don't hunger for more or better possessions:</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

—RICHARD LEWIS

Discuss

1. What are your gifts? How could they be better used?
2. Specifically, what wars against your ability to be content?
3. What might you need to offer God as part of your journey toward contentment?