

Contentment

Text: Philippians 4:11-12

Introduction

1. The apostle Paul had learned the secret of contentment.
 - a. It is a secret worth learning.
 - b. It is one that many professed Christians have failed to learn.
2. Though happiness and contentment are not the same, it might be said that contentment is a prerequisite of happiness.
 - a. It is difficult to be happy while discontent.
 - b. Paul was not dissatisfied with his own state for he had learned the gift of contentment.
3. The word in the Greek is "*autarkeia*" which means entirely self-sufficient.
 - a. "Sufficient in oneself, self-sufficient, adequate, needing no assistance; hence, content, Phil. 4:11." (W.E. Vine)
 - b. Its general idea is independence from outside circumstances—the opposite of unrest, worry and anxiety.
4. The apostle Paul personified the definition.
 - a. He could face anything—could have nothing or all things, it made no difference—because he had Christ.
 - b. The one who walks with Christ and lives in Him can cope with anything.

I. Contentment Viewed Both Negatively and Positively

- A. Negatively: things in which one should not be content.
 1. To live in sin or disobedience. (Rom. 6:1-2)
 2. To sit and do nothing for the cause of Christ. (Titus 2:14)
 3. Self. (Phil. 3:12-14)
- B. Positively: the example of Paul.
 1. Live in prosperity and remain faithful to God.
 2. To live abased—to live without:
 - a. Money.
 - b. Youth—grow old gracefully.
 - c. Physical health. Paul's thorn in the flesh. (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 - d. Praise or approval of others.
 - d. Having your own way.

II. Three Evidences of Discontentment

- A. Murmuring—complaining—fretting. (1 Cor. 10:10)
- B. Anxiety. (Phil. 4:6)
- C. Fear. (Phil. 4:7; Rom. 8:31-39)

III. Three Basic Elements of the Secret of Contentment

- A. A realization that nothing of an earthly nature either lasts or satisfies. (Eccl. 1:8; 2 Cor. 4:16-18)
- B. Confidence in the wise and loving providence of God. (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 8:28)
- C. The fact that one actually has God in his life. (2 John 9)

IV. How Paul Learned Contentment

- A. Not by accident—**will** is a major factor.
- B. Contentment is actually a by-product of:
 - 1. Discipline. (Heb. 12:11)
 - 2. Trust. (2 Tim. 1:12)
 - 3. The veracity of God's promises. (Phil. 4:6, 7, 13, 19)

Conclusion

- 1. Contentment does not come by accident.
- 2. Contentment comes by doing the will of the Lord, continually disciplining oneself by it.
- 3. Are you content? If not, learn the secret of contentment.