

# Outline\_Putting on a Heart of Contentment

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The Heart of Contentment- A Biblical Counseling Perspective: Part 2

Scripture: Php. 4:10-13; misc

Key words: Contentment, discontentment, complaining, grumbling, providence, sovereignty

Sermon Audio: Discontent is something most Christians (and others) struggle with from time to time. If it's chronic it leads to even greater problems. The Old Testament provides us with a case study in discontent as well as a warning if we do not seek to put off discontent. The New Testament gives us the solution as to how to put off discontentment and put on contentment regardless of circumstances. In this two week study Pastor Bruce will explore both aspects.

Introduction (Php. 4:10-13)

A. Let's Consider Paul

B. Background to the passage

C. Will we respond to discontentment like the Israelites or like Paul?

D. Adamic Emptiness (1 Peter 2:11)

1. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11 ESV)
2. Passions of the flesh (lusts, desires)
3. Part of that residual Adamic nature
  - a. It's warfare against the soul (which tends to never be satisfied).
  - b. We suffer from restless heart syndrome
  - c. Must to learn to battle restless heart syndrome

E. Repenting and moving forward in faith

F. Defining the Goal

1. [Contentment] is a sweet gracious frame of spirit which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposition in every circumstance. (Wayne Mack)

I. Paul gets a Gift (Php. 4:10)

A. It was not the gift that mattered most

1. The Philippians concern for Paul was most important
2. Both parties were focused on the work going forward
3. Two aspects to the work going forward

- a. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:3-6 ESV)

- 1) Partnership in the gospel because it is of first important (1 Cor. 15:3)

- 2) The gospel's transforming work within the heart of believer's (Php. 1:6)

#### B. The importance of gratitude in a contented life

- 1. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. (Philippians 1:3 ESV)

- 2. Paul has an attitude of gratitude in "the heat."

- 3. Heat: life under the sun

- a. Paul's whole attitude is that whatever happens to him, it serves in some way for the furtherance of the gospel. In other words Paul sees everything through the lens of the gospel.

- 4. Interpreting life as God sees it

- a. Paul's lens of interpreting "the heat" is to place the circumstance under the lens of the gospel.

- b. How do you interpret what happens to you?

- 1) Php. 3:8-11

- 2) It's the first clue we get as to how Paul learned contentment. He made the right interpretation of the facts and his interpretation shaped his contented responses to the heat.

- 3) 2 Cor. 4:8-12

- a) Paradoxical-afflicted but not crushed; perplexed but not despairing....

- b) Trusting God in the scorching heat of adversity

## II. Learned Contentment (vs 11)

### A. Foundational to learned contentment

- 1. Contentment does not come naturally

- 2. The reality of sin and life in a fallen world

- a. Romans 6:23

- b. There are times when we suffer innocently at other people's hands. When that occurs, we are victims of injustice. But that injustice happens on a horizontal plane. No one

ever suffers injustice on the vertical plane. That is, no one ever suffers unjustly in terms of his or her relationship with God. As long as we bear the guilt of sin, we cannot protest that God is unjust in allowing us to suffer.” — R.C. Sproul, *Surprised by Suffering*

### 3. Three key truths about Trusting God

#### a. Three essential truths about God

##### 1) God is completely sovereign

- a) The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all .(Psalm 103:19 ESV)
- b) Kevin DeYoung: “For many Christians, coming to grips with God’s all-encompassing providence requires a massive shift in how they look at the world.”
- c) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (Ephesians 1:11 ESV)

##### 1) God is infinite in wisdom

- a) Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. (Psalm 147:5 ESV)
- b) And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28-29 ESV)

##### 3) God is perfect in love

- a) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. [10] In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10 ESV)
- b) "God in his love always wills what is best for us. In his wisdom He always knows what it best, and His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about."

#### B. Faith/Belief versus Emotional Responses to life

##### 1. Paul never doubted God's wisdom in any situation. (Rom. 16:27)

- a. to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:27 ESV)

##### 2. Paul never doubted God's character and agreed with the Old Testament when he quoted it:

- a. Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36 ESV)

3. Paul did not doubt God's love and would agree with the apostle John (1 John 4:8-10)

- a. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:8-10 ESV)

III. How Contentment was Learned (Php. 4:12)

A. Insufficient ways to seek contentment

1. Show humility
2. Recognize enough
3. Simplify
4. Have real fun
5. Make room for quiet

B. Paul's Sufficient way of learning contentment

1. Brought low....In any and every circumstance
  - a. Jesus tells Ananias in Acts 9 :16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
2. I know how to abound
  - a. Three pairs of circumstances on opposite sides of a spectrum
  - b. Rain of blessing and the scorching heat
  - c. When the Lord gives it's easier to be content, but what if he takes away?
    - 1) Do you still trust God in his sovereignty, wisdom and love?

IV. The Result of Learning Contentment (Php. 4: 13)

A. Understanding Positional Truth

1. Php. 3:8-9
2. 2 Cor. 12:9-10

B. Cultivating Contentment

1. Cultivate an attitude of enough is enough (Ecc. 4:6)
  2. Cultivate a generous spirit (Ecc. 4:28; 1 Tim. 6:6-8)
  3. Cultivate a servant's heart (2 Cor. 5:20a)
  4. Cultivate gratitude (Php. 1:3)
  5. Cultivate holy discontentment
- C. [Contentment] is a sweet gracious frame of spirit which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposition in every circumstance. (Wayne Mack)