

## **“I Have Learned To Be Content”**

*“But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content”* (Phil. 4:10f).

The apostle has already, several times, touched on personal matters but it is seen in these words that the incident which brought about this letter is now dealt with. From things written, the Philippians, having been without knowledge of Paul for some time, learned of his presence and his need in the Roman prison, and sent a generous gift to relieve him in his afflictions. The gift occasioned great joy on the aged apostle’s part and the way in which he expresses his joy is dealt with very gingerly. They had not helped; but he assures them he was aware that their neglect was due to their ignorance of his state. He “tiptoes” around the issue very delicately. Yes, he was in want but he could hand that. They had not earlier helped, but they lacked opportunity. Still and all, Paul had learned a lesson men today need desperately to learn, that in whatever state we find ourselves, to be content.

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy he said, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, neither shall we carry anything out, but having food and covering, we shall therewith be content”* (1 Tim. 6:6f). Job manifested a similar thought: *“Naked came I from my mother’s womb; and naked shall I return thither: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord”* (Job 1:21). Discontentment opens the way for one to commit many sins; covetousness, when viewing possessions other have, and movement away from God. The discontent, the dissatisfied are perilously susceptible to temptations of Satan: *“For they that are minded to be rich fall into temptations and snares and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition”* (1 Tim. 6:9). While some are by nature more inclined to be content than others, contention is a lesson which all must learn. What are some things which will aid us learn contentment? To help us, reflect on the following thoughts:

One can learn contentment by remembering the fleeting character of riches. Nothing is so certain that even the best laid plans of investment for one’s security cannot be turned topsy-turvy. If we have enough to eat; if we have covering, our necessities have been met. One must not have his hope set on the *“uncertainty of riches”* (1 Tim. 6:17). One can learn contentment by remembering that life is more important than food and clothing. These latter things will pass but the soul will not. Its worth cannot be estimated. *“What*

*shall a man be profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt. 16:26).*

One can learn contentment by remembering that God is mindful of us, that He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). See how He cares for the beasts, the grass, the lilies of the field? If He provides for these things, "*which today are and tomorrow is cast into the oven,*" surely He will provide for us, will He not?

One can learn contentment by considering the two or three year old toddler. He is content because he trusts his parents. He doesn't worry about food, clothes, or shelter. He does not give thought to them, these things will be provided by his parents. We, too, are children, children of God. In exact proportion to the trust in our Father grows, so anxieties and worries decline. May each of us diligently strengthen our faith in our Father!

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