

Contentment

Introduction:

- A. Illustrations on contentment:
 - 1. "Lazy Fisherman" – Philip Parham tells the story of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat.
 - a. "Why aren't you out there fishing?" he asked.
 - b. "Because I've caught enough fish for today," said the fisherman.
 - c. "Why don't you catch more fish than you need?" the rich man asked.
 - d. "What would I do with them?"
 - e. "You could earn more money," came the impatient reply, "and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you'd have a fleet of boats and be rich like me."
 - f. The fisherman asked, "Then what would I do?"
 - g. "You could sit down and enjoy life," said the industrialist.
 - h. "What do you think I'm doing now?" the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea.
 - i. That lazy fisherman was quite content with what he had.
 - 2. Benjamin Franklin said, "Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor."
 - 3. A typical supermarket in the US in 1976 stocked 9,000 articles; in 1994 it had grown to 30,000; in 2006 it is estimated to be 45,000.
- B. On the subject of Contentment there are three main passages – Phil.4:11; 1 Tim.6:6; Heb.13:5.
- C. Define contentment.
 - 1. The word does not mean that Christians should not continually seek to improve themselves.
 - a. As someone said, "Be content with what you have, never with what you are."
- D. In this lesson we will study the three main passages in the N.T. on contentment.
- E. There are only three other verses in the KJV which mention it – Lk.3:14; Mk.15:15; 3 Jn.10.

I. Philippians 4:11,12.

- A. Contentment is something to be learned, sought after and gained.
 - 1. It is not given automatically or miraculously to the Christian.
- B. We can learn contentment by following the example of Paul.
 - 1. He counted everything as loss in order to gain Christ – Phil.3:5-8.
 - 2. He knew that all things work together for good to them who love God – Rom.8:28.
 - 3. He knew that there is nothing permanent here – 2 Cor.4:18.
 - 4. He knew that God is able to keep that which is committed unto Him – 2 Tim.1:12.
 - 5. Paul was able to learn contentment because his heart was first and foremost focused on God.
- C. Paul's example of contentment is uplifting and serves as a wonderful example.
 - 1. He knew how to be abased, to hunger, and to suffer need – 1 Cor.4:11-13; 2 Cor.4:8-10; 11:21-28.
 - a. At times he was without physical health – Gal.4:13-15; 2 Cor.12:7-10.
 - b. Many times he was without freedom – Phil.1:12,13.
 - c. He was often without the admiration and approval of brethren – 2 Tim.4:16,17.
 - 2. Also, he knew how to abound and to be full – Phil.4:12,15-18.
 - a. For some, knowing how to abound is more difficult than being content in want.
 - b. With some, the more they get, the more they want – Eccl.5:10.
 - c. It is not easy to go from poverty to plenty or from plenty to poverty.
 - d. Listen to Solomon – Prov.30:8,9.
- D. Christians, as Paul, must learn contentment through Christ – Phil.4:13.
 - 1. We must rely on the Lord for all things; He will abundantly bless – Phil.4:6,7; Matt.7:7.

II. 1 Timothy 6:6-8.

- A. Here Paul shows us the extent the Christian is to be content.
 - 1. "...*having food and covering we shall be therewith content.*"
 - a. Are we content just with these things?
 - b. The ones who are more interested in gaining this world's goods than serving the Lord will be without excuse at the judgment day.
 - 1) They won't be able to say, "Lord, you didn't reveal that with which we were to be content."
- B. Our Lord goes a step beyond Paul's teaching and instructs us to not even be worried or concerned about food and clothing – Matt.6:25-34.
 - 1. "*Be not anxious*" in the ASV is "*take no thought*" in the KJV.
 - a. It means "state of doubt, suspense, worry" – cf.Lk.12:29.
 - 2. Why worry about food?
 - a. He feeds the birds. "*Are you not of much more value than they?*"
 - b. Man is made in the image of God – Matt.10:29-31.
 - 3. Can you add inches to your height by thought?
 - a. Thus, worry is a great waste that accomplishes nothing.
 - 4. Why worry about clothing?
 - a. He clothed the lilies and He will clothe you.
 - 5. After all these things do the Gentiles seek.
 - a. Let them do it, but don't you try to compete with them in the rat race of life.
 - b. If you have food and clothing, be content, and don't even be worried about them.
- C. Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness; He will provide for us and take care of us.
 - 1. 1 Pet.5:7– "*7 casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you.*"
 - 2. These verses help us to fix goals, purposes, and set proper values in life.

III. Hebrews 13:5,6.

- A. Herein lies the reason why many Christians are not content – they are covetous.
 - 1. Many Christians are not content but are continually striving after more of this world's goods.
 - 2. They are trying to serve two masters – 1 Tim.6:9,10.
 - 3. It is better to have only a little than a lot with much sorrow and headache – Prov.15:16; 16:8; 17:1; Eccl.4:6.
- B. Instead of continually seeking and coveting more, make doing the Lord's will your primary concern.
 - 1. We live in a land of prosperity (give examples of it).
- C. Be content and put your trust in the Lord and He will provide.
 - 1. He will never leave us or forsake us – Ps.37:25.

Conclusion:

- A. Let us be content with what we have and serve the Lord with a true heart.