

Learn to Be Content with Christ

No one will satisfyingly simplify his spiritual life without developing contentment. Contentment is a Christian virtue that requires development, for it does not emerge fully-formed at conversion. Rather, as the apostle Paul's example reminds us, contentment is learned. "I have learned," he writes in Philippians 4:11, "in whatever state I am, to be content." And the source of his contentment "everywhere and in all things" (verse 12) was this: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (verse 13).

One of the ways Paul teaches us to learn contentment is to *learn the true value of things*. As we do, we'll learn that contentment cannot be based on them. That's how Paul learned to be content whether he was "full" and "abound[ing]" in material possessions, or whether he was "hungry" and "suffer[ing]" need" (verse 12).

But the main way Paul learned contentment was by *learning the value of Christ*. According to verse 13, what Paul found in Christ strengthened his soul to be content regardless of his circumstances. And God inspired and preserved Paul's words so that we, too, might experience the same contenting depth of riches in Christ.

We can be content in Christ, regardless of our circumstances, because in Him we have everything we need, both for now and forever (see Colossians 2:10). How can we not be content if we realize that as believers in Christ we are "joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17), and will inherit everything from the Father that Christ inherits? How can we remain discontented when we realize the implications of passages like Romans 8:32—"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" God the Father has already given us the greatest and most fulfilling gift possible—God the Son. And in addition to Him, our Father will "freely give us all things" necessary in this life as well. Knowing, therefore, the infinite value of Christ, we can be content.

The essence of contentment is being satisfied with the incomparable and limitless treasures found in Jesus Christ. Contentment is your soul saying, "I have Jesus, and Jesus is enough."

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