

Contentment

Objective

To understand what it means to be content with our lives from a Christian perspective.

References

Holy Scripture

Scriptural Verse

“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content”
Philippians 4:11

Lesson Outlines

Most of us go through life with two types of attitudes – a wanting attitude – I want this and that out of life because in my mind I believe it will make me happier and because when I do have this or that I truly feel happier.

The second attitude is a distrustful attitude of God - that somehow He is holding back on me and giving my neighbor better stuff because I am always comparing myself to my neighbor.

Living with these two attitudes is not in God’s plan for us and it is actually a very poor way to go through life.

So how do we live a life of contentment?

There are some basic premises that we must keep in our lives daily.

1. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 – we own nothing in this world and we aren’t taking it with us.
2. The things that we love and cherish in the world should be loved through our love for God and not for themselves. It is not wrong to want to be ambitious, to love your job but you must want to do God’s will first through your job. Contentment is the wall and ceiling of ambition. It is great to be ambitious but if you cannot for some reason achieve your ambition then you must be content with what you have and where God has you.
3. Live each day knowing that tomorrow is not promised for you. If we live with that attitude, then how we spend our day and what thoughts we have will be totally different. Our priorities will change too.
4. Spend time with God in His Word and prayer. Not only does that remind us of the futility of life, but it also reminds us of the promises of a loving God, and it makes us realize that all we need in life is really God. The saints realized that and forsook everything just to acquire a relationship with God. St. Augustine said that he had conquered the world when he achieved a state where he neither feared anything nor desired anything from the world. That should be our attitude as well.
5. Identify what it is in life that you feel that you cannot live without and are always trying to secure. Is it your career, a relationship, wealth? Put that weakness before God and ask Him to help you overcome it.
6. Believe that EVERYTHING you have is a gift from God for you personally and it is suited for your purpose in life. He has gifted you with the abilities, talents, husband,

children, home, life, that is perfectly and uniquely suited to your purpose, and calling. They are gifts that you could not acquire with your own efforts.

7. Contentment is a learned thought process – St. Paul states this clearly – Philippians 4:11. We must work on changing our attitudes – for most of us this doesn't come naturally. We need to start by always having a thankful attitude especially in our prayers.

Conclusion

The perfect example of contentment is the Shunamite woman: 2 kings 4: 8-18.

She had no children, which is the desire of every married woman. Yet she was content serving God, her home and living amongst her people. She had the opportunity to ask for a child but she didn't. Whenever you feel discontented with things in life, think of the MANY times God has been faithful to you, how He has given you the desires of your heart, how He has covered your sins, and how He has mercifully dealt with you.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. What does contentment mean for you?
2. What makes us content? Are there times when we feel content and times when we do not? What are those situations?
3. Why do we have things that we need but are still discontented?
4. Is contentment an attitude or a state achieved in life?