

Contentment and Thankfulness

I. My recent trip to the Philippines made me aware of the importance of the Christian attitude of contentment and thankfulness.

1. I saw:

- A. Extreme poverty.
- B. People living in shacks and shanties.
- C. People living in 90+ degree heat with high humidity without air conditioning.
- D. Most people not owning a car, and instead relying on crowded Jeepneys, tricycles (motorcycles with sidecars), and non-air conditioned buses and trains to travel in.
- E. A church meeting in a non-air conditioned house in sweltering heat for a couple of hours.

2. I also saw:

- A. Nobody complaining.
- B. Happy people.
- C. Content people.

3. Ask yourselves:

- A. Could I be content living in such conditions?
- B. Would I go to church in a 90+ degree room every Sunday?
- C. Would I still be thankful to God in such a case?

II. Defining the terms

1. Contentment *n.* - 1. The action of satisfying; the process of being satisfied; satisfaction.

arch. 2. The fact, condition, or quality of being contented; contentedness. (The usual modern sense.) 1611 Bible 1 *Tim. vi. 6* But godliness with contentment is great gain.

A. Satisfied *ppl. adj.* - 1. Contented, pleased, gratified.

B. Satisfaction - II. With reference to desires or feelings. 5. a. The action of gratifying (an appetite or desire) to the full, or of contenting (a person) by the complete fulfilment of a desire or supply of a want; the fact of having been gratified to the full or of having one's desire fulfilled.

C. Content *adj.* - 1. Having one's desires bounded by what one has (though that may be less than one could have wished); not disturbed by the desire of anything more, or of anything different; 'satisfied so as not to repine; easy though not highly pleased' b. In imper. *be content*: be satisfied in mind; be calm, quiet, not uneasy.

2. Thankfulness *n.* - The quality or condition of being thankful. 1. Gratefulness, gratitude.

A. Thankful *adj.* - 1. a. Feeling or expressing thanks or gratitude; prompted by feelings of gratitude; grateful. Phr. *thankful for small mercies*.

B. Gratefulness *adj.* - The quality of being grateful

C. Grateful *adj.* - 2. Of persons, their actions and attributes: Feeling gratitude; actuated by or manifesting gratitude; thankful.

D. Gratitude *n.* - 1. The quality or condition of being grateful; a warm sense of appreciation of kindness received, involving a feeling of goodwill towards the benefactor and a desire to do something in return; gratefulness.

III. God commands us to be thankful (**Col 3:15; Psa 100:4**).

1. The wicked are unthankful (**2Ti 3:2**).

2. Unthankfulness is the beginning of the slippery slope into a sinful life (**Rom 1:21**).
3. Are you a thankful person?
 - A. We are to give thanks in everything (**1Th 5:18; Eph 5:20**).
 - B. We should thank God when both good and bad things happen to us (**Ecc 7:14**).
 - C. How often do you thank God for His blessings in your life?
 - D. Do you always thank God before each meal? In public?
 - i. Jesus did (**Joh 6:11; Luk 22:17,19**).
 - ii. Paul did (**Act 27:35**).
 - E. Do you teach your children to thank God before eating?
 - F. Do you teach your children to say "thank you" when someone gives them something or does something for them?
 - G. Do you or your children have an entitlement mindset?
 - H. Do you or your children think that God or the world owes you something?

IV. Contentment

1. How to attain contentment.
 - A. There are two ideas concerning how to attain contentment:
 - i. We can try to adjust the amount to things (material or immaterial) we have to meet our desires.
 - ii. We can adjust our desires to accord with the amount of things (material or immaterial) that we have.
 - B. The first idea is not plausible for two reasons:
 - i. The amount of things (material and immaterial) we can acquire is largely out of our control.
 - ii. Our nature is such that if we do acquire the things we want, our desires will readjust and we will desire to have more (see next section - Section IV,3).
 - C. The second idea is the only attainable, and Biblically acceptable, option.
 - i. While our possessions are not under our direct control, our desires are.
 - ii. This will be proved presently.
2. God requires us to be content.
 - A. We are required to be content with the bare essentials of life: food and clothing (**1Ti 6:8**).
 - B. We must be content with such things as we have (**Heb 13:5**).
 - i. Therefore, every one of us already has all that we need to be content.
 - ii. If you are not content with what you have now, you will never be content.
 - C. John the Baptist required soldiers who came to him for baptism to be content with their wages (**Luk 3:14**).
 - D. Are you content with your wages?
 - E. Husbands must be satisfied with their wives and not desire another (**Pro 5:18-20; Exo 20:17**).
 - F. Are you content with your spouse?
3. Contentment doesn't come naturally.
 - A. The eyes of man are never satisfied (**Pro 27:20; Ecc 1:8; Ecc 4:8**).
 - B. Those who love money and abundance will not be satisfied with it (**Ecc 5:10**).
 - C. Man is prone to lust and envy (**Jam 4:5**).
 - D. Lust, covetousness, and envy are the opposite of contentment.

- i. Lust *n.* - 1. Pleasure, delight. *obs.* 2. Desire, appetite, relish or inclination for something. 3. *spec.* in Biblical and Theological use: Sensuous appetite or desire, considered as sinful or leading to sin.
 - ii. Covetous *adj.* - 1. Having an ardent or excessive desire of (or gfor) anything; eagerly desirous to do, have, or be.
 - iii. Envy *v.*- 1. *trans.* To feel displeasure and ill-will at the superiority of (another person) in happiness, success, reputation, or the possession of anything desirable; to regard with discontent another's possession of (some superior advantage which one would like to have for oneself). Also in less unfavourable sense: To wish oneself on a level with (another) in happiness or in the possession of something desirable; to wish oneself possessed of (something which another has).
 - iv. Do you rejoice with them that do rejoice (**Rom 12:15**), or do you despise them that do rejoice because you wish you had what they have?
- E. Money and wealth don't satisfy (**Ecc 2:4-11; Ecc 5:10; Eze 7:19**).
- F. Sin doesn't satisfy (**Eze 16:28-29**).
- G. Sinners cannot be satisfied (**Hab 2:5; Pro 13:25**).
- 4. Contentment must be learned (**Phi 4:11-12**).
 - A. Satisfaction comes through labour, not idleness (**Pro 12:11; Pro 12:14; Pro 20:13**).
 - B. A good man needs nothing outside of himself to be satisfied (**Pro 14:14**).
 - C. A man's own words can feed his contentment (**Pro 18:20**).
 - D. The fear for the LORD brings satisfaction (**Pro 19:23**).
 - E. Godliness with contentment is great gain (**1Ti 6:6**).
- 5. The servant isn't greater than his Lord (**Joh 13:16**).
 - A. Jesus didn't even have his own place (**Mat 8:20**).
 - B. The apostles were deprived of shelter, clothes, and food at times (**1Co 4:11**).
 - C. If Jesus and the apostles were content with little, then we should be too.
- 6. The poor are blessed (**Mat 5:3; Jam 2:5**).
 - A. The meek shall be satisfied (**Psa 22:26**).
 - B. On the other hand, the rich are cursed (**Jam 5:1-6; Ecc 5:12**).
 - C. Affluence is often a greater curse than poverty (**Eze 16:49**).
 - D. It is wise to desire the middle station in life (**Pro 30:7-9**).
- 7. God will satisfy His children (**Psa 103:1-5; Psa 107:8-9**).
 - A. God's children who are faithful shall be satisfied in God's house (**Psa 36:7-9; Psa 132:13-15**).
 - B. We are blessed exceedingly to be God's elect and we should be satisfied to dwell in His house (**Psa 65:4**).
 - C. God's people shall be satisfied with God's goodness (**Jer 31:14**).
 - D. If we call upon God, He will satisfy us (**Psa 91:14-16**).
 - E. This world's good doesn't bring satisfaction, but God and His word does (**Isa 55:1-2; Mat 4:4**).