

The Grace of Contentment (Phil.4:10-13)

I. Discontent: Man's natural bent (Prov.27:20/Eccl.1:8)

The devil must first make us discontented before he can persuade us to sin (Gen.3:1) —Haman (Esther 3:5)/Ahab (1 Kings 21:4)

Covetousness, contrasted with contentment, leads to resentment, envy, theft, hatred, murder, war (1 Tim.6:8-10/Heb.13:5)

II. The mystery of Divine Contentment

"I am instructed" = "I am initiated into the mystery"(Gr)

Phil. 4:11 Content (self-sufficient) in whatever state
autarkeia & *autarkes* content/sufficient, but prefixed by *autos* (self)

2 Cor.9:8 That you may have all (self)sufficiency in all things

1 Tim.6:6 Godliness with (self)contentment is great gain

Self-sufficiency (not *from* oneself but *within* oneself—2 Cor.3:5)

Christian Contentment is *that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.* —Jeremiah Burroughs

III. How this state is obtained:

A. Reduction of desires (Eccl.5:10/Luke 3:14/1 Tim.6:8)

1. Desiring only God (Heb.13:5/ John 14:8/Ps.17:15/ 73:25/27:4)

2. Death to self: The desire not to be pleased, but that God be pleased with me.

3. A Clear conscience (1 Tim.6:6/2 Cor.1:12)

Seneca said: "Those things that I suffer will be incredibly heavy when I cannot bear myself."

4. Patience: waiting for delayed gratification (Matt.5:11-12/2 Cor.4:17-18/ Heb.11:24-26)

B. Christ who strengthens: Sufficiency of grace (2 Cor.9:8/12:9/Col.1:11)

"You must not therefore be content with a little strength, so that you are able to bear what a man might bear by the strength of reason and nature, but you should be strengthened with all might, according to the glorious power of God, unto all patience and to all longsuffering" — Jeremiah Burroughs

2. As God turned bitter waters sweet at Mara, and as Christ turned ordinary water into wine at Cana, so can grace transform affliction or unexceptional circumstances into a pleasing state of grace.

e.g. The poverty of Christ sanctifies my poverty for me; he took away the curse of poverty

IV. Content, but unsatisfied (Rom.8:22-23/Phil.3:12-14/Heb.6:1; Ps.17:15)

arkeo [714] = Sufficient; enough

Matt.25:9 We may not have *enough* oil if we give some away
John 6:7 200 pennyworth would not be *sufficient* to feed the multitude
John 14:8 Show us the Father; that is *enough*
2 Cor.12:9 Grace is *sufficient*

Luke 3:14 Be content with your wages
1 Tim.6:8 With food & raiment be content
Heb.13:5 Be content with what you have
3 John 1:10 Diotrophes not content with maligning John

autarkeia [841] & *autarkes* [842] same as above, but prefixed by *autos* (self)

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Not satisfied