



John's Schedule

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Moses - The Satisfying Power of Suffering



Part 6 (951210PM)

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There is a plague sweeping America. It's not AIDS or TB, it's a dark cloud that overshadows all of life. It's called DISCONTENTMENT. What is the plague we face here in America? It's the plague of discontentment. Discontentment is like an infection. You can catch it by contact unless you are resistant.

THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST

Mrs. An's husband was a pastor in Vietnam. When their church was closed by police, he was thrown into prison. Without official papers, she and her children were forced to live on a balcony outside an apartment. Yet her faith has forged a sanctuary out of her surroundings, from which she greets us:

My dear Friends:

...You know around here we are experiencing hardships, but we thank the Lord He is comforting us and caring for us in every way. When we experience misfortune, adversity, distress and hardship, only then do we see the real blessing of the Lord poured down on us in such a way that we cannot contain it.

We have been obliged recently to leave our modest apartment and for over two months have been living on a balcony. The rain has been beating down and soaking us. Sometimes in the middle of the night we are forced to gather our blankets and run to seek refuge in a stairwell.

Do you know what I do then? I laugh and I praise the Lord, because we can still take shelter in the stairwell. I think of how many people are experiencing much worse hardships than I am. Then I remember the words of the Lord, "To the poor, O Lord, You are a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat" (cp. [Isaiah 25:4](#)), and I am greatly comforted...

Our Father...is the One who according to the Scriptures does not break the bruised reed nor put out the flickering lamp. He is the One who looks after the orphan and the widow. He is the One who brings blessings and peace to numberless people.

I do not know what words to use in order to describe the love that the Lord has shown our family. I only can bow my knee and my heart and offer to the Lord words of deepest thanks and praise. Although we have lost our house and our possessions, we have not lost the Lord, and He is enough. With the Lord I have everything. The only thing I would fear losing is His blessing!

Could I ask you and our friends in the churches abroad to continue to pray for me that I will faithfully follow the Lord and serve Him regardless of what the circumstances may be?

As far as my husband is concerned, I was able to visit him this past summer. We had a 20-minute conversation that brought us great joy.....

I greet you with my love.

Mrs. Nguyen Thi An

Meet Moses in [Acts 7:20-23](#)

Moses is the third most referred to person in the Bible. No less than 784 times in 19 OT books and 12 NT books he is spoken of. Only David [930 times] and Jesus [942 times] are more frequently talked about.

For a perspective the following facts: Jacob 332 times; Abraham 277 times; Paul 154 times, Peter 153 times; John 128 times and Job 53times.

F. B. Meyer[2] gives some valuable historical information on Moses' life that is not commonly known:

Moses was brought up in the palace, and he was treated as the grandson of Pharaoh. When he was old enough he was probably sent to be educated in the college which had grown up around the Temple of the Sun, and has been called "the Oxford of Ancient Egypt"...Stephen says: "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).

But Moses was something more than a royal student: he was a statesman and a soldier. Stephen tells us that he was "mighty in words and deeds"...mighty in words--there is the statesman; mighty in deeds---there is the soldier. (The Jewish historian) Josephus says that while he was still in his early manhood the Ethiopians invaded Egypt, routed the army sent against them, and threatened Memphis.

In the panic the oracles were consulted, and on their recommendation Moses was entrusted with the command of the royal troops. He immediately took the field, surprised and defeated the enemy, and captured their principal city...and returned to Egypt laden with the spoils of victory.

FEDERAL EXPRESS OR PONY EXPRESS?

The facts of the story are this:

- Moses was adopted in the wealthiest family in Egypt.
- Moses was educated in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He went to the very best schools and had the equivalent of an M.B.A. and Ph.D.
- Moses was a highly decorated military leader.
- Moses, by virtue of his military leadership and his membership in the house of Pharaoh, was a logical choice to perhaps one day be Pharaoh (president) himself.
- Moses saw one of his Hebrew brothers being beaten by a taskmaster, went to his aid, and killed the guard.

The story of Moses is extremely contemporary. Many people today were devoting their lives to reaching the top of the pyramid. Moses was in line to own the pyramids.

Stephen catches this in v. 20-23. He is quite a man. Now, look with me at [Hebrews 11:23-29](#)

- Moses was from a SPECIAL FAMILY v. 23.
- Moses was SEPARATED TO GOD v. 24.
- Moses was SUFFERING FOR GOD v. 25.
- Moses was SATISFIED WITH GOD v. 26.
- Moses was SEEING GOD v. 27.
- Moses was OBEYING GOD v. 28.
- Moses was FOLLOWING GOD v. 29.

THE SCRIPTURES DEFINE CONTENTMENT

What does the Bible have to say about CONTENTMENT?

- **First, the Bible teaches that it is a way of life that must be learned.**

- Look at [Philippians 4:11-12](#).
- As Swindoll says, "It's not a gift from heaven".[3]

- **Second, you don't need money to be content.**

"it means to be free from inner turmoil, satisfied with one's material and financial state, and in possession of a sense of peace regardless of one's circumstances or feelings."[4]

- **Thirdly, the Bible says that contentment isn't in the good life, the fast life or even the simple life.. Contentment lies not in what is yours, but in whose you are."**[5]

The old Puritans had a lot to say about contentment. Listen to one:

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. [6]

Thomas Watson continues with:

Discontent doth dislocate and unjoint the soul, it pulls off the wheels. Discontent is a fretting humor, which dries the brain, wastes the spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life.[7]

Seven Keys To Preserve Contentment from I Timothy 6

- Remember things are only temporary v.7.

A. Such a forceful endorsement by the Almighty should make contentment a prominent concern for each of us. Instead, we make it a secret concealed by our indifference to it. When the Apostle Paul wrote, "I have learned the secret of being content," his use of the word secret was intentional. Those things we expect to bring contentment surprisingly do not. We cannot depend upon it to fall into place through the progressive evolving of civilization, for contentment arises from a different source. Most of us do not know how to uncover this secret and have never seriously tried. Our quest is usually not for contentment but for more. This quest brings us into an immense maze, where before us lie dozens of avenues. Some are wide, luxurious, downhill, and tempting, and we see a rush of our friends entering them. They lead to beautiful houses, comfortable cars, exotic vacations, and affluence. Other avenues, equally popular, lead to prestigious colleges, distinguished jobs, important friends, and power. Still others direct us to beautiful spouses, beautiful children, deep tans, and popularity. All the while, off to one side, courses a narrow uphill road, unadorned and unpopular. It is dusty from its sparse use and lonely from lack of travelers. The sole treasure at its end is an elusive commodity called "godliness with contentment." Godliness is an attitude whereby what we want is to please God.

- Only seek necessities, wait for the rest v.8.

- Avoid a consuming desire for prosperity v.9-10.

- THE PROSPERITY LADDER[8]: Another erroneous measure of contentment is the prosperity ladder. Most of us look "up the ladder" and notice that the wealthy have more than we do. This, of course, strikes a near fatal blow at one's contentment. If, instead, we reversed our gaze and looked down the ladder, our gratitude would thrive and opportunities for sharing would abound. The pettiness of my own sources of discontent would be amusing were I not so repentant about them. I have been known to grumble when our house temperature drops to sixty degrees, yet there are untold millions in the world who do not have shelter. I have been known to complain if the day is rainy, yet a large segment of the world's land is shriveling up in drought. I have been known to groan if I miss my dinner, yet thousands who go to sleep tonight without food will not awaken in the morning. Christ came to save me from sin -- not from sixty-degree homes, rainy weather, and delayed dinners. This relativism, where the grass is greener on your neighbor's lawn, can be remedied, but first it must be confessed. We need to quit staring at those who have more than we do. We need to override the set-point by spiritual maturity, to look down rather than up the ladder, and to fix our contentment on godliness rather than relativism. It helps immeasurably if we are surrounded by a community of like-minded friends rather than a society where envy has been normalized. The Conclusion of this first point is a practice lesson. Let's start learning some actions that preserve and promote contentment. Focus on the Secret of Biblical contentment. Someone[9] has written nine steps we can take to preserve and enhance the growth of Biblical contentment in our lives.

- D. Flee materialism v.11.

- Cling to eternal life v.12-16.

- Fix your hope on God v.17.

- Give until it hurts v.18.

The Lord's purpose for pain is that suffering for God enables us to experience:

- The Sight giving Power of God in Job
- The Song Giving Power of Suffering in Paul and Silas's Life
- The Scripture Opening Power of Suffering in David's Life
- The Purifying Power of Suffering in Joseph's Life

Now look at Paul's testimony:

- **Philippians 4:11-12** *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (NKJV)*
- **2 Corinthians 11:23-27** *Are they ministers of Christ? -- I speak as a fool -- I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness -- (NKJV)*

What do both have in common? **CONTENTMENT**

[1] Swenson, Margin, pp. 189-90.

[2] Farrar, p. 122-23, BETTER HOMES & JUNGLES.

[3] Swindoll, p. 99.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Swenson, p.198.

[6] Jeremy Burroughs, The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment,

[7] Thomas Watson, The Art of Divine Contentment,

[8] Swenson, p.188.

[9] Ibid., p.199-200.

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