

A Window For Women

God's Word and Norma's Notes

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Cultivating Contentment in Christ

Parts 4 & 5

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Part 4

Someone has said, “Remembrance is the hallmark of gratitude,” and I believe that gratitude is the backbone of contentment. It is profitable to look back and consider what the Lord has done for us. We were slaves of sin and under the curse of God. “But God, who is rich in mercy . . . loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses” (Eph. 2:4, 5) and saved us by His amazing grace. The days of our first love were delightfully exhilarating. Our blood-bought hearts basked in God’s love. We were cleansed and made pure for the Master and we reveled in that. In fact, it was such a delightful experience that we could not keep quiet. Others just had to hear. Perhaps your zeal has declined, your joy has faded, or your problems have overcome you. You are discontented. Of course, that is to be expected! God’s Word gives us answers to help us find peace and contentment.

In Hebrews 10:32-39, God counterbalances our dilemma with grave warnings. Our new-found faith gives us new joy and anticipation. We recall those precious former days when we were illuminated to such a degree that in the midst of great struggles and sufferings we didn’t “cave in.” We sang, “O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home” (Isaac Watts). God has not changed.

Let’s take a look at Psalm 37:4-7, as I said we would do in our last session. “Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him . . . wait patiently for Him . . . Do not fret.” That is a BIG chunk when we are in the middle of the muddle!

First of all, God advises us and reassures us in the powerful words of v. 4. “Delight yourself also in the Lord.” The battle is not yours, but God’s. Don’t attempt to figure or fight, He will take care of you and do for you what you can’t do for yourself. On top of all those care packages, He still has more. He looks inside and “give(s) you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4). Assurance! Take God at His word! What an awesome God is He. “Immortal, invisible, God only wise” (Walter Chalmers Smith).

We would do well to flesh out verses 5 to 7. When you are slandered, misjudged, falsely accused, misunderstood, or misquoted “commit” the entire matter “to the Lord.” Roll the weight onto Him. Let Him act in your behalf and leave it there. So trust – having done the above, rest in Him. Since He is carrying your burden, it is not necessary for you to bear it also, although that is exactly what we too often do – we take our burden back. How foolish! It is God’s will that you should cast on Him your every care. He also bids you not to “cast away your confidence” (Heb. 10:35). But oh, we are so foolish when taken unawares. We “cast away (our) confidence” and carry all our cares.

V. 8 tells us not to “fret” because “*it only causes harm.*” Health advisors list the devastating effects that worry, fear and anger have on our bodies. The Lord tells us what they will do to our hearts, minds and souls. God has the remedy (Phil. 4:6). Read it, pray, ask and be thankful. He gives peace.

Did you note the one more pearl that we must add to our string of contentment? Wait, there’s more. “Wait patiently” (verse 7), there’s more. “Wait patiently for Him.” Yes, waiting is the thing we find hardest to do. Waiting is the thing we do least. God has a timetable that will precisely fit not only our need, but will importantly accomplish His purpose in us and for us. Note that our resources, as believers, are in the Lord.

“Trust **in the Lord**” (v.3). “Delight... **in the Lord**” (v. 4). “Commit your way **to the Lord**” (v.5). “Rest **in the Lord**” (v.7a). “Wait patiently for Him” (v.7b). (Emphasis added to these verses.)

Part 5

Will we ever be totally contented? Not on this earth! God is daily growing us for earthly good, while He is preparing us for Heaven. “For whom the LORD loves He chastens” (Heb. 12:6). Our crosses are not curses. I used to call God’s disciplines “dark strokes” on my canvas of life. Not at all! As I have drawn closer to my heavenly Father and have more carefully absorbed His Word and His love for me, I have come to realize that His acts of discipline are “love strokes.” I thank Him for every one of them, even though sometimes they excruciatingly hurt. The Lord chastens us because He loves us! This should help us to not mistake the purpose of our afflictions. Our afflictions are really God’s mercies that often blossom and bear fruit. “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:11). With God it is alright. He is really very kind and He sanctifies us through pain.

We considered Psalm 37:4-8 last time – “delight yourself,” “commit,” “trust,” “wait,” “do not fret.” Have you applied that to your personal life situations this past month? If you did, without doubt, you have paeans of praise to give to your heavenly Father. Do you have a wayward child or a needy husband? Are you worn with grief over the thoughts of their destiny? Has it helped? No, of course not! You have not committed the matter to the only One who can handle it. Think of it this way – yes, you bore your child and he or she has your blood flowing through their veins to sustain their body. That child is yours, but your influence is limited. That child is on Christ’s mind to a greater concerned and loving degree than on yours. He shed His blood to save that soul. Your child is more His than yours. The Father loves him or her more than you do. Don’t you believe that He can do the better job? Without doubt He can! That is practicing or fleshing out the Word. “Be still, and know that I *am* God” (Ps. 46:10).

God warns teachers of His precious Word to be extremely cautious that they practice what they teach. But teachers don’t live on the mountaintop all the time. The enemy goads them just like he does everyone else. Scripture tells us that “the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). God has reasons for allowing him to attack us.

I have a confession to make. I started my day with a discontented heart a while back. I knew I could not remain in that condition after all I have been saying to you. Furthermore, my discontentment was extremely grievous to the Lord. I was leaving Him out. What did I do? My first thought was, “What have I been saying to those women out there?” I knew I had been directing you to the Word, so I went back to Part 3 of this series to find out exactly what I said to you. There it was – Isaiah 40:28-31; also 41:10. It is not easy to relate this, but I want you to know that I’m not on a spiritual pedestal. Our Father deals with each of us for several obvious reasons and always for His glory.

“In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me. Among the gods *there is* none like You, O Lord; Nor *are there any works* like Your works” (Ps. 86:7, 8). David prayed this with complete confidence and with full assurance in the Lord. Confidence in Him is contentment. Be assured that God is and that He will answer for our good and for His own name’s sake, honor and glory. He knows your heart-cry even before you utter it and He longs to hear and to answer. Jesus groans for your need.

“Day by day, and with each passing moment, Strength I find, to meet my trials here.”

What have you been learning about contentment in your life?

**You can find hundreds of free resources from
Dr. John and Mrs. Norma Whitcomb at www.SermonAudio.com/Whitcomb.**

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