

“The Key To Contentment!”
1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Introduction:

1. Let's Head Back To Our Study Of 1 Corinthians This Morning!
 - 1 Corinthians 7!
 - Paul Has Been Dealing With Some Important Issues:
 - Dealing With Single & Married Living!
 - Dealing With Marriage & Divorce!
 - Today - We Come To Another Issue:
 - Facing The Church In Corinth!
 - And One That We Face As Well!
2. Issue: Christian Contentment!
 - Are You Content?
 - To Be Content Means That You Are Satisfied With:
 - Who You Are – Who God Has Made You To Be!
 - Where You Are At – Where God Has Placed You!
 - And Even What You Are Doing – What God Has Called You To Do With Your Life!
 - Being Content As A Christian:
 - Is Not An Easy Virtue To Have!
 - Thomas Watson - An English Pastor From Puritan Times - In The 1600's - Wrote An Entire Book On: “The Art Of Divine Contentment!”
 - Says This About Not Being Content:
 - “This Disease (Of Discontentment) Is Almost An Epidemic! Some Are Not Content With The Calling Which God Hath Set Them In, And Must Be A Step Higher, From The Plough To The Throne! Others From The Shop To The Pulpit! What Is This But Discontent Arising From High Flown Pride? Every Man Complains That His Life Is Not Better, Though He Seldom Complains That His Heart Is Not Better! How Is It That No Man Is Content?”
 - Are You Content?
3. This Is The Issue Paul Deals With In 7:17-24!
 - As A Christian, You Need To Learn To Be Content!
 - Read Passage!
 - We Need To Learn To Be Content!
 - Because - As Paul Tells Us In 1 Timothy 6:6 - “Godliness With Contentment Is Great Gain!”

* Are You Content?

1. *In The Circumstances Of Your Life!*

- See This In 7:17 - “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches!” - Are You Content With Your Circumstances?
 - In This Verse, Paul Is Referring Back To His Instructions Dealing With Single & Married Living!
 - Especially When Divorce Has Entered The Picture, Though The Christian Did Not Actively Pursue It!
 - And This Kind Of Circumstance Is Very Difficult!
 - For Those Who Have Experienced This!
 - For Those Who You Know Who Have Experienced This!
 - It Is A Circumstance That You Would Not Have Chosen!
 - How Can A Christian Learn To Be Content:
 - When They Are Faced With Difficult Circumstances Like This?
 - Not Just Divorce!
- But What About Other Circumstances That You Can't Control?
 - Perhaps You Lost A Loved One!
 - A Very Difficult Circumstance!
 - A Circumstance You Have No Control Over!
 - How Can You Be Content?
 - Or Perhaps You Had A Serious Injury Or Have A Serious Disease! **IE:** Like The Olympic Runner From South Africa - The Blade Runner - Both Legs Amputated As A Child!
 - Another Very Difficult Circumstance!
 - Another Circumstance You Have No Control Over!
 - How Can You Be Content?
- When You Face A Difficult Circumstance In Your Life:
 - That You Have No Control Over!
 - Remember That God Is Still In Control!

- God Is In Control:
 - Through His Providence In Your Life!
 - “But As God Hath Distributed To Every Man!”
 - It Is God Who Is Ultimately In Control Of What You Have Or Don’t Have In Your Life!
 - As Job Said - “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD!”
- God Is In Control:
 - Through His Placement Of Your Life!
 - “As The Lord Hath Called Every One!”
 - It Is God Who Is Ultimately In Control Of What You Do In Your Life!
 - He Is The One Who Gives You The Gifts / Abilities To Work & Serve & Provide For Your Families!
- God Is In Control:
 - Through His Plan For Your Life!
 - “So Let Him Walk!” / “And So Ordain I In All Churches!”
 - It Is God Who Wants You To Continue To Live!
 - Even When You Face These Difficult Circumstances! That You Can’t Control!
 - Keep Walking! With The Lord!
 - Keep Living! For The Lord!
 - Keep Trusting! In The Lord!
- And Be Content!
 - Because Even If It Seems Like You Are In Circumstances That Are Too Difficult To Handle!
 - Remember That God Is Still In Control!
 - Hebrews 13:5 - “Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!”

* Are You Content?

2. In The Condition Of Your Life!

- See This In 7:18-20 - “Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. / 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. / 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called!” - Are You Content With Your Conditions?
 - In These Verses, Paul Is Dealing With The Condition A Person Was In When He Was “Called” By Jesus Christ To Repent Of Their Sin, Believe In Him & Be Saved!
 - A Circumcised Person Is A Jew!
 - An Uncircumcised Person Is A Gentile!
 - Or Anyone Who Is Not A Jew!
 - And In The Early Church - Even In Greek & Roman Cities - There Were Many Jews As Well As Gentiles Who Became Christians!
 - And These Conditions Could Have Been Very Disturbing!
 - The Jewish Christian Could Regret That His People Rejected & Crucified Jesus!
 - The Gentile Christian Could Regret That He & His People Lived In Unspeakable Sin!
 - How Can A Christian Learn To Be Content:
 - When They Are Faced With Disturbing Conditions Like This?
 - Not Just Your Race & Nationality!
- But What About Other Conditions That You Can’t Change?
 - Like Your Past? **IE:** In High School, Had A Friend Named Tom - In The Bible College My Parents Worked At - Before He Was Saved, He Was Heavily Involved In Alcohol & Drugs - Not Just Addiction, But Also Dealing - Making Many Trips To Spanish Harlem In New York City & Made A Lot Of Money & A Reputation For Himself!
 - This Was How God Found Him & Called Him To His Son, Jesus Christ, To Be Saved!
 - But His Past Condition Was A Constant Source Of Shame & Embarrassment To Him!
 - A Very Disturbing Condition!
 - A Past / Condition That He Could Not Change!
 - How Could He Be Content?
- When You Face A Disturbing Condition In Your Life: (Like Tom)
 - That You Cannot Change!
 - Remember The Change That God Has Made In Your Life!
- The Condition Of Your History!
 - 7:18 - “Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised!”
 - Your Personal History - You Can’t Change!
 - You Can’t Change Your Past!
 - This Can Be Very Disturbing!
 - If You Were A Jew When You Were Saved:

- You Can't Change Who You Are! Your Past!
- Don't Try To Conceal Or Change Your History!
- Or If You Were A Gentile When You Were Saved:
 - You Can't Change Who You Are! Your Past!
 - Don't Try To Conceal Or Change Your History!
- Your Past Is In The Past! Your History Is History!
- Instead - Remember The Change That God Has Made In Your Life!
 - He Has Given You A New Future!
- The Condition Of Your Heritage!
 - 7:19a - "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing!"
 - Your People's Heritage - You Can't Change!
 - The Jews Made The Sign Of Circumcision To Be A Very Important Thing! Even Jewish Christians Started Expecting Christians Of Other Nationalities To Be Circumcised!
 - This Could Have Been Very Disturbing!
 - But God Says That All Of Those Conditions You Have:
 - That Are External & That Are Superficial!
 - They Are Nothing! They Mean Nothing! They Do Nothing For You In Your Walk & Relationship With God!
 - Instead - Remember The Change That God Has Made In Your Life!
 - He Has Given You A New Family!
 - Galatians 3:26-28 - "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. / For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. / There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus!"
- The Condition Of Your Heart!
 - 7:19b - "But the keeping of the commandments of God!"
 - That Is Something!
 - But When It Comes To Your Own Heart - You Can't Change It!
 - In Order To Keep The Commandments Of God!
 - With The Right Actions & Attitudes!
 - This Is Very Disturbing!
 - Instead - Remember The Change That God Has Made In Your Life!
 - He Has Given You A New Heart & A New Focus!
 - Romans 2:29 - "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God!"
 - And Now You Can Keep The Commandments Of God!
- So Be Content!
 - 7:20 - "Let every man abide (Remain) in the same calling wherein he was called!"
 - Because Even If It Seems Like You Have A Condition (Either Past Or Present) That Is Very Disturbing!
 - And It Is Something You Cannot Change!
 - Remember The Change That God Has Made In Your Life!

* Are You Content?

3. ***In The Calling Of Your Life!***

- See This In 7:21-24 - "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. / 22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. / 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. / 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God!" - Are You Content With Your Calling?
 - In These Verses, Paul Is Dealing With Your Calling In Life!
 - Your Vocation! Here He Talks About Those Who Were Slaves & Those Who Were Free!
 - Imagine Being A Slave!
 - Very Common In Corinth At This Time!
 - During The Time Of Paul - Around 200K Free Citizens / But Around 500K Slaves! Owned By Another Person To Serve Them!
 - Very Demeaning & Hard & Wrong!
 - Albert Barnes - "Slavery Is Evil, And Always Evil, And Only Evil!"
 - Now - Imagine Being A Slave & Believing In Jesus!
 - This Kind Of Calling Can Be Very Discouraging!
 - Yet - God Says - 7:21a - "Art Thou Called Being A Servant / Slave? Care Not For It!"
 - Don't Let It Bug / Bother You! Content!
 - How Can A Christian Learn To Be Content:
 - When They Are Faced With A Discouraging Calling?

- But What About Other Callings That You Can't Celebrate?
 - None Of Us Are Slaves! But All Of Us Serve In Some Way!
 - As Employees! As Spouses! As Students! As Children!
 - Sometimes It Can Be Very Difficult & Discouraging!
 - When You Have A Boss That Is Demanding Or Coworkers That Are Difficult To Work With!
- When You Face A Discouraging Calling In Your Life:
 - That You Cannot Celebrate!
 - Then Remember & Celebrate What God Has Given To You!
- Celebrate Your New Opportunities!
 - From Christ - 7:21b - "But If Thou Mayest Be Made Free, Use It Rather!"
 - To Be Content Does Not Mean That There Can Be No Change! It Means, That You Are Satisfied With Where God Has Placed You, Wherever That Is!
 - Sometimes God May Open Up Some Other Doors For You!
 - Like For A Slave To Become Free!
 - There Were Lawful Ways For A Slave To Become Free Even In Rome - As A Gift / Working / Paying / Emancipation!
 - He Says: Take It! But Why? Not Just For Freedom's Sake - But So That You Can "Use It!"
 - If You Have A Better Opportunity To Be Used By The Lord & To Serve The Lord, Then Take & Use It!
- Celebrate Your New Freedom!
 - In Christ - 7:22a - "For He That Is Called In The Lord, Being A Servant, Is The Lord's Freeman!"
 - You May Be In Bondage To Another Man!
 - But A Christian Is Truly Free In Jesus Christ!
 - **IE:** Like Paul & Silas - When They Were Thrown Into Prison In The City Of Philippi - The Jailer: "Thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks!" (Acts 16:24)
 - They Were In Bondage! In Jail! Prisoners!
 - But - They Were Still Free!
 - Acts 16:25 - "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them!" - The Lord's Freeman!
 - A Christian Is A Free Man - No Matter What Their Calling / Status In Life!
 - Free To Know God! Worship! Serve! Please! Glorify!
- Celebrate Your New Service!
 - For Christ - 7:22b - "Likewise Also He That Is Called, Being Free, Is Christ's Servant!"
 - We Are All Free - According To This Verse's Meaning!
 - But A Christian Becomes A Willing Servant / A Willing Slave To Another Master! A Good Master! The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Jesus Christ Is The Master That Provides True Freedom!
 - John 8:36 - "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!"
- Celebrate Your New Relationship!
 - With Christ - 7:23 - "Ye Are Bought With A Price; Be Not Ye The Servants Of Men!"
 - Jesus Bought Every Christian With The Price Of His Own Blood! ("Precious Blood Of Christ!" - 1 Peter 1:19)
 - Now You Belong To Him!
 - But Not Just As A Servant / A Slave!
 - But As Something More! Galatians 4:7 - "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ!"
 - Don't See Yourself As A Servant To Man!
 - But A Servant To God! A Son Of God! No Matter What You Do! And No Matter Where You Are!
- And Be Content!
 - 7:24 - "Brethren, Let Every Man, Wherein He Is Called, Therein Abide!"
 - Because Even If Your Calling Is Very Discouraging!
 - And It Is Something That Is Hard To Celebrate!
 - Remember To Celebrate In The Lord & The Freedom He Gives To Those Who Believe In Him!

Conclusion:

1. None Of Us Are Slaves / Servants Like These Verses Describe!
 - But We All Have A "Calling" In This Life!
 - God Has Given Each One Of Us Skills / Talents / Abilities In Order To Make A Living & Provide For Our Families!
 - Do Not Fret Over What Your Calling Is!
 - Every Calling / Every Vocation Is Sacred!
 - To Be Used For Service & Witness For The Lord!
 - So Be Content!

2. The Key To Contentment:
 - No Matter What:
 - Your Circumstances Are!
 - Your Condition Is!
 - Your Calling Is!
 - Is Found At The End Of 7:24:
 - “Therein Abide With God!”
 - Don’t Wait For A Change To Take Place In Your Life:
 - Before You Walk With & Abide With God!
 - No - Be Content & Look For Ways To:
 - Walk With / Please / Serve God Right Now! Right Where God Has Placed You!
 - If You Are A Student – “Therein Abide With God!”
 - If You Are A Construction Worker!
 - If You Are A Homemaker!
 - If You Are Unemployed!
 - If You Are Retired!
3. Don’t Look For Or Wait For A Change:
 - In Order To Start Living For God!
 - Be Content & “Therein Abide With God!”
 - Because: “Godliness With Contentment Is Great Gain!”

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