



"God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage."  
—Anonymous

29-Jul-11

## Be Content in All Things (Part One)

Ours is a discontented world, and current events indicate that more unsettled times are just ahead, creating more anxiety and dissatisfaction. God's Word tells us, however, that we must be content in all things: "Let your conduct be without [covetousness](#); be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

[God](#) wants us to be content to save us a great deal of heartache and to prevent us from breaking His commandments. Yet, because of our carnal nature, human reasoning clouds our thinking, and we often manage to miss the real significance of God's instructions, which as God's children, we need to know and be practicing.

In [Ecclesiastes 5:10](#), Solomon writes, "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity." In his [wisdom](#), Solomon had seen that money and possessions do not bring a person true happiness and is therefore vanity. The dictionary defines *vanity* as a "display of excessive pride," and [Proverbs 16:18](#) tells us, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." These

scriptures clearly show that money or possessions are not the way to happiness. Yes, we can enjoy these things, but if that is all we are interested in, we will never be content. Just look at the lives of the rich and famous!

God is not a God who wants us to live miserable existences, working all our lives just to pay off debts that we have accumulated perhaps because we tried to keep up with the Joneses. He wants us to have an abundance of good things in our lives, and that begins with obeying His Word. We can all look at the people in our towns and see many who do not obey God yet seemingly prosper and have all that life can provide. Some may have gained high positions in the community or even in government, but are they genuinely happy? Did they, perhaps, achieve so much through dishonesty and underhanded tactics?

What drives a great many people is the desire to take as much out of life as possible, and they try to prove it by the possessions they accumulate—whether they can afford them or not. Some are not satisfied until they have bigger and better things than their neighbors, which means every time a neighbor gets something new, they have to top it. When they go shopping, they give in to the demands of all the eye-catching merchandise screaming out to them, "Buy! Buy! Buy!" These people are never content! In the end, they are in heavy debt and leave a mountain of bills as their children's inheritance.

Too often, people fill their homes with things that they might appreciate for a few weeks or even months, but then either throw them away or put them on sale at a garage sale. What a waste! Sadly, it seems that some people work solely for possessions. Discontentment is a hard taskmaster, and many make themselves slaves to the credit card and second mortgage.

Not being content with what they have drives people to lose all reasoning and break more of God's laws. Sometimes, when people receive a gift that they did not particularly want and someone else receives what they desired, their discontentment leads them into jealousy and feelings of unfairness. The fact that the person giving the gift had put a lot of time and effort into choosing and purchasing the gift becomes lost in [ingratitude](#). When we allow ourselves to become discontent, we allow this damaging, carnal thinking to rob us, not only of the [joy](#) of receiving, but also of the [love](#) and

thoughtfulness that went into it. If we do not stay on top of them, our carnal natures can lead us into all kinds of unhappiness, with the result that we [sin](#). Being discontent has serious consequences.

It is not only about possessions. I once heard one lady telling another that she did not care how her children did it, but she wanted grandchildren. Her discontentment prevented her from simply enjoying her children and allowing circumstances to flow naturally toward marriage and babies. No, she had to push them into having children, possibly out of wedlock, just to satisfy her desire!

[Genesis 4:3-8](#) contains the account of Cain and Abel bringing sacrifices before the Lord. Abel's sacrifice was more acceptable than his elder brother's, and when God pointed this out to Cain, he became angry and killed Abel. Not content that God had corrected him so that he would do better in the future, he allowed jealousy and rage to drive him to murder. All Cain needed to do was to [repent](#) and offer an acceptable sacrifice. Instead, he allowed discontent to lead him to break God's commandments. How many did he break in this act?

[1 Thessalonians 5:18](#) says, ". . . in everything give thanks," but that does not just mean all the things that are pleasing to us. Unlike Cain, we need to be grateful for trials and corrections that help us to grow in godly character. It may be difficult to have the right perspective, but if we want to please God, then we must overcome our carnal nature, the way of thinking that has caused untold problems since Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden.

In Ezekiel 28 chronicles [Satan](#) and his downfall into sin. Notice verse 2, addressed by God to "the prince of Tyre," who was a human type of Satan, probably the ruler of that Phoenician city: "Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, 'I am a god. I sit in the seat of gods in the midst of the seas,' yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god." In verses 3-5, God describes his proud attitude, and in verses 12-17, he shows the same attitude in Satan.

Satan was a covering cherub at the very throne of God. He saw how beautiful he was and how he held such a high position. He also saw the

mighty works of God, and instead of being pleased with his part in God's plan, he allowed his pride to lead him into discontentment. No longer satisfied with his position, he soon attempted to usurp God's throne.

This great being, renamed as "[Adversary](#)," is still filled with pride, and with that pride comes a great deal of discontent. He influenced one-third of the angels and then all of mankind to be discontent and ungrateful ([Revelation 12:7-9](#)). Even now, Satan wants instant gratification. He wants adulation. He wants everything under his power. As "the prince and power of the air," he broadcasts his discontent throughout [the world](#) ([Ephesians 2:2](#)).

If we do not keep control on our minds, we could, even after being converted by God, allow ourselves to fall victim to the same problem of discontentment that has beset man all down through the ages. If we do not stay on top of this, we, too, could become locked into dangerous thoughts that will set us on the path to eternal damnation. We can see how serious a sin discontentment can be.

- Geoff Preston

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Contentment](#)

by John O. Reid

Many people live in a state of discontent. Ironically, what they set their hearts upon (wealth, power, influence) often displaces the love for family and a relationship with God. True riches consist of godly character coupled with contentment- a by-product of obedience. Contentment (an inner quality) does not come naturally, but must be learned as the Apostle Paul has counseled (Philippians 4:12). Paul, who lived his life on a metaphorical roller coaster, realized that God was with him through ups and downs, working godly character through all his cumulative experiences. Knowing that God is with us, we don't have to collapse under trial or yield to temptation, but be content that God is developing godly character, preparing us for our spiritual destiny.

## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[The Elements of Motivation \(Part Two\): Vision](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

If we don't know where we're going, we aren't going to get there! John Ritenbaugh illustrates that our vision of our goal—the Kingdom of God—is a compelling motivation to overcome, grow, and bear fruit in preparation for eternal life.

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