

The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment

Contentment can be so elusive.

- The contentment of driving a newer, cleaner vehicle that does not smell like a wet dog (i.e., my '96 Grand Voyager) lasted until the car got a new dent.
- The contentment of outside lights controlled by my smartphone was short-lived because now I'm thinking how much better life would be if I could remotely control my bedroom light, Keurig coffee maker, fireplace ...
- Getting away for a week's vacation is always marred by a nagging thought: It's going to end in six days ... five days ... four days...

If we're honest with ourselves, most of us could identify times when discontentment tries to get our attention. It's a natural part of our makeup as sinful people; left to ourselves and our own devices, we can never feel fully satisfied. *This is nice, but if I only had ...*

It doesn't have to be that way. In fact, for the follower of Christ, it should never be that way. We give lip service to the idea that "all I need is Jesus," but in our quest for bigger and better—and in our complaints—we act just like the world around us. But one of the greatest marks of a transformed life in Christ is contentment.

Let me repeat that: One of the greatest marks of a transformed life in Christ is contentment.

I'm currently reading a book recommended to me by my friend, Andrew Hudson. Andrew doesn't recommend a current top seller or what's trending at the moment on Amazon. Nooo. He hooked me on a book by Jeremiah Burroughs. Burroughs was one of those old-school preachers—so old-school he's cool. He was a 17th-century English Puritan preacher, and his book, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, is a collection of his sermons on the subject. Here's a few nuggets I've gleaned:



Many men think that when they are troubled and have not got contentment it is because they have but a little in the world, and that if they had more then they should be content. That is just as if a man were hungry, and to satisfy his craving stomach he should gape and hold open his mouth to take in the wind, and then should think that the reason why he is not satisfied is because he has not got enough of the wind; no, the reason is because the thing is not suitable to a craving stomach. Yet there is really the same madness in the world: the wind which a man takes in by gaping will as soon satisfy a craving stomach ready to starve, as all the comforts in the world can satisfy a soul who knows what true happiness means.

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O poor deluded man! it is not because you have not got enough of it, but because it is not the thing that is proportionable to the immortal soul that God has given you. Why do you lay out money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? (Isaiah 55: 2).

God is not against creature comforts or possessions, but He is against us looking to those things for contentment instead of looking to Him. I want to be fully satisfied in Jesus. Looking for contentment in anyone or anything else speaks volumes about our walk with Christ.

On the other hand, contentment gets the attention of others. To live with nonstop pain in your shoulder yet still live contentedly without complaint ... to endure rough days at work with a smile ... to be content to drive an old car ... to be content when ... well, you get the picture. When we respond to hassles, hardships, and the pull of materialism in a way quite different from the world, it gets noticed. And it points to the One in whom we find our contentment.