

## A Summer Of Contentment

Written by Scott Evans

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As we close the books on another summer up here in the northeast, I can look back on it and see God's handiwork throughout it. While some of it was difficult, much of it was spent growing closer to God through some difficult times and through some great times.

Over the summer I spent a lot of my time doing some of my favorite things! I played countless rounds of golf. I was able to spend time with my brother and some friends that I had not seen in quite some time. I attended concerts by Gold City, Greater Vision, Rejuvenation, Only By Grace, the Kingsmen, the Martins, Randy Simpson, New Harmony, Father's Voice and Karen Peck and New River. A lot of great memories were made. However, I spent a lot of time working through some difficult days and nights in my life as well. The source of the problems and difficult days is not important. What is important is what God taught me during these good time and the bad.

Contentment is a great word! Charles Kelley says, "Christian contentment is the God-given ability to be satisfied with the loving provision of God in any and every situation." The Bible puts it this way in Philippians 4:11-13, "... I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: anywhere and in all things I am instructed to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

Abased and abound are really fancy words for being content in the rough times and the good times, when afflicted or when prosperous, when suffering or secure, when hungry or fed. It is hard to say which state is the easier to be content in. When abased we find comfort in God. When abound we tend to forget our dependence on God. However, as verse 13 in Philippians 4 reminds us, we can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. That is all things, not some of the things, not part of the things but all things. I love the way that JB Phillips translates this verse. He says, "I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and the power."

Another favorite verse about contentment is found in First Timothy 6:6-7. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." The Greek rendering for contentment here is "autarkeia" which means "an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances." It is very difficult to have peace in the face of adversity but with God it can be achieved. Contentment comes from God and no other source. If we trust God and believe that He is working everything for our good, how can we not be content?

I wrote all of that about contentment to say this. God has taught me more about contentment in the past three months than I had learned in my entire lifetime. Contentment cannot be found in money, friends, family, careers, ministries or anything else this world can offer. True contentment can only come through God and a very personal relationship with Him. I have always known this but God proved it to me once again.

The first step toward contentment is to have a right relationship with God. The quickest way to

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discontentment is to be out of God's Will and not living for Him. However, once you confess your sin before God and come back to Him, you will find that peace and contentment will return.

Also, we must never confuse happiness with contentment. You do not have to be happy to be content! As I stated earlier, I spent a lot of long, difficult days and nights seeking God for direction in some of the circumstances in my life. Many of those circumstances were not happy ones. I faced situations with job uncertainties, health concerns, problems with relationships with friends and just everyday concerns. Not happy moments but once I righted my relationship with Christ, I found myself finding contentment with all of the situations in my life, happy and sad.

If you are searching for contentment, stop searching in the things of this world. You too can find contentment in Jesus Christ. If you do not know Him as your personal Savior, you can know Him today. Please visit this page to see how to become a Christian today. If you do know Christ as your Savior but are still searching for that contentment, get down on your knees and pray today. He will answer that prayer. Matthew Henry, the great Biblical teacher, said this, "Christians are to be satisfied and sufficient, and not to seek for what more than God has given them. He is the source of true contentment."