

Introduction

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:” (2 Peter 1:3).

The overall theme of these lectures is “I Know.” As the verse above points out, God has supplied us with the knowledge of all things which pertain to spiritual life and godliness. Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). And again, “*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*” (John 17:17). From these passages we learn that spiritual truth can be ascertained and that this truth is found in God’s word. Peter penned, “*But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*” (1 Peter 1:25). To this Paul added, “*How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*” (Ephesians 3:3-4). Peter pointed out that the NT is God’s Word and Paul said that they (the apostles) wrote the NT by Divine revelation from God so that you and I could read and understand God’s will for mankind today. Truth can be known and understood through the knowledge of God’s Word.

Contentment Is Acquired

Contentment is a state of mind. Therefore, it is not subject to the situation a person may find himself or herself in, but to the manner by which they adapt themselves to the situation. The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary defines contentment as, “...1 satisfaction; being pleased; ease of mind; happiness:... 2 Archaic. the act of satisfying or the state of being satisfied” (448). Thus, contentment is something which we are taught and learn.

Paul penned, “*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be*

abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:11-12). In verse twelve Paul said he had been instructed, in verse eleven he said he had learned; and again in verse twelve, because he had been instructed and had learned, he now knew how to be content in any situation or condition in life. We can learn to be content.

An Endless Appetite And A False Security

The wise man penned, “*All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled*” (Ecclesiastes 6:7). As the need and desire for food is never satisfied, so those who seek contentment through worldly gain and pleasure never experience true contentment.

The gratification of the sex addict is just for the moment and then the hot coals of desire are again inflamed. It is said that those who are addicted to pornographic material grow in their hunger for it to the extent that they begin to desire to view it more frequently and with greater intensity. That is from natural sexual relations to group sex, rape, child molestation, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. Peter described such as, “*Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbad the madness of the prophet*” (2 Peter 2:14-16). Contentment can never be obtained through sexual gratification alone.

Those who seek contentment through the use of recreational drugs will never be completely satisfied either. Like the sex addict, their appetite cannot be appeased. Of these, Solomon wrote, “*Who hath woe? who hath sorrow: who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They*

that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of the mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (Proverbs 23:29-35). Here again, the addict turns time and time again unto his or her vice to find contentment in life only to awake from the influence of his or her drug to realize his or her misery is as great or greater than it was before they partook of their addiction.

In like manner, contentment is not achieved through wealth. Solomon penned, “*He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity*” (Ecclesiastes 5:10). In the Proverbial Letter he wrote, “*Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*” (Proverbs 30:7-9). Paul warned, “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... He is proud, knowing nothing, ... and destitute of truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*” (1 Timothy 6:3-10).

Wealth alone does not bring happiness, security, nor contentment; but rather, more times than not, a greed for more wealth.

The True Source Of Contentment

The Hebrew writer wrote, *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:5-6). Jesus said, *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28). Paul penned, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Philippians 4:13). And again, *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us”* (Romans 8:31)? All of these passages point to God as the true source of contentment. When we have and maintain a proper relationship with God we find and have an inner peace and contentment with self and God which surpasses all understanding. The trials of life: sickness, death, monetary needs, political upheaval, etc., doesn't cause us to be over anxious because we know all is well with our soul. Paul exhorted, *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7).

To have and maintain this relationship with God, we must bow down unto Him in humble obedience and submission, *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up”*

(James 4:7-10). To obtain this relationship with God, the alien sinner is told to hear (Rom. 10:17), believe (John 8:24), repents (Acts 17:30-31), confess (Romans 10:9-10), and to be baptized (Acts 2:37-38). The erring Christian must confess his sin (1 John 1:9) and repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:18-24). We maintain it through prayer, as mentioned above (Philippians 4:6) and through faithful attendance in worship and service to God (Hebrews 10:23-26). This, and this alone, is the only path and key to true contentment.

Conclusion

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage” (2 Peter 2:19). The pleasures of the world may promise joy and happiness, but they only provide misery, trouble, and bondage. Freedom of sin and inner peace and contentment can only be found in obedience to God. Have you found this inner peace?

Works Cited

All scripture references are from the KJV of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary,
Volume one A-K, World Book Inc.,
Chicago-London-Sydney-Toronto, 1990, page
448.

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the
30th Annual Mid-West Lectures,
“I Know”

To hear or view the complete lesson go to
www.39thStreetChurchOfChrist.org
or contact the

39th Street Church of Christ
15331 East 39th Street
Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

I Know...

How To Be Content

by
Larry Yarber

© 2012



International Bible Studies
Tract Series