

## Contentment and Gratitude

You and I live in a society that believes the selfish lie that no one (especially me) should have any unfulfilled needs or wants.

Right behind this, is the exaggerated understanding of “rights” - getting what we deserve.

Unfortunately, these beliefs have also crept into the church.

Why are so many people in society and in the church so dissatisfied?

In 2 Timothy 3:2-3, Paul lays down a sample of sins that flourish in the hearts of people. Notice, Paul includes ungratefulness and unholiness.

### **Discontentment is really about being ungrateful.**

Discontentedness and ingratitude go hand in hand. They are signs of unbelief.

Ex. - Ps 106, the psalmist declares Israel's corporate guilt of sin and wicked behavior. Their problem starts when they do not understand God's wonders, which leads to their forgetting God, to their rebelling against God. They did not remember because they were not grateful. They were not remembering and not being grateful because they did not know (have a relationship with) God. Not remembering (being grateful) plays a critical role in rebelling. Discontented people rebel.

Romans 1 shows how discontentedness plays a part in unbelief. Low thoughts of God lead to no thoughts of God, and then to lofty thoughts of oneself and dissatisfaction with one's condition (Made in the image of God). The more elevated the position men assign to themselves, the more they feel they have coming to them.

### **Contentment is about being grateful**

So, how do we get on the road to contentment?

In Col. 2:6-7, Paul commands the Christian to walk (your journey with Christ in this life; your relationship with Him) in Christ in the same manner that he or she received Christ. You and I came to Christ in complete dependence on Him for strength, faith, eternal life, and sustaining grace. Now you and I live in Christ in complete dependence on Him for these.

Your Christian walk is an extension of your gratitude to God for who He is and what He has done

If you only love God for what He does for you, then you only love yourself, for you see God only in terms of those activities He undertakes which somehow improve the quality of your existence.

Gratitude strengthens your relationship with God, and gives you confidence that you are His and that He is on your side.

Unless you have an intimate relationship with God - that is knowing Him and His ways, gratitude will be far from your heart. When you know God, your heart will overflow with gratitude. Your obedience will also grow because your heart is already open in worshipful gratitude to the Father.

It is not in receiving all that you desire that brings contentment, but having your hearts emptied of the vain "needs" and "rights" the American culture offers you, and being filled with gratitude for what you have.

And what you have is Christ in you. Only a constant, developing relationship with Christ brings contentment.

Contentment comes not from having every need, want, and desire filled, but instead, contentment comes only if you realize that you deserve nothing at all. There are no "rights" in the Kingdom of God. Contentment will not come from having your standard of living raised or the quality of our life raised.

Contentment comes only from having the desires of your hearts sanctified (purified) by knowing Christ who lives in you.

*Psalm 73:25 - Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.*

Anything that God gives you will be more than you deserve.