

CONTENTMENT IS BAD!

March 2, 2014

At first glance, I do not think that anyone, in their right mind, would agree with the message that is presented in the title of this article. How in the world can contentment be bad?! Scores of books and untold articles have been written on how to be content in this life; so why would anyone say that contentment is bad?

Of course, not all contentment is bad and most of the time it is good, but it can be negative. The Greek scholar, Joseph Henry Thayer, said, "Contentment is a perfect condition of life in which no aid or support is needed." Another said, "The good life exists only when we stop wanting a better one. The itch for things is a virus draining the soul of contentment" (anonymous). Depending upon one's direction in life, both of these statements can be good or they can be bad. If one is making reference to the physical blessings of this life, then they are likely to be "spot on" in the wisdom they intend to convey. However, if one is talking about spiritual things, then both are terribly wrong and bad!

Not one person that has ever lived, or that ever will live, has experienced the condition in which they needed neither aid nor support. God created for mankind a wonderful world in which to live and provided all the necessary things that aid and support our lives. But it isn't just the physical for which He planned; Peter said, "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 Pet. 1:3). Without God, we could not live physically, neither could we live spiritually, but because of His love, He has provided for us all that we need.

If one tries to be content spiritually, failure will be the result. If we stop wanting better, when it comes to our spiritual lives, then we will only receive worse. Paul commanded the Corinthian brethren to "be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Like a structure, the Christian must always be reinforcing the knowledge they have and endeavoring to gain more, or he will rot away from a lack of use. A growing and maturing Christian will always be striving to add those Christian characteristics which Peter described to his life (2 Pet. 1:5-8).

There is, however, a huge difference between growing in the knowledge of Jesus (2 Pet. 3:18) and coming with a better idea that cannot be supported in the Scripture. If someone says, "I believe," or "I feel like..." that is not a sign of growth and scholarship; it is a desire, on that individual's part, to make the Gospel less restrictive and easier to accept by those that do not want to pattern their lives after Christ. One must always strive to grow and mature in his knowledge about God. As important as that is, one must also be careful that he isn't carried away by every thing that comes along because it appears to be new and improved (Eph. 4:14).

The ultimate goal should be for none of us to become content or comfortable where we are in our spiritual lives, but to continue to always become better students, teachers, and Christians. At the same time, we must be very watchful about changing the "Old Jerusalem Gospel" into something that is different, no matter how modern and better it may seem, and always be conscious of those that endorse such. Like John exhorted, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jn. 4:1).