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Daily Devotional - Monday, November 19, 2018 - Contentment in All Circumstances

NOVEMBER 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, November 19, 2018 - Contentment in All Circumstances

Philippians 4:10-13

MONDAY

19

Think about the times when you have felt truly satisfied. What caused you to feel that way? For most people, a sense of well-being comes when their environment is just the way they want it, but that wasn't the case with Paul. He learned to be content in every circumstance, good or bad.

We'd do well to learn a few lessons from him. After all, we can't avoid all difficult situations, so we might as well discover how to face them with a tranquil, settled spirit rather than with frustration and anxiety.

Contentment isn't governed by external circumstances. Changing the situation may bring temporary relief, but satisfaction based on circumstances will always be sporadic and fleeting. It's a matter of how you think, not what you have.

Contentment flows from an inward attitude. The apostle's inner calm came from a mind set on Christ. Choosing to trust the Savior no matter what, Paul allowed the Holy Spirit within him to rule his emotions and shape his responses.

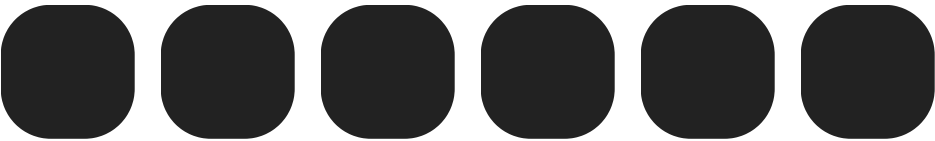
Contentment is learned experientially. This isn't something you can acquire from a book or sermon, because it's a process that must be lived out. Paul learned contentment—in persecution, suffering, and prison. The Lord used every difficulty to transform him.

Situations that cause frustration, anxiety, and displeasure are also the ones God uses to produce contentment in us. When you are fed up with your own grumbling, disappointment, and dissatisfaction, then you are ready to let the Lord teach you His new way of living—in joyous trust.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, November 15, 2018 - Getting Ready

NOVEMBER 15TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

1 Peter 1:13-16

We all face difficulties in life. Biblical thinking and balanced judgment can help us prepare to deal with challenges, and 1 Peter 1 contains valuable instructions. We are to ...

Fix our hope on Jesus (v. 13). No matter how hard the circumstances, life has purpose and meaning in Christ. The heavenly Father has promised always to be with us and to keep watch, like a shepherd caring for his sheep. (See Matt. 28:20; John 10:14.) Through the Holy Spirit's transforming power, troubled times can become opportunities for us to learn more about God's faithfulness, draw on His strength, and experience personal growth.

Resist our former lifestyle (v. 14). When troubles come, it is tempting to revert to ungodly habits or take up new ones. In these seasons of life, Satan will encourage us to pursue any path that leads away from the Lord. We need to remember that we are new creations whose lifestyles are to match our position as God's children. That old behavior does not fit us anymore.

Make holiness our goal (v. 15). Being "holy," or "set apart," begins with giving up control over our life and yielding to the Holy Spirit's rightful authority. As we submit to Him, He will begin to express the life of Christ through us. By learning what pleases God and acting accordingly, we cooperate with His efforts to conform us to the Son's image.

While struggles are part of everyday life, we do not have to be overcome by them. Think about a specific step you can take to start carrying out these instructions today.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 14, 2018 - What It Means to Follow Jesus

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 14, 2018 - What It Means to Follow Jesus

Matthew 4:18-22

WEDNESDAY

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We often refer to ourselves as followers of Christ, but what does that really mean? When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him, they physically left what they were doing to be with Him. The disciples had tangible evidence: They could see His direction with their eyes and hear His words with their ears. But how do we follow Jesus today? As we examine today's passage, we'll see four essential elements that show us how to be followers of Christ.

1. The disciples heard Jesus' voice. Today Christ speaks to us through His Word, giving instruction and guidance through direct commands and prohibitions, spiritual principles, and biblical examples. And within us, we have the Holy Spirit, who directs our path and corrects us when we go astray.

2. They obeyed without delay. Once the disciples heard the Lord's command, they immediately complied. Following Jesus requires that we not only do what He says, but also when and how He says to do it.

3. They left something behind. To follow Jesus, the disciples abandoned the comforts of home and the security of a regular salary. Other believers might be called to give up something completely different.

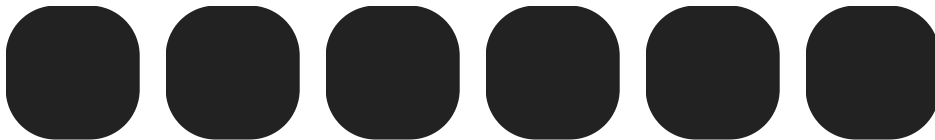
4. They pursued the higher purpose Christ offered them. Instead of simply making a living, Christ promised them a life with eternal purpose—becoming fishers of men for the kingdom of God.

Being a Christ follower is not merely an identification with Him; it's a commitment of obedience that demands leaving behind anything that gets in the way of living fully for Him.

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 12, 2018 - the Consequences of Impatience

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 12, 2018 - the Consequences of Impatience

Luke 15:11-21

TUESDAY

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How serious is a lack of patience? We generally write it off as inconsequential. It's often seen as a weakness rather than a sin—after all, it's not as bad as adultery, theft, or murder. But have you ever considered what your impatience reveals about your attitude toward God?

When we demonstrate an inability to tolerate delay, we are telling the Lord, “I don't trust Your timing; mine is better.” Can you see the seriousness of this attitude? Impatience is a display of pride because we are elevating our understanding above that of our all-knowing God.

The prodigal son's journey toward disaster began with impatience. He wanted his inheritance immediately and was unwilling to wait. After taking matters into his own hands, he faced the following consequences:

He brought sorrow on his family. Likewise, our impatience hurts those we love.

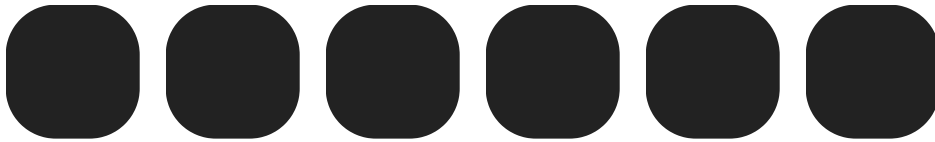
He left the security of home. When we run ahead of God, we often leave behind the voices of reason and wisdom in our life.

He found himself in ruin. God's blessing accompanies our obedience, so we stand to lose a great deal when we ignore His timing.

He felt unworthy. We don't experience fellowship with the Lord when impatience keeps us outside of His will.

Although the prodigal son was welcomed home, he could never regain the inheritance he'd lost. We, too, must often live with painful consequences as a result of jumping ahead of God. Let's remember it's better to wait patiently until the Lord moves us forward.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, November 12, 2018 - Patience - A Powerful Attribute

NOVEMBER 12TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Colossians 3:12-17

MONDAY

12

Patience, or a lack of it, spills over into every aspect of our life. For example, when you're waiting for an elevator that doesn't come quickly, do you repeatedly push the button? Or if you're stuck in a grocery line that's not moving, do you wait calmly or inwardly grumble about how poorly managed the store is?

Although to some degree our temperaments may determine our ability to wait, the kind of patience God wants Christians to have is that which is produced by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Apart from Him, we will naturally become impatient when people frustrate us or

circumstances aren't to our liking.

The spiritual fruit of patience allows us to say, *I'm willing to let go of immediate gratification and wait for the Lord to supply*. It's an inner quietness and trust that comes from God alone. This doesn't mean we'll never feel pressure or stress, but when we release our expectations to the Lord, He will calm our heart and mind.

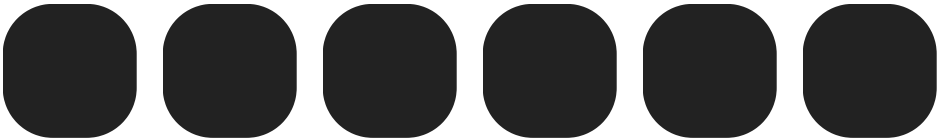
David understood this. While waiting to become king, he had several opportunities to kill Saul, the nation's current ruler. By refusing to take advantage of the situation, David demonstrated patience and faith in God's timing (1 Samuel 24:10-11; 1 Samuel 26:10-11).

Patience is a matter of trust in God. Are you willing to release your expectations for both the small and large events in your life? Can you acknowledge that the Lord's timing is more trustworthy than your own? If so, you're on your way to being a truly patient person.

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