

## **The Problem Of Self-Satisfaction**

### **Introduction**

1. Self-satisfaction is for many the self-made prison which has restricted their activities, productivity, and happiness.
2. The problem of self-satisfaction is immense and is nigh universal with most falling into this trap.
  - a. Self-satisfaction is a kind of living death - no climbing, growth or improvement.
  - b. It robs the individual and the world of great blessings.

### **Reasons For Self-Satisfaction**

1. Some people cannot be any better, because they do not want to be any better. (Rev. 3:17).

Rev 3:17 "Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,"

2. Some people are blind to their own faults. (Matt. 7:1-5).
3. Some people are self-satisfied because of a lack of vision.
  - a. They never dream. They never look ahead. They never see things as they could be.
  - b. God's people are warned about a lack of vision. (Prov. 29:18).

Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law. NASB

Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. KJV

4. Some people are self-satisfied because they want only to live up to the demands of the average.
  - a. "I am doing as well as the other fellow."
  - b. "Why should I be expected to do better than the average?"
  - c. "What do you do more than others?" Matthew 5:47
  - d. Jesus taught us to excel and go the second mile. (Matt. 5:41).

### **Things We Should Never Be Content With**

1. We should never be content with medical science.
  - a. Imagine what a trip to the dentist was like a 100 years ago.

- b. Imagine what the world would be like without modern vaccines and medicines.
  - c. Imagine what the world will be like if a cure could be found for cancer and heart disease.
2. We should never be content with our knowledge of God's word. (Jn. 8:32; Psa. 119:105; 2 Tim. 2:15).
    - a. Truth is knowable.
    - b. Truth is saving.
    - c. Truth is guiding.
    - d. Truth is to be acquired all through life.
  3. We should never be content with human relations.
    - a. We should strive to make our homes better.
    - b. We should work to get along with others better - at church, at work, etc.
  4. We must not be satisfied with missions. (Mk. 16:15).
    - a. The world is lost unless it hears and obeys the gospel.
    - b. We must constantly work to improve our efforts and methods of winning the lost.
    - c. Believers have the privilege and responsibility of evangelizing the world.
    - d. Methods will change, but our enthusiasm and dedication to soul-winning must never change or wane.
  5. We must not be content with benevolence. (Gal. 6:10).
    - a. We are to do good to all men.
    - b. Above all, we must help those of the family of God. (Gal. 6:10; 1 Jn. 3:17,18).
  6. We must not be satisfied to be like world. (Rom. 12:2; Matt. 5:13-16).
    - a. "Everyone is doing it" or "I am just like those around me" are common expressions.
    - b. The Christian is to transform the world not conform to it.
    - c. The Christian is light, not darkness.
  7. We must not be content with the level of our Christian maturity. (Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).
    - a. We must never stop growing.
    - b. We must mature as long as we live.
    - c. Though maturity is attainable and has been attained by many, it is never reached in the absolute.

## Things We Should Be Content With

1. It is a paradox.
  - a. The Bible warns us against self-satisfaction, but teaches us to be content.
  - b. Contentment is desirable and achievable but is sinful if it leads to apathy and arrogance and rejection of God.
2. To be contented with one's lot is a thing to be desired; to be contented with one's self is a thing to be dreaded. (Pulpit Commentary)
3. Contentment defined.
  - a. Contentment is not insensibility.
  - b. "I don't care" is not contentment.
  - c. God cares and the Christian cares.
  - d. Contentment is not self-satisfaction. (Rev. 3:14-22).
  - e. Contentment is not apathetic indifference. (1 Jn. 3:17).

1 Jn. 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

- f. Contentment is to be well-pleased, free of anxiety, quiet restfulness in the midst of all kinds of changing events, detachment from anxious concern about the outward features and circumstances of life.

### 4. We are to be content with

- a. What we have. (Heb. 13:5).

Heb. 13:5 "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

- John Bunyan said, "I am content with what I have, little be it, or much."
- We may have a little or lot, but if we have learned true contentment our happiness will not be destroyed by outward circumstances.

- b. Our state. (Phil. 4:11).

Phil. 4:11 "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."

- Paul was in prison at Rome. (Acts 28:17, 30, 31).
- Paul was content in prison because of the peace he enjoyed as the result of being right with God.
- His contentment was not because everything was right with him and those close to him.

- c. Slavery (Eph. 6:5-9).

- Slaves were instructed to obey and please masters.
  - This would be a hard pill to swallow especially for those who had Christian masters.
  - Paul reminded Christian slaves that their real Master was God, and faithfulness to their earthly master pleased God and He would bless them.
- d. Marriage to unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:13).
  - e. Handicapped - Some handicaps cannot be overcome, but this does not diminish from one's usefulness and importance.
  - f. Most of us must learn to be content with not being rich or beautiful or famous, etc.

### **How To Cultivate Contentment**

1. We must work at it. (Phil. 4:11).
  - a. "I have learned."
  - b. It may take years or even a lifetime to develop true contentment in most or all of life's circumstances.
2. We should count blessings. (1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20).
  - a. We should concentrate on what we have, rather than what we do not have.
  - b. We should count our blessings, not our blights.
  - c. We should reflect on how bad it could be.
  - If we will open our eyes, we will see those who are much less fortunate than we.
  - Sober reflection will make us ashamed of our discontentment and make us thankful.
3. We should transfer our attention and affection to holier and higher matters. (Matt. 6:33).
  - a. Our meat should be to do the will of Him who made us. (Jn. 4:30).
  - b. We must change our thinking from the earthly to the heavenly. (Col. 3:1,2).
4. We should keep busy.
  - a. An idle person often thinks of his privations and misfortunes.
  - b. We should stay busy doing good. (Acts 10:38).
5. We should learn that happiness is not tied to "things." (Eccles. 5:10; Lk. 12:15).
  - a. 1 Timothy 6:6-8

1 Tim. 6:6 But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

1 Tim. 6:7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

1 Tim. 6:8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

b. Psalms 37:16 "Better is the little of the righteous than the abundance of many wicked."

c. Proverbs 15:16 "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and turmoil with it."

6. We should put our trust in Jehovah.

a. The Lord's instructions to be content is based upon His promises that He will not forsake us and He will take care of us. (Heb. 13:5,6).

b. He promises to provide the necessities of life. (Matt. 6:25-34; Psa. 37:25; Phil. 4:19).

7. We should put away envy.

a. Envy is "a feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc." Dictionary.com

b. Examples

- Saul (1 Sam. 18:8,9).
- Philistines (Gen. 26:14).
- Elder son (Lk. 15:25-32).
- Haman (Esther 5:9-14).

8. We should put away pessimism.

a. The discontented pessimist when asked how things are will reply, "They are so much worse than yesterday, and so much better than I expect to be tomorrow."

b. Discontented pessimism is a living death.

9. We should avoid self-pity.

a. Elder son (Luke 15:29).

Luke 15:29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and {yet} you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;'"

b. As long as we say, "Life cheated me," or "I'm so unfortunate" we will not find contentment.

c. Pity is good, but it should never be wasted on oneself.

10. We should stop complaining.

a. Complaining is a disgusting, sinful habit that destroys contentment.

b. The person who constantly complains will not find contentment and will make others discontent.

11. We must not have "I can't be satisfied" attitude.

- a. Some people say, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be discontent." (Phil. 4:11).
- b. We will only find contentment if we seek contentment.

### **Conclusion**

1. Yes, self-satisfaction is very dangerous and will keep us from reaching the heights God intended.
2. Contentment is a godly attribute that will bring us peace and help us to please God.
3. All Christians should join with David and say. (Psa. 23:2).

Psa. 23:2 "He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters."

4. We all need to read the 128th psalm. (Psa. 128:1-3, R.S.V.).

Psa. 128:1 Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!

Psa. 128:2 You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

Psa. 128:3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

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