

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

All Glorious Within



Contentment



JANUARY-APRIL 2012

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"The King's daughter is all glorious within . . ." Psalm 45:13

About All Glorious Within

All Glorious Within is a publication for Christian young ladies that began in January 2006. It is compiled, edited, and published three times per year by Karissa Hiebert. Co-editors are Abe and Bernice Hiebert, who approve and improve each issue, giving many suggestions and much valued advice.

We welcome new subscribers! If you have friends or relatives that might be interested in receiving All Glorious Within, you may request brochures or sample issues for them.

All Glorious Within is non-profit; subscription rates are minimal just to help cover costs of postage and copying. Free brochures available upon request. Gift certificates also available.

Our Mission

Our goal is to provide conservative, wholesome reading material to inspire girls in their Christian walk, with an endeavor to maintain the centrality of Jesus Christ. If you have questions or concerns, please let us know personally about them. Suggestions are appreciated!

If you come across anything in All Glorious Within that is unBiblical, opinionated, or does not pass the tests of Philippians 4:8 and Colossians 2:8, please let us know about it. (Note that we do not necessarily endorse every word of each article.)

This issue of this publication has been approved by the co-editors, my parents (Abe and Bernice Hiebert).

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Submissions

We gladly welcome submissions . . . please send articles, poetry, testimonies, reviews, and other such contributions! We do not publish advertisements.

All submissions must be approved by the co-editors (editor's parents), and we ask that everything submitted be honoring to the Lord, based on the Word of God, and corresponding to Philippians 4:8. Please include information such as titles, authors, and publishers' information, where applicable. Thank you.

Back Issues Available

To help cover costs of printing and postage, please include a small donation with your order if possible. Thank you! Note – some issues may not be available.

Christian Chronicle (previous publication, 3 column format):

Volume 2, Issue 3: Infatuation vs. Integrity

Volume 2, Issue 4: Home Life

Volume 2, Issue 5: Humility

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Volume 1, Issue 1: Speech

MAGAZINE FORMAT:

All Glorious Within

Volume 1, Issue 2: Hospitality, Thriftiness, Creativity

Volume 1, Issue 3: Boldness, Enthusiasm, Initiative

Volume 1, Issue 4: Sensitivity, Sincerity

Volume 2, Issue 1: Discretion, Discernment

Volume 2, Issue 2: Reverence, Deference, Tolerance

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Volume 3, Issue 4: Responsibility, Dependability, Consistency

Volume 4 Issue 1: Missions (*Special Issue*)

Volume 4, Issue 2: Determination, Purpose, Courage

Volume 5, Issue 1: Gratefulness, Appreciation

Volume 5, Issue 2: His Strength

Volume 5, Issue 3: Trials, Afflictions (*Special Issue*)

Volume 6, Issue 1: Compassion, Care, Mercy

Volume 6, Issue 2: Submission, Honor, Respect

Volume 6, Issue 3: Security, Confidence, Stability

Submission Deadline for Next Issue:

May 20, 2012

Letter from the Editor



Notes from our Readers

Greetings in the name of our King and welcome to the 21st issue of *All Glorious Within!* May this issue be an encouragement to you in finding contentment in your life.

Contentment is a theme that has many different aspects to it; in this issue the focus ranges from being content with what we have (vs. covetousness), to being fully satisfied in the Lord, to practical ways to cultivate contentment, and more. Thank you to those who contributed to this issue in any way.

Lord willing, our next issue's theme will be a continuation of contentment, in a different sense. It was difficult to find a title: *Contentment, Part 2*; *Satisfied Single*; or a host of other titles were available. We settled on *A Kept Heart*. This will include: contentment in singlehood, in serving in the home or wherever He has placed us, in resting in the Lord, in waiting for God's best, keeping the heart, etc. We're hoping to feature some testimonies as well. Your submissions are welcome for this upcoming issue. We're looking forward to hearing from you as you seek to bless our readers with whatever the Lord lays on your heart. ♥

~ Karissa



"For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Psalms 107:9



We've received notes and comments over the years, but have never published them. We're not sure if we regularly will, but decided to publish some this issue, names withheld. If you do not wish your note to be published, please specify such. We also will not publish your name unless you specify that it's alright for us to do so. ☺



I've appreciated the articles you used from "The King's Daughter" magazine . . . one of my friends gave me some old [KD] issues she had, and I really enjoyed them. "You Are Special" was one of my favorite articles! I was happy to see it in this issue of AGW. Hopefully it will bless others as it has blessed me! -An American subscriber



Thank you so much for the last issue of AGW! It is a blessing to me and the thoughts and loving admonition in the Lord has been special. I was especially blessed to read Karen Wolf's article. -An American subscriber



I really appreciated the various articles in "Security, Confidence, Stability." They were very encouraging to me. My the Lord richly bless you as you publish your magazine for His glory and our edification. -An American subscriber



In the last issue of AGW I really enjoyed "Confident Security" by Karen Wolf. It made me realize all the more that we can only please the audience of one, which is God. I find this to be a real challenge in my life. It's so, so very easy to try and please or be accepted by everyone but it doesn't really bring lasting joy to be running after security, acceptance, or attention. I'm so thankful that God chose and cares about me. -A Canadian subscriber ♥



Satisfied in God



*by
Lisa Look*

The glare of the desert sun bore down heavily and the hot dry air held the bite of dust. All along the valley floor, shimmering mirages of water appeared and vanished but no one gave notice anymore. Hundreds of thousands of tents stretched out toward the horizon, and from the vast encampment a low, steady rumble sounded. Like a brooding storm it rose and fell until finally it broke into an angry, desperate cry. "Water! Give us water!" And in their tents those who had passed through the Red Sea murmured aside to one another, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"

On another day, in another place, the same vast encampment is seen. Once again a sound is heard to rise and fall, but it has a different tone. Wait; is it weeping? Look, in every tent door sit men with tears coursing down their weather worn faces. Listen; are they weeping for their sins? Or perhaps for the promised land? No, what is this you say? They cry for meat? Yes, they are saying, "Who will give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, that we ate so freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." Nothing except manna they say? But manna – that is angel's food.

Perhaps you can identify with these people. Maybe you too long for something you do not have, or for some place you wish to be. Maybe you felt that way last week, or you feel that way today. Maybe today you are satisfied in God, but fear the test that may be tomorrow. Whatever your case may be, you can be sure that sooner or later you must face the issue of contentment, or the lack of it, again. In any circumstance, in every season of life, the giant of

Discontentment threatens to rob God's people of their peace, joy and satisfaction in Him and His will for them.

So what is contentment? What does it look like? Is it found in the face of the infant resting, peaceful and satisfied in her mother's arms? Yes, that is a picture of contentment. But it can also be heard in the words of a desolate and broken man who said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21b) It is heard again in Mary's words "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." (Luke 1:38) The psalmist David's testimony was "The LORD is my Shepherd: I shall not want." These are testimonies of contentment and they can be yours, regardless of the circumstances you are in. If the Lord is your Shepherd then it does not matter whether you are resting in green pastures or walking through the valley of the shadow of death – you will never want (i.e. "lack") anything.

The contented soul is a happy soul. Her needs are met and she is completely satisfied. Her outward circumstances do not dictate the degree of joy in her heart. No abundance or lack of physical possessions seems to affect her. She is content in her stage of life, her place of residence, her physical appearance, and her place of service. She realizes that God has provided everything she needs for her present happiness.

You may be questioning if that degree of contentment is possible for you. Or, maybe you think it would be possible, but you wonder how to get it. We know it is possible because Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Philippians 4:11) If Paul could learn, then surely you and I can,

for the same storehouse of grace that he received of is still available to all who will take of it. Let's look now at how we can gain this attitude of contentment.

First, and most importantly, you must be born again! There is no way you will ever find genuine and lasting contentment in anything outside of Christ.

Assuming then that this great transaction has already taken place in your life, consider this question: What is your view of God?

For too many of us, our view of God is far too small. Sure we know that He is all powerful, all wise and full of love. You may be able to give mental assent to these truths, but do you know them in your heart? Are you fully persuaded that God in all His power, wisdom and love is ordering every circumstance of your life, and that He will provide for your needs? Or, do you take offence, murmur and complain at God's provision? Far too often we are like the children of Israel, who, after all the miracles they saw in Egypt, still murmured for water, instead of trusting God to supply their needs. Though they were fed with angel's food, they complained and wept for the fish, melons and spices of Egypt. They looked at the circumstances they were in instead of their Almighty God, and from that warped perspective their God appeared small.

The Hebrew writer tells us that their sin was unbelief, and we see in the account of their complaint for meat that in their unbelief they were discontent. Their unbelief opened the door to discontentment, and so it is today. Our faith must be firmly fixed on the truth of Who God is, and the immutability of His promises if contentment is to be ours.

So what does the word of God say about God? The scripture is full of the revelation of who God is, so let's look at just a few things that God has told us about Himself.

First, God is Almighty. There is no limit to His power. His mighty hand stretched out the

heavens, holds the oceans and gives us our every breath. In Jeremiah 32:17 the prophet says, "Ah Lord God! behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." At the end of his prayer, God answers him and says, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" We all know that the answer is "No." Nothing, not even my circumstance is too hard for Him. God says, in Isaiah 43, "...ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. Yea before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work and who shall let it?" No power on earth or in heaven can stop His work or turn it back. If some circumstance is tempting you to discontentment, remember that the Almighty God is at work. Meditate on His power, and rest, content.

Secondly, we see in Scripture that God is all-wise and Sovereign. "Thus saith the LORD...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them." (Is 44:6,7) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Here in God's own words we have a declaration of His wisdom. His purposes are so far beyond our understanding, that many times we don't even see His hand in our circumstances. But by faith we know that God in His mighty power and boundless wisdom is ordering the circumstances of our lives. Shouldn't we trust Him and rest with contentment in His provision?

Third, consider this, that God is good. His work is right, His way is perfect. Moses says of God in Deuteronomy 32, "He is the Rock, his

There is no way you will ever find genuine and lasting contentment in anything outside of Christ.

work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." David echoes his words in Psalm 18: "As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him." And again in Psalm 34: "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." Do you see Him? This great and mighty God is working in wisdom, showing his goodness and mercy to you through the circumstances He has brought you into. No, it may not look or feel like this in the natural, but to the eye of faith *it is so*.

Last, but not least, let's consider His love. No greater love has ever been known than the love of God. Nor will any greater demonstration or revelation of that love ever be seen than what was shown to us through the death of His Son. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:8) Do you doubt His love for you? Doubt no more, for He tasted death for every man, and that includes you. He poured out His soul unto death for you, and by His stripes you are healed! "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32) The Almighty God in all His power, wisdom, goodness and love has purposed what is best for you. As a child of God, you can be assured that He gives, and withholds, in love, always working for your good.

Having seen now a bit more of who God is, believe it! Let your faith rest in the Living God. When the giant of Discontentment threatens your peace, joy and satisfaction in God's will, overcome his lies with the truth of God's word. Make David's faith-filled testimony your own and say from your heart, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

With all that we've looked at of who God is and what He has done, it seems only fitting that our hearts would well up with love toward Him. This is a big key in being content, because as we delight ourselves in the Lord, our hearts will be satisfied. When you're in love with Jesus, you won't be longing for fulfillment in everything else. When you love Jesus with all your heart, you'll be delighted to do His will only. The changing fashions, the latest gadgets, the desire for some "new thing," all these lose their appeal to the heart that is satisfied in God.

What about that desire to go to the mission field, or for a husband and children of your own? These desires are right and God-given, but perhaps for now they are God-denied. If you will give these desires to God and delight yourself in Him, you will find that His incredible grace is sufficient for you to be content right now, in your situation.

Is Jesus really enough? Yes, dear sister, yes. He is enough. He is sufficient for your every need. Love Him extravagantly. Trust Him completely. Believe His word. Surrender to His will. You will find more joy and contentment than you ever hoped or thought. ♥

He is sufficient for your every need . . . You will find more joy and contentment than you ever hoped or thought.



Lisa Zook (23) lives near Kalona, Iowa with her parents Larry & Jewel and her 8 (soon to be 9) younger siblings. She is currently serving at home and also helps her dad with his deck refinishing business in the summertime. It is her desire that the Lord Jesus would be exalted in every part of her life and work.



Editor's note: Lisa was one of the girls I was with in Haiti in 2009. See the Missions issue (Volume 4, Issue 1 - <http://www.allgloriouswithin.org/backissues/volume4issue1.pdf>). ©



His Time

by Lisa Zook



Wait

by Rachel
Graybill Musser

"In His time" –and never late;
With skill divine He plans –not fate.

Not by chance, this vale of tears;
This circumstance wasted no years.

All His will is for my gain.
Come good or ill, –'tis not in vain. ♥



And shall I pray thee change Thy will, my Father,
Until it be according unto mine?

But no, Lord, no: that never shall be, rather
I pray Thee, blend my human will with Thine.

I pray Thee hush the hurrying, eager longing,
I pray Thee soothe the pangs of keen desire,
See in my quiet places wishes thronging–
Forbid them, Lord, Purge, though it be with fire.

And work in me to will and do Thy pleasure,
Let all within me, peaceful, reconciled,
Tarry content my Well-beloved's leisure
At last, at last, even as a weaned child. ♥

–Nathan Brown
Submitted by Lisa Zook



With cheerful faith thy path of duty run
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
But what thou would'st thyself,
could'st thou but see
Through all the events of things
as well as He. ♥

–Anonymous
Submitted by Lisa Zook

READ: Psalms 37:1-7

Sit impatiently waiting for a phone call.
The public phone is being monopolized and I
want to use it. Nevertheless, I have to wait. It's
a part of life here in Guatemala.

I hurriedly get ready to go away. My co-
worker says we will leave in five minutes. I wait
an additional twenty minutes.

Waiting. Ouch! How I hate to wait. I think
God is trying to teach me lessons on patience,
but it is hard to sit still long enough to listen.

I've found that delays are a part of God's plan
for my life. He uses these periods of waiting,
whether they are five minutes or ten years, to
develop character, to teach patience, to show who
truly is in control, and to demonstrate His power.

When delays come, instead of wasting that time
complaining, I can do something worthwhile:

1. Spend time praying.
2. Encourage a friend or witness to a neighbor
who is also waiting.
3. Meditate on Scripture.
4. Write a letter.

If the waiting is long term, I need to serve
God contentedly where He has placed me. Why
not enjoy my present circumstances, instead of
ruining that time in longing for the future?

Dear patient Heavenly Father, help me, an
impatient-natured person, to learn the lessons
You want to teach me. May I respond lovingly
and patiently to the roadblocks and delays that
[Y]ou put in my path. Thanks for being patient
with me. Amen. ♥



From *Harmony for the Heart*, p. 133 – Chapter 9,
"Be Still, My Soul." See p. 14 of this issue.

A Satisfied Heart



by
Holly Hageman

When we first give our lives to Christ and accept Him as our Saviour, all of Heaven rejoices! Our own hearts rejoice, too, because we have found in Him the answer to the lostness of our souls, the joy of life, and the purpose for living – knowing that our names have been written in the Book of Heaven, our sins blotted out, never to be remembered again. What a glorious promise and gift we have been given, Heaven now having become our home, and a great salvation so full and free!

All too soon, it seems, the joyful journey leads us to a fork in the road. The decision we must make – which path should I take? Oh! The roads are marked! One shiny, bright sign with attractive flashing lights marks the entrance to an appealing, wide, well-traveled road marked, “My Will”. On the other hand is a humble, lowly sign, planted deeply in rich, fertile soil and green pasture, beautifully lettered and well-kept. It says that the road marks the way to fullness of life, the pathway to joy, and the blessing of God. The sign reads, “God’s Will.” The road appears to be narrow and full of twists and turns. Unlike “My Will Road”, it tells of losing oneself and surrendering to Another. It does not promise continual, sunshiny skies and an easy travel. Yet, it claims that its way is the way to fullness of life. What a decision! Tell me, which road would you take?

Following God’s will for your life is truly the only way to obtain a *satisfied heart*. Following God’s Will involves surrendering our own will. Surrender is giving up, resigning, and yielding oneself to the power of another. Surrender to God is giving our hearts, wills, plans, dreams, and ambitions – our very lives – into His hand and making God Himself the sole pursuit of our hearts and lives. Dissatisfaction of heart arises when our own wills rub against God’s Will, and our hearts pine after something earthly to satisfy our heart’s capacity for Christ.

A satisfied heart is one that loves God’s Will and, beyond that, one that loves Jesus more than anything or any other person. Other people and relationships cannot satisfy the need in our hearts for fellowship with God. Often we will look for friends or companions to meet a need in our lives. God has designed that we should fellowship with one another and encourage, love, and inspire one another in Him. However, God hasn’t designed for a friend or companion to fill His place in our lives. He wants us to gain our strength, assurance, and confidence from Him alone. It is the power and strength of God that enables us to stand when all else fails. It is His strength and assurance that empowers us to stand for Christ when we are in the midst of opposition. It is as we find who we are in Jesus and how much He loves us that we can have the humble, beautiful, strong confidence in Him that God desires for us.

Loneliness is an evidence of a sensitive heart. It is the heart longing for love and fellowship. If we try to fill our lonely hearts with a person through a relationship, we may find ourselves lonelier than before and possibly in a place of spiritual compromise. Loneliness of heart is meant to be fully satisfied by God. Loneliness can be quite painful, and at times our hearts will cry out because of it. But if in our loneliness we go to the Lord and ask Him for a greater filling of Himself and a knowing of His great love for us, He will be faithful to meet us in our need and to reveal Himself to us in greater measure. He is the Good Shepherd and desires to give us what we ask of Him. He will lead us in green pastures and fill our cup to overflowing so that we shall not want any good thing. The result will be that our sensitive hearts will be found full of His tenderness for others in their need. His love will prove to be strong in our weakness, and we will

be able to comfort others with the same comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted.

We can be satisfied in the midst of trials and suffering. It is possible to have our hearts joyful, satisfied, and worshipping the Lord in the midst of trials and suffering! [*Holly knows what she's talking about! She wrote this while she was sick in bed. - Ed.*] In fact, God desires that we give thanks in all things! When a trial comes, what an opportunity it is to offer a sacrifice of praise! If we worship the Lord in the midst of a difficult trial, what a blessing it must be to the tender heart of Almighty God!

Paul and Silas had just experienced a terrible beating and were thrown into the inner prison, their feet securely fastened in stocks; surely their bodies ached, and their backs must have been torn, bleeding, bruised, and swollen. The prison probably was filthy, filled with dank air; and rats could probably be heard scuttling here and there in their cell. We could expect men in such a condition to be full of self-pity, grumbling and complaining, groaning in their sleep; however, at midnight the neighboring prisoners heard Paul and Silas praying and *singing*! What a testimony it must have been to the other men to hear Paul and Silas worship God in the midst of their pain and suffering. Acts 16 tells us that an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, all of their chains fell off, and the doors swung open! The presence of God and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit must have been prevalent, because the first words of the jailer, after calling for a light and falling down before Paul and Silas, were, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas were able to speak the Word of God to the jailer and his family, and that very night he and his family believed and were baptized. What a great victory was won for Christ!

A great victory can be won for Christ in our lives when we give our hearts and tongues to praise in the midst of trials and suffering. A sacrifice of praise that blesses the heart of God will surely bring a lifting of our own hearts, and

the eyes of others will be turned to see the Source of Hope within us. We can, by our joyful, satisfied hearts in the midst of trials, direct the hearts of others to Christ.

Possessions or status cannot satisfy the desires of our hearts. Only the things that God can do for us are the things that cannot be stolen from us or taken away. He is the Giver of all good things, and the things He wants for us are eternal treasures that cannot rust or be destroyed. Our relationship with Jesus is the chief of eternal treasures. God, in His love, will pare away at our hearts, wills, and lives until there is nothing we hold nearer to our hearts than Jesus and our relationship with Him. Jesus is really all that matters in view of eternity. Jesus is the Great Treasure, the Pearl of Great Price! If we place our treasure in Heaven and give our lives to pursue that which is eternal, our hearts will surely follow. "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" - Luke 12:34.

A satisfied heart comes from a surrendered life. When we initially lay down our lives upon the altar, it is the beginning of a moving of God that will bring us to a place of absolute surrender where He will move and flow through our lives without hindrance. God will, once we have laid our wills down, continue down the "hall of our heart", touching hidden areas of our heart and bringing them to light. Symptoms of unsundered areas will arise in serving of self, seeking our own way, pride, anger, and sometimes jealousy. These symptoms will help us to identify and surrender afresh all of our heart to the moving and working of His Spirit in our lives. Our hearts must be willing for this work to begin, and we need to turn toward the path of following God's Will. But even this turning is His work. "*For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure.*" - Phil. 2:13.

Even if your heart wants to follow the road marked, "My Will", you, too, can be placed upon the road of "God's Will". Ask Him to change your heart, to bring you to the place of

Surrender to God is giving our hearts, wills, plans, dreams, and ambitions – our very lives – into His hand and making God Himself the sole pursuit of our hearts and lives.

surrendering your will. He can place your feet upon the path toward fullness of life, joy, the blessing of a fruitful life, and a satisfied heart.

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." - Hebrews 13:20-21. ♥

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Satisfied in Him

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house.

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled - He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness - I am the bread of life: He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.

How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light we shall see light. ♥

Ps. 65:4; Ps. 27:4; Matt. 5:6 - Luke 1:53;

Ps. 107:9 - John 6:35 - Ps. 36:7-9

From *Daily Light on the Daily Path*, November 29



~ Sweet Contentment ~

From the Editor's Devotional Journal, July 10, 2009

"For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Psalm 107:9



"... for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Philippians 4:11 ♥ "But godliness with contentment is great gain." I Timothy 6:6 ♥ "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." Hebrews 13:5 ♥ "My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD." Psalm 104:34 ♥ "For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Psalm 107:9 ♥ "... they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing." Psalm 34:10 ♥ "For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11

Contentment. Such a vital part of our Christian lives, yet so often forgotten or overlooked! In the last several months, the Lord has been speaking to me in this area. It touches so many aspects of life. For one, circumstances - am I content with the circumstances God has placed me in? Or am I longing for something else? And there are so many other areas.

What is the secret of contentment? I believe it is being fully satisfied in Christ. He satisfies the longing soul! Nothing else will truly satisfy and fulfill our souls. Only Christ... and as we sweetly rest in Him, we will find Him to be sweeter than ever, and will be fully content, not desiring anything other than Him, His presence, His will, His desires, His love and grace... ♥



Themed Scriptures



Contentment

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." *Exodus 20:17*

"For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." *Psalms 107:9*

"Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in Thy way." *Psalms 119:35-37*

"[The slothful] coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not." *Proverbs 21:26*

"And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." *Luke 12:15*

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." *Ephesians 5:3-4*

"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*

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." *Colossians 3:5*

"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. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." *I Timothy 6:6-12*

"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." *Hebrews 13:5* ♥



If a bird can cling
To a spray aswing
In a mad May wind,
And sing and sing
As if he'd burst for joy;

Why cannot I
Contented lie
In His strong arms
Beneath His sky
Unmoved by earth's annoy? ♥

Author Unknown - Submitted by Esther Lang

Used by permission from [Poems for Memorization](#), p. 164. Rod & Staff Publishers, Inc. Crockett, KY 41413, 1 (606) 522348.



You'll Have to Wait



A Devotional
by Heather Martin

READ: Psalm 145:14-17

It's strawberry season again! Big, red, and juicy – what could taste better in the spring than fresh berries? Lift the leaves to find the cluster, however, and temptation will stare you in the face. You'll see a berry, still pink, but big enough to make your taste buds quiver. Will you pick it?

Take a moment to compare half-ripe strawberries with truly ripe ones. Light strawberries may reach great sizes, but they will usually swell if left to ripen. The color of a half-ripe strawberry may be a tempting pink, but a ripe one is startlingly red. A pink strawberry will have a distinct flavor. But how does a scarlet strawberry taste? It is tangy with spring's fresh air, juicy with its rain, and sweet as the sunshine!

Reason dictates that you pick only fully ripened strawberries. But you'll have to wait.

It takes time for the sunshine and warm air to ripen them.

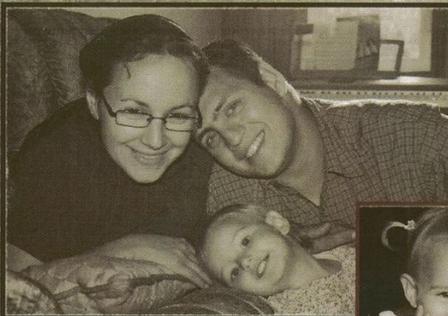
Other fruit requires time to ripen also. Perhaps you must be sixteen to get your driver's license. Seventeen to attend Bible school. Eighteen for courtship. Twenty for volunteer service in Guatemala. The fruit may be delicious, but you'll have to wait!

Maybe you're a little impatient with life. It seems like *right now* would be a good time to serve the Lord in volunteer service, teaching school, or serving in some other capacity. Your age or circumstances staunchly block the way. Don't despair! Those desires are like hard, white strawberries. In God's time and way they can ripen into juicy fruit, but you'll have to wait!

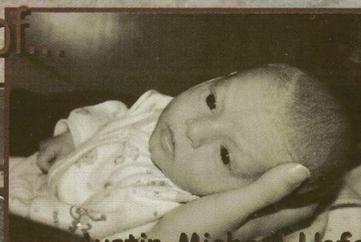
... Continued on page 14 ...



Announcing the birth of



Amy Grace Hofer
21 Months



Austin Michael Hofer

Born: November 4, 2011
6lbs 3oz, 19 inches long



Thanking God,
Benji & Janice Hofer

Janice's interview/article is in Vol. 3, Iss. 1; announcements of her wedding and first birth are in Vol. 3, Iss. 4 and Vol. 5, Iss. 2. ~ Do you have a wedding or birth announcement? Please submit a picture and information to share with the other readers! ♥

Continued from page 13 . . .

Wanted: Quotes



While You Wait

by Heather Martin

You can pick pink strawberries. You can even pick white strawberries if you want to. However, neither will be edible, and both will ruin the fruit's chance to ripen. You can try to rush life's circumstances if you want to. You can even throw guidelines away, taking on responsibilities and privileges before reaching the designated maturity. The consequences of doing this are like picking white berries. You'll ruin your chance for properly ripened, delicious fruit.

Scarlet strawberries are time ripened. And you'll have to wait.

Don't ruin tomorrow's fruit by picking it green today! ♥



This devotional is taken from Chapter 9: "Be Still, My Soul," pages 135-136, of *Harmony for the Heart: Devotionals for Young Women*, compiled by Elaine Berry. Used by permission from the publishers (Green Pastures Press, HC 67, Box 91-A, Mifflin, PA 17058).



WANTED: Quotes!

We all have a little collection of good, inspiring Christian quotes in our memories, on the walls, in journals and booklets, etc. I'm compiling a booklet of these quotes and need your help! If you are interested in being involved in this project by submitting some quotes, short poems, etc, please contact me at editor@allgloriouswithin.org with them or for more details. And spread the word! Thanks! ©

- Karissa



READ: Micah 6:6-9

Okay, you've decided that you will pick only ripe strawberries. Now you're faced with a dilemma. What should you do while waiting on those that are still half pink?

In the strawberry patch, you can squat on the straw and stare at the clusters, waiting for them to ripen. You can even turn them daily – the underside may ripen faster!

While waiting for God's fruit in your life, don't merely sit and stare. Neither should you rush the process. Search for other God-given opportunities.

God has a purpose for every year and every day of your life. He didn't give you a seventeenth year just to put in time until your eighteenth. He gave you a seventeenth year to serve Him in a unique way.

If you're longing to be a missionary, start preparing. Has your co-worker ever heard your testimony? Is your elderly neighbor lady a Christian? If you want to be a teacher, start collecting ideas. Work with children; develop your patience.

Whatever your desire, you can still serve God today. By helping in your home. By tackling your job with determination to glorify God. By influencing your friends in a positive way. By being a light to the world.

Don't overlook today's opportunities while you wait for tomorrow's strawberries! ♥



This devotional is taken from Chapter 9: "Be Still, My Soul," page 137, of *Harmony for the Heart: Devotionals for Young Women*, compiled by Elaine Berry. Used by permission from the publishers (Green Pastures Press, HC 67, Box 91-A, Mifflin, PA 17058).



Contentment



by
Laura Rempel

"In whatsoever state I am,
O Lord, make me content;
And smiling still, ne'er to repine
O'er what Thy grace has sent."

– Author Unknown

"If I just had that certain thing, or if I lived in a different place... If my circumstances would just be *different*, then I would be satisfied."

Are you content amidst the circumstances in which God has placed you? Or do you find yourself begging God to change them so you will become content?

Does receiving what we ask of God really bring contentment?

Contentment is being satisfied with what one has. Even further, it is "the positive assurance that God has supplied one's needs, and the following result is release of unnecessary desire".

This simply means that one is not constantly wanting this or that, but trusts that God has completely met her every need in her present circumstances. The psalmist David understood this when he wrote, "Lord, You have assigned me my portion and my cup, You have made my lot secure." – Psalm 16:5.

Whatever circumstance you are presently in, God knows about it and has planned it especially for you. It's up to you to accept it (as difficult as it may be), and decide to be content.

We often think that if only things were different, we would be truly happy. However, the Lord knows what we need, and it is not always a change of scenery! When you see children who receive everything they whine or cry for, are they content? We all know the answer to that! And

so it is with us, God's children. We don't always receive what we want because God knows it won't necessarily make us satisfied. He wants us to be content right where we find ourselves. God knows exactly what we need and when we need it.

In Matthew 7:7-11, we read of how God responds to those who truly ask, seek, and knock. Furthermore, He says that if we – sinful people – know how to give good gifts, surely our Father in heaven knows how to give good gifts to those who ask Him. When I ask the Father for something, He will give it to me, if He thinks it is good for me. He withholds those things I ask for, if they would not be good for me at that time. His desire is that I be satisfied with Him alone. He knows what is best for me. Trust the Lord, for He knows what is best for you, dear sisters!

"For He [God] satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness." – Psalm 107:9.

Our true satisfaction comes only from knowing Jesus Christ! Nothing in this world – no thing or person – will ever make us completely happy.

It is so easy to look to the things in the world to make us content. We think if only we had more money, or a new outfit, or our own bedroom, or went to a different church, then we would be satisfied. But it's only in Jesus Christ that we can be truly content.

The things in this world are temporal and passing away. 1 Timothy 6:7 tells us that "...we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." We can't take anything from this world into eternity. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus!

Contentment



by Anna
Letitia Waring

Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise
To meet the glad and joyful smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes,
And a heart, at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking some great things to do,
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go.

Wherever in this world I am,
In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

So I ask Thee for the daily strength—
To none that ask denied—
And a mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at Thy side,
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.

And if some things I do not ask
In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit filled the more
With grateful love to Thee,
More careful, not to serve Thee much,
But to please Thee perfectly.

There are briars besetting every path,
Which call for constant care;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy everywhere.

In a service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me,
For my inmost heart is taught the truth
That makes Thy children free,
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty. ♥

Submitted by Esther Lang



And as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein.
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain
With backward glances and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread.

But, cheerful in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine,
But in His strength alone! ♥

-John Greenleaf Whittier

Submitted by Lisa Zook

Overcoming Covetousness



by
Esther Lang

I did not learn the virtue of contentment at a young age. As far back as I can remember, I always longed to do something else, live somewhere else, or be someone else. I spent hours upon hours fantasizing about what my life might be like if I could only have all the stuff I wanted. I daydreamed about the things I would do when I got older. . . . You get the picture. I was **not** a content person. And I was **not** happy. To be honest, I was absolutely miserable! I was coveting, which is defined as "to wish for [something] enviously," or "to have a craving for possession" of something.

What does God's Word have to say about people who are not content? I found out that the tenth Commandment speaks directly about this subject: "Thou shalt not covet." (Exodus 20:17) God went on to list the names of the things we must not covet: Our neighbor's house, our neighbor's wife, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or his ass, or **any thing** that belongs to our neighbor. And since a "neighbor" is anyone around us, we are not covet **anything** that belongs to **anyone** else.

From the tenth Commandment I can see that, if I am coveting, I am breaking God's law. That's why covetous people are miserable – because they are disobeying God's plan for their lives. Disobedience may sometimes bring temporary pleasure, but it is only that: temporary. It does not offer lasting happiness or joy. Coveting "feels good" sometimes, but it is **not** good, and never has good results!

Do you know what all covetous people have in common? They all focus on one thing: self. They always want more and **more**, to satisfy their own desires. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous . . ." (1 Timothy 3:2)

"Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough . . . they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." (Isaiah 56:11) So the root of the problem is greed. "He coveteth greedily all the day long . . ." (Proverbs 21:26)

Coveting is also a form of idolatry. When I covet, I think continually about whatever it is that I want, and I put that desire first and foremost in my heart and mind. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15) "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Ephesians 5:5) "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; . . . and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5)

Coveting often leads to more sin. Let's look again at the Ten Commandments. Who would worship a false god if they were content to serve the true God? Who would bow down to graven images? What person would take God's name in vain if they were content to obey God's laws and fear His Name? Who would want to disregard the Lord's Day, if everyone was content to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"? What child would rebel against his parents' rules if he was content to honor them? What murderer is there that did not at one time covet wickedness? What thief is there who could truthfully say he did not covet the thing he stole? Who would bear false witness and tell lies if they were always content to live and speak the truth?

A few more examples – what child would cheat in school if she did not covet better grades or an "easier way"? What daughter would want to go out and "do her own thing" if she was content to obey God and submit to her parents?

What young people would want to dye their hair (or otherwise change their looks) if they were content to be the way God made them?

I speak from experience – coveting leads to much, **much** sin! How much better it would be if we would all “be content with such things as [we] have”! (Hebrews 13:5)

So, after we realize that we must choose contentment and flee from covetousness, what should we do? Realize that contentment is a resolve, not a whim. It does not depend on circumstances. Listen to this – “If I only had one more new dress, I’m sure I’d always be content.” “I can’t be content until we move to a different town.” “As long as I have such a good friend, I’ll always be content.” “It’s easy to be content when life is full of fun activities.” Sisters, contentment – true contentment – is not based on these conditions or others like them. In true contentment, there is only one “if”: “If I know Jesus, love Him, believe Him, and obey Him, I will be content.”

After I realized that contentment is so important to God, I decided to make contentment one of my life goals. I am learning to say like Paul, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” (Philippians 4:11)

After I resolved to be content, was it easy? Am I just a “naturally content person” now? No, I still have to fight against the desires of the flesh. This is something I have to be diligent about. Bad habits die hard!

Every time I realize that I am coveting, I need to repent. (Coveting is sin, so it needs to be turned away from.) Then I ask the Lord for strength to be content, and He always answers when I call on His Name. When I am tempted to fall into the trap of covetous thoughts, He is faithful to help me think content, thankful thoughts instead. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

When I am tempted to covet, it helps to “count my blessings”. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21) I am very thankful for the love of my Saviour, who died for me, that I might live happy in Him. I am thankful for Christian parents, and for each one of my siblings. I am thankful for so many blessings – why shouldn’t I be content?

My journey to contentment has not been easy, but the more I exercise contentment, the sweeter I find it to be! Truly, “godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Timothy 6:6)

May the Lord bless you, sisters, as you seek and find contentment in Christ. ♥



Esther Lang (20) lives in Door County, Wisconsin with her family. She enjoys cooking, writing, reading, and corresponding with friends. She and her brothers and friends publish a magazine for youth; if you are interested, please write to: In the Days of Thy Youth, P.O. Box 264; Richmond, IL 60071



A Song of Low Degree

by John Bunyan

He that is down need fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much;
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
That go on a pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age. ♥

Submitted by Esther Lang



From Poems for Memorization, p. 158. Rod & Staff Publishers, Inc. P.O. Box 3, 14193 Hwy. 172, Crockett, Kentucky 41413, 1 (606) 522-4348. Used by permission. - Also appears in "The Pilgrim's Progress."

Resources on this issue's theme



Let Us Be Content A Devotional

The following messages can be obtained without charge from Charity Christian Fellowship's Sermon Ministry, 59 S. Groffdale Rd, Leola, PA 17540, charitychristianfellowship.org/sermons. 1 (855) 55-CHARITY. We have not personally reviewed all of these messages. - Descriptions from the Charity website.



Leah and Rachel (John D. Martin)

From Rachel and Leah, two sisters, we learn a valuable lesson on contentment. Both of them had unfulfilled expectations in their lives. So often it is the same way with us. The key to our contentment is to find our satisfaction in God. That is the reason He allows inequalities in our lives. We can trust Him!

Tap 4 of Set 170: Profiles of Faith and Folly
Youth Bible School 2008 - Index #4120

charitychristianfellowship.org/sermons/title/leah-and-rachel



Contentment and Youth (Dan Mast)

Contentment is a Godly discipline. The only place that we can find true contentment is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This message is directed mostly to youth, and covers and addresses some practical things that they deal with. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

Tap 5 of Set 141: Practical Teachings for Youth
Youth Bible School 2004 - Index #3426

This message was previously available on the former Charity Ministries site, but seems to be missing from the new site. If it is unavailable through them, contact me - I have the message. - Editor



Contentment (Aaron Hurst)

This message has no description on the website, and we have not reviewed it at all and therefore include it only as a resource on this issue's theme. Index #1231.

<http://charitychristianfellowship.org/sermons/title/contentment>



A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.

A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked - Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith - Godliness with contentment is great gain. Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

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 - Give us this day our daily bread.

Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? - When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing - 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. ♥



Luke 12:15; Ps. 37:16 - Prov. 15:16 - I Tim. 6:6,8; Prov. 30:8-9 - Matt. 6:11; Matt. 6:25; Luke 22:35 - Heb. 13:5.



From Daily Light on the Daily Path, October 23



God knows, He loves, He cares . . .
Nothing this truth can dim,
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice with Him. ♥

-Anonymous

Submitted by Lisa Zook



Lord, help me to be –
Contentedly



Yours
by
Brenda Weaver

As meekness and quietness are misunderstood, contentment is misrepresented. In today's world it is portrayed more as a curse than a virtue – something to be overcome rather than embraced. The world beckons: "You deserve more. You owe it to yourself. You will be happier if . . ." Advertisement urges us to improve, get more, and keep up with, or get ahead of, our neighbors. When this attitude of discontent marches boldly into our churches as well, the Christian's testimony of God's peace is marred.

In God's Word, contentment always has been and always will be a virtue to be cultivated. "But godliness with contentment is great gain," Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:6. Where contentment is addressed in Scripture, meekness is often mentioned as well. Daughters of God do well to recognize the "great gain" of this virtue and – along with meekness and quietness – adorn ourselves with the positive character quality of contentment. Truly meek and contented women are rare jewels today. Happy is the man who finds one. More importantly, the God they serve is glorified.

What Is Contentment?

The dictionary defines "contented" as being submissive to circumstances, accepting, resigned, satisfied. Contentment is being satisfied with things as they are. Then am I content if I refrain from painting my peeling porch, purchasing a desired item, or cleaning my cluttered attic? Not necessarily. I may be unmotivated, slothful, or busy with more important projects. Financial difficulty or time restraints may limit my ability to proceed with the tasks at hand. Contentment is *accepting* my peeling porch or cluttered attic while being satisfied to wait until circumstances allow me to remedy these problems. Contentment is being satisfied to wait until I can afford that desired item or being willing to do without it. Contentment is not simply avoiding tasks or resigning myself to limitations or circumstances. Rather, it is *deciding* to be satisfied, when my natural inclination is to demand change or to get what I desire.

A Biblical definition of contentment may be gleaned from 1 Timothy 6:6-12. Contentment here includes:

- Recognizing things are temporary. We cannot take them with us when we die (v. 7).
- Knowing that food and clothing are enough (v. 8).
- Realizing that the desire to be rich brings temptation and snares. It may destroy us and result in eternal damnation (v. 9).
- Remembering that "the love of money is the root of all evil." This love may well pierce us with sorrow and destroy our faith (v. 10).

As children of God we are to run from the snares of discontent (v. 11): "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

Discontent: Scenes and Sources

Daughters of Eve are tempted to be discontented with their relationships, their personal appearance, and the appearance of their homes. True, some displeasure may prompt us to read relationship-building materials and set goals to improve our relationships. A measure of dissatisfaction may motivate us to exercise, lose weight, take calcium, or eat healthy foods. It may motivate us to shine windows, organize drawers, paint ceilings, or otherwise improve our homes. But an ongoing attitude of discontent is destructive, encumbering the soul. It places undue stress on a family or individual. ("He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind" Proverbs 11:29.)

The devil loves to try to tempt and trip contented Christians. He may use a variety of means to achieve this goal; four common ones are convenience, clutter, comparison, and the pursuit of pleasure.

Convenience Congests Contentment

Our world has changed. Things have become temptingly convenient. Your mother or grandmother may have taken a rare trip to town to stock up on

necessary staples. This was a carefully planned event. If she was missing an ingredient for her evening meal, she borrowed from a neighbor or did without. If an essential article of clothing tore, it was patched rather than replaced. If shoes were outgrown, hand-me-downs were worn, or toes endured pinching until the funds and time were available for that next trip to town. In her words, she learned to "make do." Today, increased income, more vehicles, and a wider selection of local merchants, have made it convenient to quickly go to the store to complete, replace, and revitalize any number of things. We find it difficult to be content and make do as Grandmother did.

Technology has confounded our world with convenience. Modern appliances have automated chores that required significant effort to perform fifty or one hundred years ago. Free time is swallowed up by more functions, meetings, and social events. Or it is consumed by efforts to acquire, use, clean, or service the latest gadgets and timesaving appliances. We can also travel great distances, enlarging our circle of acquaintances and responsibilities. Simple pleasures may be forgotten as we catch the next plane or answer a rush of E-mail. Before we realize it, our lives become congested with that which is now so convenient.

Clutter Clouds Contentment

"I don't have time to read a story now," I informed my young daughter. Her gleaming eyes clouded.

"It's okay; I will help you work," she responded cheerfully after a few moments of dejection.

At the end of the day, I said prayers with her as I tucked her into bed. As she closed her eyes I thought of the anticipation they had mirrored earlier that day. I remembered then that I had gone from one task to the next all day long and had not read my daughter a story. I reviewed the work I had done. Was it all necessary? Could some of it have waited for another day? Did my home have to be super clean and tidy in order to host tomorrow's guests?

When our days become so cluttered with busyness that we cannot take time to enjoy simple things, our view of peaceful contentment is clouded. Our domestic cares sometimes obscure the importance of simply serving others contentedly.

The clutter of *things* can also draw us away from Christlike contentment. We remember the story of the prodigal son and how he walked away from

God and the security of home. I was surprised to learn that the word "prodigal" actually means extravagant or addicted to wasteful expenditure. Might we also be labeled prodigal in our search for newer, better, and *more*?

"And [Jesus] said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

Comparison Competes With Contentment

Probably more than anything else, comparison competes with contentment. Recently I was reminded of this in a personal way.

I closed the door of our large old home – comfortable and full of character, obviously lived in by a family. I visited an acquaintance in her new, immaculate home with a carefully manicured lawn. When I returned, my home looked far less appealing – messy, and in need of repairs. Quickly I picked up some books and slid them into their rightful places on the bookshelf. I began giving orders to the children to put their things away. "If that mother can keep her home neat and orderly, I should be able to as well," I verbalized my thoughts and emphatically stressed the importance of my family's cooperation. In a few short hours I had developed a raging case of "the comparison flu."

My feverish attempts to immediately organize my house and coerce my family into tidiness were interrupted by my daughter's quiet words of wisdom. "Mother, her house may be neat, orderly, and appealing, but she is not writing a book." Her comment wiped my brow like a cool, wet washcloth; the furrows relaxed. I stopped to observe. It was true. Part of the disorder was mine. Some of the projects and tasks were unfinished because I had been writing.

"You are right," I told my daughter, giving her a quick hug. After apologizing, I changed my critical commands to pleasant requests. Together we worked at restoring order but with a new purpose in mind. We finished tasks and cleared the clutter for order's sake. I stopped demanding it for comparison's sake. God gently reminded me that the woman whose home was very neat and orderly could frequently and unashamedly host visitors without a lot of frenzied preparation. She could encourage others by hosting them in her tidy guest room; I could encourage others by writing in my disarranged back room.

A considerable part of contentment is accepting our individual differences and refraining from comparing with others. We are tempted to compare not only houses, but also faces, families, finances, abilities, backgrounds, wardrobes, blessings, blunders, and on and on. Second Corinthians 10:12 admonishes us well: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

The Pursuit of Pleasure

Pleasure seeking and entertainment are priorities in today's culture. While considered important industries, entertainment and recreation do not make people industrious. A steady diet of worldly entertainment does more than curb one's worthy accomplishments – it leads to discontent, as the enjoyment of simple pleasures is hindered by the compelling urge to do more thrilling things. Any woman who cares for children accustomed to hours of television or video viewing knows the difficulty of keeping them content. The creativity, resourcefulness, and imagination of these children are diminished in their demand to be entertained.

Pleasure seeking continues into youth and adulthood. Recently a young man said of our church's young people, "They seem so happy. But what a boring life – they can't do anything." The people of whom he spoke are not bored; they are content to do a great many things that do not seem exciting, thrilling, or tempting enough to a young man who has feasted on entertainment junk food.

While all pleasure seeking is not evil, it needs to be carefully kept in check. Like the seed that fell on ground that sprouted thorns, we may be "choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). Paul warns Timothy of coming apostasy in 2 Timothy 3. His list of things to expect in such perilous times includes "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

Do we have the courage to ask ourselves, "How much do I love and seek after pleasure?"

Discontent at Home

Discontentment in the home is readily passed on to the next generation. Many mothers have wondered why their sons or daughters demand the newest

entertainment, insist on following the latest styles, and demonstrate annoyance with a life of simplicity as taught by the Bible and the church. Too often this attitude of discontent and annoyance has been learned, for it is modeled by adults. Do we insist on the latest and the finest for our homes? Are we attracted to magazines that tempt us to pour our energies into that which is applauded by the world? Is our modesty evidenced in dress only? Are we constantly seeking ways to increase our income or improve our social standing? If so, we may expect to see discontent, indulgence, and self-gratification repeated or magnified in the next generation.

Attitudes of discontent in the home, and in the church, confuse onlookers, especially if we try to convince them with words that we as Christians are called to be God's special, redeemed-people, separate from the world. Which kingdom – the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of this world – has preeminence in our lives? "Let your *moderation* be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5, emphasis added).

Cultivating Contentment

Daughters of God can cultivate contentment in many ways. First, we need to focus on Christ. He lived a life of self-denial and sacrifice so that men might be saved. Is it Christlike to live a life of self-gratification and self-indulgence while distancing ourselves from the needs of the souls around us?

Second, it is essential to remember that our residence in this world is *temporary*. Christ said His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Furthermore, He prayed for those who did believe, and those who would believe, on Him: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (Taken from Christ's prayer recorded in John 17.) As daughters of God we are citizens of the kingdom of God. Our focus is on the life to come.

Third, it is vital that we seek affirmation and commendation from God and His Word, rather than demanding it from other people. Sometimes when we feel especially vulnerable we lean towards others, grasping for praise to bolster our wobbling self-worth. But even other Christians will fail us at times, and the

world is not to be trusted in deciphering kingdom business or determining the worth of a child of God. In contrast, God and His Word never fail.

Blessed is the daughter of God who seeks for and finds direction and affirmation from her Father God in His Word! Relying on approval from other people is risky, and we have already examined the dangers of comparing ourselves among ourselves. The Scriptural alternatives are also found in 2 Corinthians 10. "Casting down imaginations, and every high things that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (verse 5). Seeking the approval of peers and comparing ourselves with others frequently includes imaginations and distortions. It is far better to compare ourselves to God and seek His approval. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (verse 18).

A fourth way to cultivate contentment is to train yourself and your children to enjoy simple activities. Suggestions abound. You may enjoy anything from reading books aloud (to your family or a blind senior) to hiking nature trails. Count the various birdsongs you hear in a day, or take time to pop jewelweed seedpods in the fall. In the bustle of busy days, and amid the din of the computer age, daughters of God should remember to treasure simple pleasures.

A secret of being content is to experience what I call "glarrow" – part gladness and part sorrow. Paul says in Philippians 4:11 "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." He assures the Philippians that he knows how to be abased, and how to abound; how to be hungry, and how to be full; how "both to abound and to suffer need." Paul knew the gladness of ready provision. He also knew the sorrow of emptiness and need. Through Christ's strength (Philippians 4:13) and Paul's acceptance of both gladness and sorrow, a clear testimony of contentment was given.

In areas where you are tempted with discontentment, thank God for the "glarrow." Praise Him for the things about your appearance, your home, and your relationships or abilities, that make you glad. Remember to thank Him also for allowing the things that sadden you. God uses the mixture of gladness and sorrow, provision and lack, abounding and suffering need, to cultivate contentment in our lives.

Contentment, along with the joyful acceptance of the "glarrow" in our relationships – especially our

marriages, gives a mighty message of Christ's love for the church. Do not miss the opportunity to paint a picture of Christ's sacrificial love through the tiny, everyday brush strokes of contented love in your home. (Read about specific brush strokes in Chapter 9.)

Daughters of God can cultivate contentment by carefully monitoring their reading material. Many magazines and books are designed to make us discontented. They entice us through advertising, pictures, or articles to change or improve our appearance, clothes, abilities, homes, and gardens. While change and improvement are not always wrong, a spirit of discontent is. Unchecked, our time can be consumed in perfecting our personal world while neglecting spiritual growth, personal evangelism, and teaching children godly character.

Finally, learn to balance work and pleasure. Not only were we created to bring glory to God, we were also created to work. In Genesis 2:15, God puts Adam in the garden to "dress it and to keep it." Only after Adam and Eve sinned did work become toilsome labor, "by the sweat of your brow." Contentment does not come by continually searching for entertainment and recreation but by balancing work and play.

Home – Haven of Contentment

We can use any of a number of ways to transform our homes into havens of contentment. One way is to set the table for mealtime and eat together. This time of sharing food and thoughts provides a continuing sense of satisfaction and contentment. When days scurry by with appointments and scheduling conflicts that prevent sharing one or more meals together, family members feel disjointed and alone within the bustle. Today's fast pace of living threatens this one commonplace occurrence.

"Wow, look at that table!" One neighbor boy gaped, jabbing his friend in the ribs and pointing toward our kitchen table, which was set for supper.

"That's some meal," added the other boy wistfully.

"How can they . . . ?" The younger boy paused, inquisitive yet hesitant.

"Because they are lucky, that's why," retorted the older boy.

By our standards a very simple meal awaited the family. *What was astounding about it?* I wondered. Then I realized that our table, complete with place

settings for each family member and food waiting in serving dishes, was the rarity the boys were responding to. Possibly only at holidays these boys got to sit at a table that looked quite common to us. Within a year, both boys' mothers, who had found it troublesome to set the table for the family to eat together, had left their homes in search of more excitement. I have never forgotten the wistfulness in their sons' eyes as they looked at our set table.

Neither will I forget the neighbor children's enthusiasm and delight when they gathered in our backyard to sample the fresh, warm applesauce they had helped strain, or counted the soybean pods they'd plucked from one stalk. Working together is another way to enhance a spirit of contentment in our homes.

Periodically clearing clutter from closets, cupboards, and homes in general, usually adds to the feeling of contentment. Including children in this venture teaches them the value of order and gives them a sense of accomplishment.

Monitor decorating tendencies when seeking to make your home a haven of contentment. I try to ask myself, "Do I want my visitors to be impressed with my decorating or feel comfortable and content?" Which would you rather be when you visit someone's home?

Beth and her husband invited another church family to their home to share a meal. Beth's heart was warmed when the young mother called her several days later and thanked her for being content. "Your home speaks of it," she explained. "I came home feeling contented rather than fretting about what I could change or add to my home in order to keep up with the latest styles."

Do not be afraid to be content with less than the best. For a number of years we had metal folding chairs around a used, mismatched kitchen table. The fingerprints of young children were easily washed from the chairs, and I was not distressed about small shoes scratching varnished oak. Neighbor children with dirty knees climbed onto the simple folding chairs and watched with wonder as I rolled pie dough. Those chairs, while far from stylish, helped to make my kitchen a welcome haven of contentment for youngsters.

In striving to make our homes havens of contentment we may want to ask ourselves these questions: If Jesus visited my home, which would he compliment: the décor or the discipline? the treasures or the tone? the color schemes or the evidence of eternal dreams?

Practically Speaking

Daughters of God cultivate contentment in a variety of practical ways:

- Cassandra has trained herself to limit her trips to town. Contentment and careful planning enable her to do this. Resourcefulness and more uninterrupted days are the result, not to mention the blessing of not straining the family budget.
- Catherine has uncluttered her home in an unusual way. When they moved to their new home, she decided to "leave the pretties packed." Instead she neatly recorded Bible verses on the newly painted walls, first in pencil and then with a large marker. Her family and visitors are exposed to Scripture, and Catherine finds her housecleaning far less burdensome.
- For years, Cara lamented her large nose, prominent chin, and ruddy complexion. Frequently she compared her face to the attractive faces around her. Finally she repented of her discontent and reproach of her Creator. She accepted her outward appearance and focused on "the hidden man of the heart." Friends who knew her commented on how her outward appearance improved as her countenance changed, reflecting her growing inner beauty.
- Connie loves a clean house. As a farmer's wife with four young children, she has adjusted her expectations. Each week she gives several of the rooms in their large farmhouse a good cleaning. The rest of the cleaning may or may not get completed. Although her house is rarely completely clean, it is never totally dirty.
- In teaching her children contentment, Carol practices toy rotation. She has four boxes of simple but stimulating toys. For several weeks the children play with one box of toys, while the other boxes are stowed away in the attic. After several weeks have passed, the box of toys is exchanged for another one. Glad cries of "I remember this" are punctuated with laughter and play. Picking up is easier and clutter is minimized. (Hint for mothers: more and *more* toys do not make contented children.)
- Carmen strives to be thankful for the "glarrow" in her life. She recognizes the value of being content in gladness and sorrow. Even though her home was lacking in loving affirmation, she is thankful that her experiences have sensitized her to the needs of others.

Mary and Martha of Bethany are our Scriptural mentors of contentment. From their examples we learn about the value of being content in our areas of service. Martha is sometimes accused of being out of the Lord's will. Actually, she was performing common, necessary, womanly acts of service. Her service was not wrong; her attitude and dissatisfaction were. When she complained to Jesus about Mary leaving her to serve alone, Martha was gently exhorted: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41, 42). Martha could have been content to serve without finding fault with Mary, who was serving in a different, also needful, way. Martha could also have been less concerned with her earthly duties, allowing more time for the most important – worship of her Lord.

Many women can relate to Martha. They find it difficult to lay aside their domestic duties or simply complete them with less fuss and bother. Busy Marthas can, and should, plan for some "Mary" minutes.

Blessed are the women who make time to worship their Lord with abandonment as Mary did. They may also need to learn discipline and contentment in completing the many mundane tasks of a Martha's world.

In what ways can you and I be content? What can we do less rigidly or flamboyantly in order to allow adoration time for our Saviour?

Quiet Paths

After wintering in fairer lands, my phoebe friend has returned to our neighborhood. Again her simple call encourages me. Comparing myself to others, and comparing my service to that of others, frustrates God's plans for me. I can serve Him in the ways He has called me to.

When I step away from the clutter and conveniences of our world, I more readily hear God's affirmation and feel His smile of approval. I can hurry past cobwebbed corners and smile at sparse flower beds while I answer His bidding. I can be content without a new dress while I share the message He laid on my heart.

Daughter of God, seek His direction in your life. He will lead you – aside from the convenient, away from the clutter, beyond the comparing – to quiet paths of contentment. Worship Him there: Sometimes in temporary abandon, as Mary did when she left her domestic duties to wash Christ's feet; some-

times contentedly, serving others in the midst of your busy Martha's world.

Scriptures

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Romans 14:19

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Colossians 3:2

"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."

Hebrews 13:5

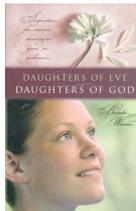
Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Your world scorns contentment. Your kingdom embraces it. I confess that I find myself sorely tempted to get or do more, especially when it is convenient. Far too often I compare myself to others and interfere with Your plans for my life. Forgive me, Father. Strengthen me in striving for contentment. I want to worship You, serve You, and adore You. Part of my service to You involves serving others as Martha of Bethany did. Give me wisdom. Help me not to be encumbered and ensnared in ways that prevent me from worshiping You wholeheartedly as Mary did.

I want to be content with less so that I may do more for Thee.

Contentedly Yours,



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Lord willing, next issue we will look at another chapter ("Single!") from this book.





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Next Issue's Theme: (Lord-willing)



Contentment, Part 2:

A Kept Heart