

Practical Christian Living

Lesson 15: Learning to be Content

Key Verse – *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:19

God wants us to learn how to face life with joy and confidence. To do this we must learn to be content in all the varying circumstances of life. In this lesson we are going to learn a great truth that can change our life.

What is this truth? It is this: **God and what God provides for me is all I need.**

God the Provider

The Bible teaches that the sovereign God of the universe loves us and has promised to provide all the things that we really need. He has not promised to give us all our *“wants,”* but He has promised to meet our needs. The Apostle Paul said, *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:19

• God supplies our material needs.

In Matthew chapter six, the Lord Jesus tells us not to be anxious about our material needs, such as food, clothing, and other necessities of life. Jesus said, *“do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on...For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Matthew 6:25, 32-33

• God supplies our deepest inner needs.

In our last two lessons we have seen how God supplies our need for significance and security. He has made us members of Christ's body, and every member of the body of Christ is important. He has *“accepted us in the Beloved.”* He loves us unconditionally. God says to us, *“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love...”* Jeremiah 31:3

• God supplies our spiritual needs.

In Christ, God has given us everything we need for our spiritual life. The Bible says, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS in heavenly places in Christ.”* Ephesians 1:3

• God freely gives us all things.

In giving us His Son, God has given us the greatest gift of all. Since He has given us the greatest gift, His Son, we can be sure that He will give us whatever else we may need. The Bible says, *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* Romans 8:32

It is wonderful to know that we have a heavenly Father who has taken upon Himself the responsibility of meeting all our needs. A.W. Tozer said,

"With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures."

(A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy)

Satan the Tempter

Although God has provided for all our needs, we must not forget that we have an enemy who hates us and wants to destroy us. The Bible says, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."* 1 Peter 5:8

We need to understand how Satan tempts us. Most, if not all, of Satan's temptations have to do with putting wrong thoughts into our mind. Satan puts thoughts like these into our mind: *"God has not provided all you need. You need something other than God and what He has provided for you."* This was exactly the way Satan tempted the first man and woman.

Adam and Eve were created by God and placed in a beautiful garden which God Himself had planted for them. In the Garden of Eden was every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. Adam and Eve had a work to do for God—they took care of the garden God had planted. They were loved and accepted by God. They had daily fellowship with Him. They had a perfect environment.

Picture a circle and let it represent the world God provided for Adam and Eve. In the world that was theirs, Adam and Eve had everything they needed. If they had needed anything else, God surely would have provided it. Adam and Eve could truly say, *"God and what God has provided for us is all we need."*

We might wonder how Satan could tempt someone who was living in a perfect environment, but Satan's temptation to Eve was very simple. He suggested to Eve that she and her husband needed something other than what God had provided for them. Satan wanted Eve to think, *"God is holding back from us something that is good."*

Eve accepted Satan's lie. It became a belief in her mind and she acted on it. She ate the forbidden fruit. She gave some to her husband and he also ate it. Their disobedience brought sin and death into the world, along with all the sorrow, misery, and heartache that results from sin.

How Satan Tempts Us

Again, let each of us picture a circle and let it represent the circumstances that God has arranged for us. Inside the circle that is ours, God has provided all that we really need.

Things are not perfect in our little *"circle,"* nor will they ever be in this life. We live in a world that is under the curse of sin. Therefore we will face many trials and troubles. God has not promised us an easy time in this life, nor has He promised to give us everything we want. But He has promised to meet our needs and to be with us always. I can truly say, *"God and what God provides for me is all I need."*

Satan, our great enemy, will seek to deceive us as he deceived Adam and Eve. He will seek to put wrong thoughts into our minds. Satan will point to something outside of our "circle," and suggest to us, *"You need this. In fact, you cannot be happy unless you have it."*

The Danger of Accepting Wrong Thoughts

We may not be able to keep Satan from suggesting a wrong thought to us, but we can refuse to accept it.



“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

To see the danger of accepting wrong thoughts, we need to be reminded of this truth: ***We are controlled by the way we inwardly see and believe things to be. What we believe determines what we do and what we feel.***

If we accept a wrong thought, it becomes a wrong belief, and wrong beliefs lead to wrong actions and wrong feelings. These wrong feelings usually lead to inner problems.

Handling our Inner Problems

Christians, as well as unsaved people, have inner problems such as resentment, fear, worry, guilt, and feelings of rejection. To overcome these problems, we must discover what causes them and how to deal with them.

At the root of most inner problems is the wrong belief that we need something other than God and what God has provided for us.

Let us consider some common problems and see the wrong thinking that is involved in each of them.

• Resentment

Wrong Belief: God is not good to me because He has not given me that which is best.

Right Belief: What God has given me is best for me even though I may not understand it.

Resentment comes when we believe that what God has provided for us is not best. We may resent something about ourselves. We may resent our parents or some member of our family. We may resent our circumstances. We may even resent God.

The solution to this problem is believing that God and what He gives us is what we need. We may not understand our situation, but we must not be offended by what the Lord does or does not do. Jesus said, *"Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."* Matthew 11:6

• Fear

Wrong Belief: God is not able to take care of me.

Right Belief: God is with me; therefore I do not need to be afraid.

When I am fearful, it means that I am not trusting God to take care of me. God knows our hearts and He knows the tendency we have toward fear. Hundreds of times in the Bible, He says to us, "*Fear not.*"

The reason we are not to fear is that God Himself is with us. God says, "*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*" *Isaiah 41:10*

• **Worry**

Wrong Belief: God is not able to meet my needs.

Right Belief: God will meet my needs.

We worry or become anxious because we do not believe that God will take care of us or meet our needs.

Worry has a destructive effect on us. It is also a sin against God. Worry is sinful because it doubts God's love, it doubts God's wisdom, and it doubts God's power. David learned the cure for worry. He said, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want [I lack nothing].*" *Psalms 23:1*

• **Guilt**

Wrong Belief: I must punish myself for my past sins

Right Belief: God has forgiven me of every sin. There is no condemnation to those who are in CHRIST.

Guilt is that feeling of condemnation that we have when we think about our sins. Constantly remembering our sins can cause us great distress.

At the root of this problem is our failure to realize and count on the fact that God has provided absolute forgiveness for us. He has provided a Savior—the perfect Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, "*Let it be known to you...that through this Man [Jesus Christ] is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS...*" *Acts 13:38-39*

God has told us that, in Christ we are forgiven of every sin. When we continue to condemn ourselves for our sins, we are not believing God. The Bible says,

"There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to those who are in Christ Jesus..." Romans 8:1

• **Feelings of rejection**

Wrong Belief: I must have this person's love to meet my needs.

Right Belief: God and what God chooses to give me is all I need.

Sometimes our interest in a particular person grows until we feel that we must have that person's love in order to be happy. Yet the person does not seem to care for us. As a consequence, we feel rejected and hurt, and maybe even angry.

At the root of the problem is the belief that I must have that particular person's love to meet my need. This is a wrong belief. God has promised to meet all my needs. The fact that He has not provided me with that person's love means that I do not really need it. I may feel that I need that person's love, and I may be grieved and hurt because I do not have it. But I must come back to this great truth: *God and what God provides for me is all I need.*

It is not wrong to love someone and to be grieved when that person does not respond to your love. But you must never assume that you must have that person's love to meet your need.

Actually, Christ, and only Christ, can fully satisfy our heart. No human being can do this. If we seek from people what can be found only in Christ, we will be disappointed. The love of Christ alone can fully satisfy our heart.

While each of these inner problems is different, all have the same root. The root cause in each case is the wrong belief that we need some thing other than God and what God has provided for us. In each case, the remedy is to come back to this great truth: *God and what God provides for me is all I need.*

The Secret of Contentment

The Apostle Paul did not have an easy life. He suffered much persecution. He was poor and often in distress. He had physical problems from which he got no relief. He was in prison much of the time. Yet with all of this, Paul was a contented Christian. Paul said, "*...I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.*" *Philippians 4:11*

Whether he had much or little whether he was out of prison or in prison, whether he was abounding or in distress, Paul had learned to be content. He had learned that God and what God provided for him was all he needed. Paul said, "*I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*" *Philippians 4:12*

What is the secret of contentment? The secret of contentment is believing that God and what God has provided for me is all I need. It is learning to be content in whatever "*circle*" God has provided for me.

God says that we are to live without covetousness. To "*covet*" means to strongly desire something that belongs to someone else. We are commanded not to be covetous, but rather to be content with the things we have. The Bible says, "*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.'*" *Hebrews 13:5*

In this verse, God tells us why we are to be content. We are to be content because **(1)** we have the Lord Himself living in us, and **(2)** we have the things that He has provided for us. This is all we need.

Discovered Gem: God, and what God provides for me, is all I need.

Questions:

1. Will God actually provide all our needs and wants.
2. Does God supplies our spiritual needs?
3. What does Satan's temptations have to do with putting wrong thoughts into our mind?
4. How does what we believe determine what we do and what we feel?
5. What is the secret of contentment?
6. Should we punish ourselves for past sins?
7. What does it mean when we are fearful?
8. In Christ, are we are forgiven of every sin?
9. Is it wrong to love someone and to be grieved when that person does not respond to your love?
Explain
10. Why are we to be content?