

Speaking to the soul



Contentment

True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. 1 Timothy 6:6 - 8

Everybody can see that to be contented is a wonderful way to be. Oscar Wilde wrote: “True contentment is not having everything, but in being satisfied with everything one has.” Those are wise words, and they well reflect the thinking of the stoics, whose philosophy was so influential at the time Paul was writing. However, the apostle goes a step further. Contentment is thoroughly good, but it is best when combined with a life that is focused on God. The person who has found a relationship with God can have confidence that they will have peace, whatever their circumstances, for time and eternity.

We live in a society that is fundamentally discontent. The advertising industry works hard all the time to convince us that our contentment relies on us buying the latest car, kitchen, mobile phone or computer. The television peddles the lie of the perfect body, and people place themselves under huge pressure to conform to the image that is portrayed. It is hard to stand up to all the pressure, but we have to do so if we are going to enjoy the contentment that God wants for us.

Paul had clearly thought these issues through very carefully for himself. In writing to the church in Philippi, he shared his own testimony. He wrote: “I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little” (Philippians 4:12). For Paul, this was no philosophical statement but a way of life, and we would all do well to turn down the noise of the media and learn to live like the apostle. Godliness with contentment is the winning combination!

QUESTION

Are you content? If not, what could you do to find complete contentment?

PRAYER

Lord God, I thank you for the ways in which you constantly bless my life. Help me to live more and more closely to you and to find true contentment whatever my circumstances.
Amen

Photo - Entrance to Portstewart Strand. A National Trust facility.

