

Content in Christ

By Betty Harstad

Do you ever wonder how we can be content when our lives are sometimes troubled even after becoming a Christian? How do we regain an eternal perspective during and after each upsetting circumstance when often negative emotions disturb our peace and patience?

Paul says this in Philippians 4:11-12 (ESV): *“Not that I am speaking of being in need for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”*

So what does Paul mean when he says he has learned the "secret" to being content in all situations? I believe he answers this in the next verse: *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”* (Philippians 4:13). The "secret" is Jesus Christ, Who is the focus and theme of the whole Bible. The focus of this next verse is also Jesus Christ: *“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; What can man do to me?’”* (Hebrews 13:5-6)

We are to keep our mind on Christ, the Son of God, Who is in heaven, interceding for us. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 1:3-7).

So yes, our contentment does lie in Jesus Christ, Whom God sent to fulfill His purpose in Believers. We do get grieved by various trials that come to us or to our loved ones, but we are being guarded through faith in Jesus Christ for a salvation ready to be fully revealed in the last time. While in the midst of a trial or a testing, we may react with fear, bitter tears, discouragement, and perhaps depression for a period of time until God gets ahold of us through His Word. A Believer has the light and glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as his great treasure, but it is in an earthen vessel that is weak and wasting away, so that is why God renews our inner-self through the Word and the Spirit day by day. *“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you”* (1 Peter 5:10).

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day, for this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).