

## Content in This Present

### Evil World

By Lynn Warner

We are born in sin, wandering off the track, not recognizing God's paths. Our hearts are hardened in the delusion of sin – our rebellion against God. Yet, God says, *"I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them"* (Hosea 14:4).

How did God love us? Through Jesus Christ, for in His death for all mankind, He demonstrated that *"greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13). And how does He teach us about our sin and His great love? – He teaches us through suffering. Jesus Himself learned obedience through things He suffered, for *"although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered"* (Hebrews 5:8). Obedience is yielding to direction. Only then do we find contentment. First, however, we must learn what sin and evil are because Jesus *"gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father"* (Galatians 1:4). Jesus testified about this world. He said to His disciples, *"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil"* (John 7:7). We must learn to hate our life in this world and thus preserve it for eternal life: *"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal"* (John 12:25). God teaches us through suffering. We are not greater than our God and Rescuer. And He Himself learned through suffering.

How can we be content, then? How can we be content when we cannot make ourselves content in this present evil world? How can we be content when we cannot recognize God's paths by ourselves, and we realize we are in the delusion of sin? Nor can we turn our hearts to God. We are not in control but utterly dependent, weak, and suffering! Don't our circumstances cause us to wrestle with pride, anger, rage, and fear? How do we respond? We often try to find something in the world to soothe ourselves, to content us and release us from our physical and emotional pain. Sometimes, we seek a worldly solution that seems to bring us a form of "contentment." Worldly versions of contentment, however, don't last and can be stolen.

How can we learn contentment? There are many ways, but I have been reminded that God can teach us through His creation. I believe God gave us animals and nature as ways to instruct us. For example, I have learned that even horses and dogs will live for themselves, taking charge (or trying to take charge) of their circumstances. Even those who by nature are more submissive will try to take control. If they succeed, they are overly aggressive because of fear – fear they will lose control. Inwardly, they want a true leader they can trust – only then can they relax and be content in obedience – we seem to be quite similar.

Only God can rescue us through His Son, Jesus Christ, Who died for us, but He also lived for us, showing us how to be content in our dependent and weak nature and how to be content when we are not in control. We learn that we are most content when we accept that God loves us, is sovereign in our lives, teaches us, and works in us so we can live in a relationship with Him and others. He went before us as an example, and we are to follow.