

Finding Contentment in a Discontent World

1 Corinthians 7

Where do you go to find contentment?

Most people assume that happiness and contentment are found in our circumstances – our job status, wealth, health, or relational status. If you're not happy, change your circumstances!

Most Christians seem to agree, especially in regards to the circumstance of marriage.

At Grace, we do not believe there's anything wrong with being single for life.

But we're not always the best at communicating that. As a church we have at times unintentionally marginalized adults who are single because we've lived with unchallenged, false assumption that the ideal Christian life includes a spouse and kids.

The ideal Christian life is independent of circumstances.

Therefore, contentment is possible in ANY circumstance, but it's not easy.

You must cultivate contentment by learning and meditating on the following truths.

4 TRUTHS that foster contentment

1. Contentment begins with the Gospel
 - True contentment requires the forgiveness, peace, and hope found in the Gospel
 - If you want to have contentment in life, you must believe
 - If you have trusted in Jesus then contentment is possible in any circumstance
2. Your circumstance has advantages (7:7-9,32-35)
 - What is this "gift" of singleness in v7?
 - **A supernaturally strong focus on the mission God's given you in life**
 - Earthly attachments pale in comparison
 - But why does Paul say in v8 that it's better to remain unmarried? Answer: v32-35
 - He is speaking to a culture that assumed all people should get married
 - Paul says, "No! There's nothing wrong with being single"
 - A HUGE advantage to being single: you can give undivided devotion to the Lord
 - Every stage of life has advantages and disadvantages
 - **But there is no ideal stage where life is finally easy and fulfilling**
 - Many assume that if they can just make it to the next stage of life, they'll be content
 - But they won't! Because every stage of life has its pleasures and pains
 - We must learn to see and celebrate the advantages of the stage we're in
 - We must learn to be content **in this stage**, or we'll never be content

3. The end is near (v25-31)
 - We are already in the “last days” – Jesus could come back at any moment
 - That fact gives a sense of urgency to this life that makes all circumstances small
 - Our possessions, our money, our pleasures, our sufferings, and even our marriages are all temporary
 - That reality fosters contentment in any circumstance
 - You can be content never getting married because marriage is not eternal
 - In heaven no one will care who was married and who was not
 - That’s why Paul says in v29, “those who have wives...”
 - He’s saying **we need to live with the mutual understanding that our marriages are NOT the basis of our identity, significance, or contentment**
 - Luke 14:26
 - Hyperbole – Jesus doesn’t want you to actually hate your family
 - He wants you to put Him, His kingdom, His Word as your absolute priority
 - The time is short – marriages and parenting will one day end, but your relationship with Jesus will last forever
4. What matters in life is obedient service to the Lord (v17-24)
 - Paul says, “Whatever circumstances you were in when God called you...”
 - He discusses circumcision and slavery because they were the basis of a person’s value in 1st Century society
 - Paul does not say you **MUST** stay in the circumstances you are in, but he says you **CAN** stay there and still find contentment
 - Contentment is not found in circumstances, but in **obedient service to the Lord**
 - Back to the advantage of singleness: you have less distraction and more freedom
 - **Not freedom from obligation, but freedom for service**
 - Practically speaking, if you want to find contentment in any stage of life...
 - Avoid sin – it poisons contentment
 - Sin makes contentment impossible
 - Find a way to serve the Lord
 - Know your spiritual gifts and find a way to serve that lines up with those gifts

Lasting contentment really is possible in any circumstance

- It begins with the Gospel
- It requires you to believe that there are real advantages to your stage of life
- It requires you to live as if the end really is near
- It requires you to obey and serve the Lord