

Sunday, December 1, 2013—A Heart of Thanksgiving: Learning to Be Content

Introduction/Review

- Last Sunday we began looking at the connection between thanksgiving and contentment with a study titled Thanksgiving the Key to Contentment.
- We began by studying the various occurrences and meanings of the word “content” in the KJB. The word content occurs 16 times in 16 verses.
 - Mark 15:15—“to content the people” In this case the underlying Greek word means to do that which gives stratification or is satisfactory.
 - Luke 3:14—“be content” In this case the underlying Greek word means to suffice one’s self with, i.e., to be stratified or content with.
 - II Corinthians 12:9—“my grace is sufficient”
 - Philippians 4:11—“content” In this case the underlying Greek word means sufficient in one’s self self-adequate, needing no aid, hence contented. The Greek word only occurs in this verse.
- Contentment—occurs 1 time in 1 verse in the KJB.
 - I Timothy 6:16—“contentment”
- We further noted that there are 13 different English words that contain the word “content” as their root word, according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*. Furthermore we observed that words like contention, contentious, contentiously, contentiousness denote a lack of contentment.
 - Content--quiet; not disturbed; having a mind at peace; easy; satisfied, so as not to repine, object, or oppose (I Tim. 6). 1) To satisfy the mind; to make quiet, so as to stop complaint or opposition; to appease; to make easy in any situation (Mark 15:15); 2) To please or gratify.
 - Contented--Satisfied; quiet; easy in mind; not complaining, opposing or demanding more. The good man is contented with his lot.
- Matthew 15:32-39—notice how the crowds not enough became more than enough through the giving of thanks. Don’t misunderstand me what I am after here is the principle. When give thanks for what we currently have and possess we are able to find our stratification and contentment in what and who we are at the present time.

- Philippians 4:11-12--Paul had to learn to be content in “whatsoever state” state he found himself. Paul had to learn to be content regardless of his circumstances. According to Webster’s 1828 Dictionary the English word “learn” means “To gain knowledge of; to acquire knowledge or ideas of something before unknown.”
- Please notice that within the context of the passage Paul’s learning to be content in verses 11-12 does not happen apart from his IN EVERYTHING offering PRAY AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING in verse 6. Through the process of practicing I Thessalonians 5:18 “IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS” in his pray and thought life Paul LEARNS to be content regardless of the situation he finds himself in.
- A Heart of Thanksgiving is able to turn Paul’s WANT or NOT ENOUGH into CONTENTMENT.

Learning to Be Content

- I Timothy 6:6-8—Paul says that as believers we need to be content with food and raiment. In other words we need to learn to be content with the basic necessities of life. Like Paul we need to learn to be content when we are abased as well as when we are abounding.
- I Timothy 6:9-10—those who deliberately pursue riches are endanger of not only never being content but causing great harm to themselves and those about them.
- So how can we learn to be content? We must start by following Paul instruction and example to “in everything give thanks.” Second, we can practically do that by naming and counting things we are thankful for in our lives.
- Psalm 139:17-18—the Hebrew word translated “count” means to number, to take account of, to reckon. The English word “count” carries the following meanings according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*
 - To number; to tell or name one by one, or by small numbers, for ascertaining the whole number of units in a collection; as, to count the years, days and hours of a man’s life; to count the stars. 2) To reckon; to preserve a reckoning; to compute. 3) To reckon; to place to an account; to ascribe or impute; to consider or esteem as belonging. 4) To esteem; to account; to reckon; to think, judge, or consider.
- The process of counting forces one to be deliberate. The process of counting forces us to take time to stop and consider. The key to learning how to be content is stop and name the things we are thankful for i.e., to be intentional about the giving of thanks.
- Genesis 2:19—one of man’s first tasks was to name the animals. Adam brings order to God’s creation by contemplating and studying creation and naming that which God made. To name something is to manifest the meaning and value God gave it.

- Why is it easier to name to things we want, desire, allude, or in some way discontent us than it is to name the things that content us?
- Philippians 4:11—“the hardest part of learning and training is the essence of transformation. Practice, practice, practice.” (Voskmap, 56) In learning to be content we need to practice that giving of thanks in the details of everyday life.
 - “. . . all hard things come in due time and with practice. . . Do not disdain the small. The whole of the life—even the hard—is made up of the minute parts, and if I miss the infinitesimals, I miss the whole. . . There is a way to live the big of giving thanks in all things. It is this: to give thanks in this one small thing. The moments will add up.” (Voskamp, 57)
- Ephesians 5:20—as a means of practice in the process of learning to be content I challenge the saints of Grace Life Bible Church to create a list of 1,000 things we are thankful for. To count and name in an intentional fashion 1,000 things we can praise and thank God for in details of our lives. Let’s start here. Let’s just start doing what Paul instructs us to do “give thanks always for all things unto God” and see what happens.
- Martin Luther the name that spawned the Protestant Revolution said, “If you want to change the world pick up your pen.” Let’s start changing our world’s through the intentional giving of thanks. “. . . that habit of discontentment can only be driven out by hammering in on iron sharper. The sleek pin of gratitude.” (Voskamp, 50)
- Colossians 3:15—Paul is literally telling the Colossians and by extension us to be *Eucharisteō*. To have the same mindset and attitude that Christ had on the eve of his death.
- Colossians 3:16—the state of being thankful is described as a state of mutual teaching and admonishing and the singing of *charis* (grace and thanksgiving) in our hearts to the Lord.
- Colossians 3:17—whatever we do in word or deed should be done with *Eucharisteō* (giving thanks) to God the Father.
- I challenge ever saint of GLBC to practice give thanks by naming/counting 1,000 things in our lives for which we can be thankful. Let’s see if we can’t be like our Apostle Paul and learn to be content. Let’s allow the heart of thanksgiving to transform our want into more than enough.