

Contentment

Jake Walls

“Contentment is a disposition of the soul.”

Wilhelmus á Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*

Is contentment the disposition of your soul? We all wrestle with contentment in a culture where the pursuit of goods and treasures is highly esteemed as a badge of honor and achievement. It is very easy to get caught up in the rat race of life in America and go after worldly goods with great zeal, seeking to build our own economic empire. This is an especially dangerous trap for men (and more especially young men). We want to establish our own little kingdoms even to the point of neglecting the kingdom that we should be pursuing above all else. May it never be! Pursue Jesus Christ and His kingdom first and foremost.

“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

Written by Martin Luther

A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right man on our side,
the man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth, his name,
from age to age the same,
and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours,
thru him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever.

Martin Luther tells us to let **goods** and kindred go! The last line of this particular refrain says that God's kingdom is forever! So why should we have a loose grip on our wealth and possessions in this life? The wealth of this world is temporal and will not last. Why do we labor and give sacrificially to the kingdom of God? His kingdom is forever! Paul tells us in I Timothy 6:8 that if we have food and raiment, we should be content. Those words are a rebuke to me and probably to most American Christians. We are blessed to have food, raiment, housing, transportation and many other great blessings. Are you content with these things? Be content with the things God has given you, and do not make it your ultimate aim to move up in the world from a monetary standpoint. There is nothing wrong with pursuing your work with great vigor and enthusiasm...in fact you should do your job very well. But do not love money! Do not make it your chief end to

glorify yourself with possessions (land, cars, wealth). We cannot serve God and wealth. We must bring our desires under control and live with a contented disposition on the soul level.

As we know from the book of James, contentment is not just a financial issue. Many times the true test of our contentment is seen most clearly during a trial. Will we count it all joy when we fall into various trials? Will we be content with the circumstances in which the God of providence has placed us? This is difficult unless the disposition of your soul is contentment. Find rest in the good God of providence who takes care of the birds, and clothes the flowers, and trust Him to work all things for your good.