

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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What God Wants From Our Finances: Contentment

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One of my greatest struggles as a believer is being content. I am a thrifty person, but sometimes this thriftiness can turn into jealousy (I want the wealth that other people have) or greed (I wish I had more money in my account). It can also turn into pride (I look down on those who like to spend so much).

However, contentment is for every type of believer, from the non-stop shopper to the tight-fisted saver. A good way to evaluate your personal contentment is to ask yourself, "Why?" Why do I buy so much and save so little? Why do I buy so little and save so much? Contentment is something that may be indicated from the exterior, but it must be evaluated primarily from the interior.

What is contentment? Simply said, it is being happy now with what you have today. Paul explains it well in Philippians 4:11-12, "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need" (NASB).

Being content is a fulfillment of what God wants from us. It is something God wants from our character regarding our finances. Hebrews 13:5 (NASB) says, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have..." Loving money or possessions is not being content. It is also not loving God. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be

devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24, NASB).

Most Christians probably think that they avoid the love of money. They don't roll around in their money (this is hard to do with only a couple of dollar bills) or count it all the time (this is easy to do with only a couple of dollar bills). They do not go on shopping sprees everyday. But are they content? I ask this because this seems to be an indicator of being free from the love of money from what Hebrews 13:5 says. If you are not happy where you are today, there may be a love for money which is hidden.

So how do you become content? First, realize that God is always there to take care of you. Hebrews 13:5 (NASB) concludes by saying, "... for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." God has allowed the financial situation you are in; realize that He has not forgotten about you and will be there to give you what you need. Second, it is realizing you have the power to be content through Christ. Philippians 4:13 tells us, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." After Paul tells us how he is content, he explains that he can do it all through Christ.

We have all we need to be content. Now the question is, "Are you content?" Your answer is an important step in stewardship.

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org