

Wanting What We Have Or "Contentment"

Text: Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure with turmoil. - Proverbs 15:16 HCSB

There once was a tzaddik who continuously praised the Lord for His great providence. "Blessed art thou, Yawheh Yireh, the Lord Who sees and provides for all my needs."¹ It seemed that his prayers were always answered. People would come from miles around to receive one of his blessings or to ask this blessed elder to pray for them.² However, he never was heard to pray for himself.³ "I have no need for anything," he would claim, "everything that I need the Lord has provided."⁴

Someone questioned him. "How can you say that Adonai has met all your needs? Look at you! You live in a shack, your clothes are old, outdated and threadbare and you eat more simply than a mouse! Surely you have many needs?"

The tzaddik replied, "If I don't have it, it must be because Hashem has not judged it suitable for my needs. I have schooled myself to not constantly want things I don't have. Instead I develop a taste in myself for the things that I do have. In this way I have learned the secret of contentment!"

Paul would have gotten along fine with this godly man. Paul said,

- [Philippians 4:11-13 HCSB \(11\)](#) I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [\(12\)](#) I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of *being content*--whether well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. [\(13\)](#) I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Some of the greatest damage TV can inflict on my kids does not stem from the wanton sex, gratuitous violence, and raging atheism that are so prevalent. Though these also need to be carefully weeded out of my children's entertainment diet, I am far more concerned about the commercials. Every five minutes, they are told, "Buy in order to be happy. Buy in order to be sexually attractive. Buy in order to be socially acceptable. You deserve this. You want this. This will fulfill you." Commercials continuously program us to be discontent. Because of this our family records the shows that we want to watch and then skips all the commercials.

In opposition to this non-stop materialistic philosophy the Bible teaches that

- [1 Timothy 6:6-8 HCSB](#) But godliness with contentment is a great gain. [\(7\)](#) For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. [\(8\)](#) But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.

Just as the way to get the most out of a fine meal is not to gulp but to savor, so the way to get the most out of life is to value all the pleasures that are already within our grasp, and then gratefully accept any new ones that God sends our way.

- [James 4:1-3 HCSB](#) What is the source of the wars and the fights among you? Don't they come from the cravings that are at war within you? [\(2\)](#) You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. You do not have because you do not ask. [\(3\)](#) You ask and don't receive because you ask wrongly, so that you may spend it on your desires for pleasure.
- [Psalms 23:1 HCSB](#) A Davidic psalm. The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.

¹ Genesis 22:14
² James 5:13-16
³ James 4:2-3
⁴ Psalm 23:1