



— FIVE-DAY —

NEW YEAR

— devotional —



By Amy Mariappan



At the beginning of a New Year, many people make resolutions about how they'll spend their time and money, or how they might improve their bodies or the lives of their families. While looking toward improvement and betterment of ourselves is a good thing (after all, in Philippians 2, Paul writes about physical exercise being necessary for our body), finding contentment is also a key practice that we're called to have.

When it comes to money and possessions, scripture reminds us time and again of the benefits of giving, saving, spending wisely, and finding wise counsel. If we look closely, contentment is a word that we can often find hand in hand with those topics.

One verse that is widely known is 1 Timothy 6:10 which says, "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil..." At this point, many stop and make points that an overwhelming desire for money is a root cause for other issues in life. However, if we continue reading, it says, "...and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." So that lack of contentment not only causes all sorts of evil, but it can even draw our hearts away from Christ. Exactly where we don't want to find ourselves in a new year!

1 Timothy tells us that with contentment comes great gain, and Proverbs says that when we fear the Lord and find contentment, we're untouched by trouble. I don't know about you, but that's where I want to be in 2025 -- blessed with abundant grace and having abounding peace, no matter what trouble comes my way. Let's walk through what the Bible says about sincere contentment.



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DAY ONE

CONTENTMENT IN OUR FINANCES



Proverbs 30:8-9 Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, so that I will not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the Lord?" And that I will not become impoverished and steal, and profane the name of my God.

Original Greek Words to Note:

Portion (choq): means something that has been appointed or decreed beforehand.

Profane (taphas): means to capture or take with force for yourself.

What do these verses say about God and contentment?

The writer of this Proverb has warned us of the dangers that befall being in either financial extreme. When we have riches, it is tempting to feel complete in our own sense of self-worth and forget that it is God's money in the first place. While there are some negative temptations that come along with having great possessions and substantial finances, the interesting thing is that it also affects the poor (and everyone in between).

There is a danger of feeling discontentment when we already have much, but there is also a danger in feeling the need to raise our own status by getting things in an unsavory and sinful way. Instead of learning contentment with what God has given us, there is a burning urge to get more, be more, and do more for our families than our parents may have been able to do for us. When we come from not having much, money and possessions seem like a way to escape frustration. And some will do whatever it takes to climb out of that pit.

Proverbs reminds us that we've been given a portion, put in a place, for a reason. He will provide for us if our eyes are on Him, and we seek Him first. So let that be our prayer today -- whether rich or poor, that we set our heart on Christ instead of the things that draw us away from Him.

What might be hindering or preventing me from being content with the finances God has entrusted me with?

What step toward contentment can I make today based on these verses?



DAY TWO



CONTENTMENT IN OUR CURRENT CALLING

Habakkuk 3:17-19 Even if the fig tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit on the vines, if the yield of the olive fails, and the fields produce no food, even if the flock disappears from the fold, and there are no cattle in the stalls, yet I will triumph in the Lord I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like deer's feet and has me walk on my high places.

Original Greek Words to Note:

Salvation (yesha): means safety or prosperity.

Strength (chayil): means army or wealth.

What do these verses say about God and contentment?

Back in Old Testament times, most people relied on very few things to sustain them: the food or harvest they could grow, their land, or their livestock. If they didn't have even one of these, they suffered substantially. But in Habakkuk, they were without all of these!

This would be like losing your home, your job, and all the savings you put aside for a rainy day. And yet, the writer of Habakkuk rejoiced in God. He found strength and hope in Him for at least giving him bodily strength.

It reminds me of how Job lost everything; and even though he questioned why he was going through all that he was, he found his strength and contentment in knowing God was sovereign and had a good plan.

You may be in a tough situation not having the promotion or title you think you deserve. Maybe you're discontent being a new stay-at-home mom without accolades and now in a lonely and trying time. Or maybe you've recently truly lost everything. We can find our contentment, and delight even, in our supreme Lord who has everything planned out. We can find our feet beneath us as we continue treading the heights and pressing onward.

Psalms 37:3-4 says, "Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Now, His desires are not always our desires, but when we pursue Him and are content with dwelling where He has placed us for whatever season we're in, He'll give us delight and blessings.

What might be hindering me from finding contentment with where God has currently placed me in life?

What step toward contentment can I make today based on these verses?



DAY THREE

CONTENTMENT IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS



Psalm 37:3-4 Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. .

Original Greek Words to Note:

Faithfulness (emunah): means to be steady and true.

Delight (anog): means to take pleasure and enjoy the luxury of.

What do these verses say about God and contentment?

We're warned in multiple places in the Bible of three areas that draw us toward the world instead of heaven: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Even Jesus was tempted in these areas in the desert as He began His ministry. And these draws are what often take our focus off our God-given relationships, whether that be a marriage, friendship, or family.

It's easy to think how infidelity can cause a marriage to end, but where does all that start? With the eyes. It might start with a small glance, but the lust of the eyes toward what we don't have is powerful. When our pride of feeling like we deserve more rears its ugly head, we've taken three steps back from the humble acceptance of God being enough. Not to mention the lust of the flesh! When our friendships or marriage don't fulfill us in the way we need or want them to, we look toward other things. We casually throw away friendships that God has strategically placed in our lives.

But God has placed imperfect people in our lives who cannot fulfill our every need. That is where contentment comes into play. It is, as the writer of Psalm 37 writes, resting where God has placed us, investing in doing good for those around us, and finding delight in the Lord above all.

The verses here remind us that when there is a simultaneous steadfast trust in God's ultimate plan and a gentle leaning into His guidance and hand, He is truly able to fill our hearts with contentment in the areas where relationships with others may fail.

What might be hindering me from being content in my relationships with others?

What step toward contentment can I make today based on these verses?

DAY FOUR



CONTENTMENT IN OUR EXTERNAL NEEDS

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Original Greek Words to Note:

Anxious (merimnaó): means to be so anxious that you are distracted over it.

Transcends (uperechousa): means to rise above or to be superior over.

What do these verses say about God and contentment?

While it is normal to battle dissatisfaction or discontentment, the ability to learn contentment both in abundance and lack is learned (Philippians 4:11) and comes with practice. There is nothing innately wrong with wanting to upgrade your home, have a bigger car, or go out to fancy restaurants, but do we look to those things to give us that sense of satisfaction or accomplishment?

External things, while necessary, may break or deteriorate over time. They're often consumables that, even if for a short time, can never bring lasting joy. They, as the word "anxious" means here in Philippians, cause a division of attention. Without focusing our minds on what is of utmost superiority, God and His provision, we cannot find contentment.

The Bible tells us that God even takes care of feeding and clothing the flowers of the field and the sparrows of the air; so why do we lack fulfillment? When we can step back and truly see God providing for our needs, adopting a heart of thankfulness, we can then feel real contentment with those things we've been given. God truly does take care of His children, making sure we have everything we need. And His provision is enough! Allow His peace to transform your hearts and minds so that you can focus on what He is trying to fulfill through you today.

What might be hindering me from being content with the things that I need?

What step toward contentment can I make today based on these verses?



DAY FIVE

CONTENTMENT IN OUR WALK WITH GOD



Hebrews 13:15-16 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Original Greek Words to Note:

Profess (omologountōn): means to give thanks, acknowledge, or to agree.

Share (koinōnias): means to have fellowship or partnership.

What do these verses say about God and contentment?

How can we find true peace and joy in living our Christian life loudly and unashamedly? How can we feel fulfillment in reading the Bible when things may feel stagnant? The answer comes from just doing it! Verse 15 this week reminds us to continually offer praise and thanks.

The Bible tells us that the heart is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9). When we follow what feels good and do what feels comfortable instead of what we're called to do, then we end up unhappy.

So, what does God call us to do? Offer Him praise, profess His name, do good, and share with others. It is totally others and God focused, and there is no room for service of self in contentment - which seems contradictory in nature! After all, when I'm seeking contentment, I'm looking for a heart of satisfaction in my own life.

But, as Hebrews 13 tells us, when we continually put our focus on praise and practicing Godly disciplines such as thankfulness, Bible reading, and Gospel sharing, we please God and are satisfied in our walk with Him. And that is where we then find our joy and contentment. In Him.

What might be hindering me from sharing about God and what He has done openly with others?

What step toward contentment can I make today based on these verses?



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