

The Pursuit of Contentment

I Thessalonians 4:11, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you;"

We tend to view contentment as a passive thing, to see it as sitting back and letting events and circumstances happen to us without negative reaction on our part. Scripturally, contentment is presented as an active pursuit. In this passage the action is to STUDY to be quiet (not ambitious, or grasping). This implies that it takes effort to accomplish this state.

Contentment as portrayed in the Bible is not apathy or a lack of enthusiasm. We are told that, "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Paul often proclaimed his own passion and drive toward the things of God. Contentment is a choosing to be satisfied with the place and circumstances in which God has placed us, seeking the opportunity of demonstrating His greatness and glory. It is an active discipline of the heart to seek the will of God, heedless of self-interest.

This is not a natural state. We want more. Whether it is material things, praise of others, fame or other distraction, our natural state is to pursue increase for ourselves. Paul states that, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." We have to work at this. As many other things in our walk with the Lord, we must seek His power and enabling to live a life demonstrating the peace and contentment of submission to God. We need to "study to be quiet."