

## *Women & More*

### *College of Contentment*

February 14, 2013

In 1907 the promotional slogan “milk from contented cows” was introduced by the *Carnation Condensed Milk Company*, and they touted happy cud-chewing cows grazing in the lush Pacific Northwest. Growing up on the original Carnation Farms located 45 minutes east of Seattle, Washington, company owner E. A. Stuart put what he had learned from his farmer father—that quality milk comes from healthy cows—into promotional practice.

Stuart distributed pure-bred bulls to farmers who were suppliers for his factory, whose offspring proved to be much better milk-producers than their predecessors. And so for 32 consecutive years *Carnation* cows held the world milk production record, with one of their cows producing 37,381 pounds of milk during 1920. Stuart erected a statue of Segis Pietertje Prospect in honor of her achievement (maybe she ‘mooved’ faster *udderly*).

In thinking about contented cows, and what contributes to their contentment, we would want to add to lush green pasture, safety, plenty to eat, shade trees, and an abundance of water to cool off in and drink, calm grazing companions, and, yes, those pure-bred bulls. Then in making this list of what makes them content, we realize that contented cows are indebted to their circumstances and situations entirely—their contentment is dependant on them. Afflict the surroundings: bring on some wild storms or wild animals; present a lack of food, water, shade or rest; introduce contention in the camp, and those cows could become ‘dis’ contented in very short order!

This lesson is not about ‘cows’, but about Christians, and it is not about being content only when circumstances and situations are at their best. Philippians 4:11-12 (Paul has learned contentment) *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for **I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.** 12I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**”* 1 Timothy 6:7-8 (contentment is a mind set) *“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **s**But if we have food and clothing, we will be **content** with that.”*

What is that content-‘**secret**’ that Paul learned? Our circumstances will change; situations will change; people will change; and we will change, but **God will not**—He is constant! God is immutable (never changing); God is omnipotent (all-powerful); God is omniscient (all-knowing) and God is omnipresent (always present with us). Charles Spurgeon: “Your soul has never grown rich in itself; it has always been a pensioner upon the daily bounty of God.”

Gratitude produces ‘contentment’ and we need an advanced degree in it! We need to start with being grateful/thankful for who and what God Is, and know what He can and will do for those who recognize all that with gratitude. 1 Chronicles 16:34 “*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.*” And the keys in Colossians 3:15-17 “*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

Look at the keys in Colossians:

- 1) Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts
- 2) You were called to peace (Paul in Romans: *grace and peace to you*)
- 3) Be thankful
- 4) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly
  - a. as you teach and admonish one another (doing it with wisdom)
  - b. as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (with gratitude)
  - c. and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus (giving thanks)

**We must give credit (thanks/gratitude) where credit (gratitude/thanks) is due!**

Colossians 2:6-7 “*So, then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.*” Hebrews 12:28-29 “*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup>for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’”*

► Warning against being ungrateful/unthankful: we will lose ease of mind—(contentment). Romans 1:21 “*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*” After cautioning believers to be content, Paul warned in 1 Timothy 6:9 “*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*” When we are ungrateful and unthankful, we are ingrates—not having trust in God. And God knows it!

Gratitude is a command of God to be obeyed by us. Joyce Meyer said, “It is discipline, not desire, that determines our destiny. We must be willing to hurt a little bit to be what Christ wants us to be.” If we love God and His children, we will obey His commands: 1 John 5:2-3 “*This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. <sup>3</sup>This is love for God; to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome....” Ecclesiastes 12:13: “*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*” And be sure, we are commanded to be content!*

Hebrews 13:5 “Keep your lives free from the love of money and ***be content*** with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” 1 Timothy 6:6 “But ***godliness with contentment*** is great gain.”

And we won’t have time to be ‘content’ if we’re moving at the pace of a turbo-jet; if we’re going and doing and doing and going at the slightest whim, we will miss the focus God has for our ‘time in His word’ and ‘time in His way’ and ‘time in His will’ strategically following His plan and direction for us. When Hudson Taylor was called to be a missionary to China, his son Howard wrote of he and his wife: “They entered from the very first into the Lord’s own yearning of heart over the lost and perishing. Not ‘social service,’ but living for others with a supreme concern for their soul’s salvation was the line on which they were led out.”

“It is impossible to do everything people want you to do,” said Rick Warren, “You have just enough time to do God’s will. If you can’t get it all done, it means you’re trying to do more than God intended for you to do. If you want your life to have impact, focus it! Stop trying to do it all. Do less. Prune away even good activities and do only that which matters most.” We need to slow down and do what God wants us to do; we need to give Him our time to direct, because we only have so much time on this earth. We need to wait on God and not wait on some ‘thing’ or ‘things’—circumstances, situations or people.

Nick Vujicic, shared with James Robison Friday, February 8, 2013—the young evangelist with no arms or legs—about how he had failed to listen to those close to him who’d cautioned him to slow down and keep a clear balance between his ‘time with God’ and his ‘time sharing with others’ what great things God has done. As a result of not slowing, Vujicic experienced major burn-out at the close of 2010. God brought him back, stronger than ever, but with new understanding. Now he concentrates on the activities God would have him involved in—he focuses on the ‘will’ of God for his life. His new book, *Unstoppable*, is about faith-focused following. “I make mistakes, but I’m not a mistake” he said, “when you don’t get a miracle, be a miracle.” Following Christ does not mean jumping ahead of Him—being presumptuous doesn’t pay!

Webster defines **content** adj : satisfied; *vb* : satisfy; esp : **to limit (oneself) in requirements or actions**; and **contentment** *n* : as ease of mind : satisfaction. Roget’s Thesaurus says of content: pacificatory, conciliate, sufficiency, filled, suffice, pleased, comfort, willing, approved, joyful (no to pride and self-satisfied). Content is to be happy, satisfied, at ease, adjusted; and the bottom line is that **the contented child of God is satisfied with Jesus!**

*Satisfied with Jesus* is a song by B. B. (Baylus Benjamin) McKinney—

I am satisfied with Jesus, He has done so much for me,  
He has suffered to redeem me, He has died to set me free.

He is with me in my trials, Best of friends of all is He;

I can always count on Jesus, **Can He always count on me?**

I can hear the voice of Jesus calling out so pleadingly,

“Go and win the lost and straying;” **Is He satisfied with me?**

When my work on earth is ended, And I cross the mystic sea,

Oh, that I could hear Him saying, **“I am satisfied with thee.”**

♥I am satisfied, I am satisfied, I am satisfied with Jesus,

But the question comes to me, As I think of Calvary,

**Is my Master satisfied with me?**

John MacArthur, Jr. said it, “Lots of Christians live...not realizing the unlimited provisions that are theirs in Christ, they munch on stale scraps. There’s no need to live like that! Everything we could ever want or need is included in the cost of admission—and the Savior has already paid it for us!” See, a fair amount of going is involved in following—and so we need to be strategic! For God to turn us in the direction of His using, He may turn us from the direction of our choosing. **Proverbs 19:23** *“The fear of the Lord leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.”*

Is there anyone of the unbelieving world who is truly content? Because our world so promotes self: self-esteem, self-assurance, self-confidence, and we’ve become a people self-absorbed, self-sufficient and self-satisfied, it is very hard to see how. But God knows that too. Are there people in this world, believers and unbelievers alike, who falsely believe themselves to be content? Yes!

●**False content** is described in Daniel 4:4-5 *“I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.”* Nebuchadnezzar only thought he was contented, because when the circumstance and situation described came up, in this case a dream, then it made him afraid; it terrified him. This dream of a tree that Nebuchadnezzar had was from God—one Daniel interpreted—verse 24 *“This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: <sup>25</sup>You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals, **you will eat grass like cattle** and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. <sup>26</sup>The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.”*

● **Discontent's tragic end:** In Genesis, Eve displayed discontent when she wanted more than what God wanted for her, and she allowed the *Serpent* to talk her into what she already wanted. The consequences of her discontent are immeasurable in terms of the human sin nature passed down through time. Interestingly, another meaning for the word 'content'—emphasis on the first syllable—is what is contained within something. Contentment has to be what is the content of our hearts, because what is within us will be what pours out of us.

In a New Testament parable, Jesus told in Luke 12:16-20 how the ground of a particular rich man had produced a good crop, and instead of being content with this blessing, he began to plot how he could gain even more. In verse 18 “*Then he said, ‘This is what **I’ll do. I will tear down** my barns and build bigger ones, and there **I will store** all my grain and my goods. 19And **I’ll say to myself**, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”* And in verse 20 God said to him, “*‘You fool! **This very night your life will be demanded from you**. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ 21This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.*” The man was **not** content with what he had, but his sin was not in his plans but in the fact that he did not, **first of all, give thanks to God for his crop**, and he did not consult with God about what to do or concern himself in the least with what God would want his next step to be.

We’ve said it before, if we go with God’s plans for us—his direction and will—then He will take care of the resources with which we are to carry it out and provide the strength and length of life we require. But if we go with our own plans and desires, then neither the resources to complete it, or the length of life to ‘get it done’ are guaranteed. When Jesus says “go”, He will always go before us. And when Jesus says “come”, it is always to **a good place—a place of contentment**. He says, “**Come and let us** reason together”; “**Come...and I will** give you rest” and “**Come and share in** your Master’s happiness.”

Today—Saturday, February 9—I am waiting for the results of my recent PET scan and blood work. My appointment with the doctor is on Tuesday, February 12, at 12:30 p.m. God already knows what’s up. I can be content with the outcome, because I am satisfied with the work the Lord Jesus Christ has done for my soul’s saving and for my life’s journey. Does the evil one try to tempt me to do what I’m inclined to do in the sinful nature—to be discontent? Yes. But with each temptation comes the Lord’s right hand of grace and peace, assuring me that He has the very best plan for my life. Thank You, Lord, for this trial: Thank You that You are in control! 1 Thessalonians 5:18 “*...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*”