

## Contentment

**What do people want? I suggest that what people seek is to be content.**

- Trying to find contentment in position, power, or possessions is unsuccessful because there is no logical place to stop.
- Claiming contentment at an arbitrary level on a slope invites future discontentment.
- True contentment can be found only in that which is complete and unchanging.

**New Testament passages that use the word “ἄρκέω” or variations thereof:**

Matthew 10:25 “It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master.” - Most parents and teachers want their children or students to excel beyond themselves. Jesus’ point is not to caution against surpassing the teacher, but to expect the same treatment as the teacher or master. In difficult times, be content in the knowledge that Jesus’ earthly life was difficult, yet His life was a success.

Matthew 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, “No, lest there should not be enough for us and you, but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.” - “Enough” is the same word as “content.” In this parable, the wise virgins who were prepared for the return of the bridegroom used that word to describe a sufficient quantity. The figurative use of the word as contentment refers to having a sufficient quantity to meet current responsibilities.

Luke 3:14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “What shall we do?” So He said to them, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.” - As in most of the world today, the salaries of soldiers are less than the cost of living. When battles were concluded, the soldiers were “paid” by gathering the spoils of war. So, historically and in Third World countries presently, soldiers in peacetime supplement their meager incomes through extortion. Being content with that low wage is fraught with temptation, but a good name is more valuable than gold. (Proverbs 22:1)

John 6:7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.” - As in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, “sufficient” is the literal sense of the word. The figurative use of the word implies “to have enough.”

John 14:8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” - Philip’s ill-advised request uses the word to describe a level at which the mind can be at peace.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. - “All sufficiency” is used literally and figuratively at the same time. Literally, we will have enough and be content with our good works. One depends on the other. We are promised sufficient money to accomplish every good work, a situation with which we should be content.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” - We find contentment is that which cannot be greater and will never fail.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. - The passage includes some sentiments unique to Christianity. Paul does not denigrate the gift he has received from the Philippian Christians; he is happy that they gave it for their sakes, not his own. He does not consider poverty to be more noble, but rather a statement of fact; neither wealth nor poverty defines the person. From the other direction, he does not consider maintaining his current standard of living to be worthy of his effort. Paul was not in Paul's picture; all he saw was the benefit to others (v 17).

1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. - Paul presents the source of true contentment: being like god (godliness), being a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), being transformed into the image of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29).

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” - Contentment is based on the promises and faithfulness of God, which are at pinnacle of value, rather than an arbitrarily acceptable standard of living, the perception of which is ever changing.

1 Peter 4:3 For we have spent enough of our past time in doing the will of the Gentiles. - “Enough” is the “contentment” word. Be content that you haven't missed anything by rejecting worldly pursuits.

3 John 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. - Diotrephes illustrates the untenable position of contentment based on power or position. To maintain satisfaction, one must force others to act according to my screenplay of life.