

# 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Contentment

by Dan Horn

As we think of the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment, we can think of lots of ways to break it. And we can break it in ways we haven't dealt with, just like with all the other commandments I have talked about ways we can break those commandments. But it's really important for us to understand that the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment in it being the underlying motivation of the breaking of the other commandments. We are simply not satisfied with what God has given us, and so we look for something different. We think that somebody shouldn't treat us that way, so we are angry and commit murder in our hearts. We are not satisfied with the wife or husband God has given us, so we look at another woman to lust for. We are not satisfied with the goods and materials that we have, so we go and steal. We're not satisfied with people seeing us as we are, so we lie about who we are. We bear false witness about others to tear them down so we feel better about ourselves. Grumbling and complaining, we do this because of covetousness because we are not satisfied with what God has given us. We want something God doesn't have for us. So that's the heart of do not covet. Tonight I want to talk about the opposite of covetousness, which is contentment. And this is what we are supposed to be seeking. We are supposed to be seeking to be content, supposed to be content in the Biblical way. To be content in the Biblical way means to not covet our neighbor's wife, desiring your neighbor's house, his field, his male or female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that is our neighbors. We are satisfied with what God has given us, the talents He has given us and the things he has given us, and the relationships God has given us. It really means we are satisfied with God. The opposite of covetousness is to be satisfied with God. To say he has done the right thing, not that He is lacking in what He is doing, but that He is actually doing what is good for us. Contentment is a product of faith, it's a product of true faith, of mature faith. So specifically tonight I want to consider **Phil. 4:11**, "**Not that I speak in regards to need, for I have learned that whatever state I am, to be content.**"

In the context of that verse, it's Paul telling them earlier in that chapter, "Rejoice in the Lord." Rejoicing in the Lord is one of the ways that we become content. If what we want to do is grumble and complain against the Lord, that will always increase covetousness. If we say, "God, why did you do this, why did you do that?" the next thing we say is, "I should really have this or have that." It starts with rejoicing in the Lord. This is how you work towards being content. "Let your gentleness be made known to all men," Paul goes on to say. If what we are doing is working to be a blessing to others, then we're going to be a lot more satisfied to God and have a lot less of desiring things others have. "**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" **Phil. 4:6-7** This is how we get contentment. We intentionally, when we're anxious, when we are saying I'm not satisfied where God has me or I'm concerned that this or that is going to happen instead of turning towards ourselves, we turn towards God. "**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.**" Instead of trusting in our strength, which comes back to covetousness because we'll say our strength isn't good enough or I really can get this thing, it will produce sin. When we are anxious we are supposed to turn it over to God and then he says to meditate on things that are true, lovely, of good report, and honest. What's the opposite of covetousness? If you want to foster covetousness watch TV ads, they say you should have this or that. If you want contentment you should think on the things that are noble, true, just, lovely. Then Paul says follow my teaching and my example, he mentions what a joy it is that they're caring for him again. And that is the context in which Paul makes that statements. He is saying I rejoice in the Lord, he is saying

people know my gentleness. He is saying that he is anxious for nothing, I turn all things over to God through prayer and supplication. He says he focuses on things that are noble, pure, lovely, and then he says listen to my teachings and follow my example. And this is how he gets to contentment. This is what Paul says contentment looks like.

I want to talk through a few of those words that, "I have learned that whatever state I am in to be content." Let's just consider what that starts with. It starts with "I have learned". Paul is saying he has learned; he's not saying contentment comes with justification. Contentment is a product of being saved, it is not conjoined with faith. People can be very discontent and still have faith. But that's somebody who is immature in the faith. As we mature in the faith it produces contentment. That is what mature faith looks like, that is what is looked like in Paul. He could look at the circumstances and say, "God has given me these circumstances," because he is mature enough in the faith that he can say, "this is what God did and it is good." He doesn't need to kick against the goads like he was when he didn't have faith. Instead he can see those things that God does whether it's a thorn in his flesh or other things and say this is good and he can be content. Because he looks at the world through eyes of faith rather than eyes of the flesh. So by him saying he's learned, he is saying it's about sanctification, it's about a learned skill. And it's not saying I have been taught either, it's learned which means he has responsibility too. It doesn't mean God didn't teach him, God did teach him, God took him through these circumstances, God has him be stoned, run out of town, God had all these things happen to him and his responses to all that is, "I have learned to be content." We need to understand it's our duty to learn to be content. It is God's responsibility to put us through circumstances that teach us, but we need to recognize that we have a duty to work to learn it. It's our duty to learn to be content with what God has for us, to be content where God has us, with what position God has us in, what gifts and opportunities he has given us, where he has placed us. Understand contentment doesn't come naturally, it's the opposite of what the natural man wants. The natural man constantly wants more, he constantly wants something different, he's never satisfied. But when we are saved, we don't have to have the slavery to sin, we don't have to have the slavery to covetousness, it's been broken. What wasn't possible to have true contentment, now becomes possible, we can actually be content. But it's one thing to have the chains broken, it's another thing to walk as a free man. Through Jesus Christ we have been made free, but yet we actually have to do the work to walk as a free man. And it doesn't mean that God isn't working through us, and it doesn't mean that we aren't God's workmanship, that He did so that we can walk in His ways. But at the same time we are commanded to have zeal to do things. We are commanded to put off sin and we're commanded to be content. It is what it looks like that puts the old man to death, the lack of contentment is a sign that sin is still rampant in your life. When we think of contentment it's something that we're not to be passive about. We are supposed to be actively learning how to be content. Think about it, have you ever tried to teach your child something and they just have no interest in learning and you can tell them over and over again and they won't learn. Make sure you're not like that with God. Because God is working to teach you contentment, but you can be the child that just won't listen and we've all been that child. We have all been the child that has been taken out 10 times to be spanked, but let's recognize that we shouldn't desire to be that child. Instead we should be desired to be the one who wants to hear the teacher. When Paul was taken through these circumstances, when he was taken through being beaten and having to flee from Damascus and being let down by a basket, he used those things to learn contentment. Do you take the events that God has taken you through to learn contentment? Because it's your duty to look at what God has led you through, the lessons He has given you and it's your duty to take those lessons and actually apply them to your heart; to learn contentment. If you want contentment think about how you get it, you start by rejoicing. You can't be passive about what God does in the world. You have to rejoice in all things, you have to say if you're

going to be content, it starts with the view that everything that God does is right. Then everything God does is wise, everything God does is good, and so in the midst of those trials, if you rejoice this is how you learn contentment. And it's real work because it's easy to look at circumstances and instead of rejoicing, it's easy to say, "But I don't like these circumstances," but we actually have a duty to choose to rejoice. It doesn't mean that you have to choose to like it. It's really important to understand there is a difference in saying, "I just found out I have cancer," and rejoicing in the Lord that you just found out that you have cancer versus saying I am happy I have Cancer. We can rejoice in the Lord and we can be thankful for what God is doing and rejoice knowing that it is good, but at the same time it's proper to grieve and be sorrowful about things. These aren't separate from rejoicing in God. We rejoice because we trust that what God is doing is the right thing. That's the source of our joy, it doesn't mean that when Paul was being stoned he could rejoice in what God was doing at the same time it hurt when the stones hit him. It didn't mean that the stones didn't hurt, what it meant was that he could still look at God and say this is good in the midst of the pain. If you want to understand contentment, be anxious for nothing. Anxiety is how you lose contentment. And instead of losing contentment, work to turn it over to God. Don't just think these things will happen magically, you actually have to make the effort. When you're anxious, take the thought captive and take it to the Lord. Plead to Christ, that's how you build a habit of being content. It's really easy for us to just sit and mull on things and build anxiety. Well, building anxiety is the opposite of contentment. God says instead, what you do is lay it at God's feet and say God deal with this and then you have enough faith to trust that He will deal with it in a good way. So then instead of being anxious you can be content, you can trust in the Lord. Do you want contentment? You have to learn how to pray. You have to learn how to pray not just praying like you are ordering something in a restaurant, (I Want this, and this, and this). Pray where you say, "I am going to turn this over to you God. Yes, I still have responsibilities. Yes, I am still going to do the things I shouldn't do. But I'm going to turn this over to you." It's not like ordering off a menu. It's easy in our prayers to be like ordering off a menu, but that doesn't reduce anxiety at all. Then you just go, "did I really choose what I should've chosen?" instead of trusting that you turned it over to God. Anxiety is directly opposed to contentment. But God says through prayer, with thanksgiving, God will guard our hearts and our minds. This is how we get protection for contentment so that we can remain content, learn this practice of turning it over to God so that God guards our hearts and minds and protects us being content. When we try to deal with the things that make us anxious by ourselves, what we end up with is instead of contentment, we just end up with ever increasing anxiety. To be content you have to know how to pray. We have to focus on the things that are righteous. We focus on things that are defiling if we focus on injustice, lies, the things that aren't noble, those are the things that will foster things in us discontentedness. If the only thing we are looking at in the world are the things that are going wrong, then we should expect our minds to be thinking on the problems instead of thinking that God is sovereign and in control of this world. If we're not focusing on the things that are good then we can expect things, our own hearts, to be turned toward things that aren't good. Paul learned these things, if you desire to learn these things then you need to be the child that listens to the teacher. If not, then God is failing to teach His children. When we lack contentment it's because we are failing to hear the instructions that God is giving. Recognize that it's also hard to learn these things, it takes real work, it takes real mortifying the flesh. It requires real war. We can't do it passively. If that's how you're treating it, you will never reach contentment with God. Of course, in heaven you would, but I am talking on this earth. Contentment is possible on this earth but it requires you to war against the flesh, work to take every thought captive. It doesn't mean you successfully take every thought captive, but it means you actually work at it. We can really make serious headway for contentment, but only if we desire it enough to do the work to achieve it. Don't expect to learn if you don't want to do the work. These things are hard things to do, it's hard to rejoice in the midst of a trial. It's

hard to force yourself when you just want to worry about something, to just turn it over to God and say, "I'm done with it." That's not a natural response because the old man wants to play God, but the new man is supposed to say I trust the new God. It's hard to do that, you have to guard yourself and watch for it. You have to see if your petitions are true petitions or if you're truly giving it to God or you're really just holding onto it and saying, "Hey God, fix this how I want you to fix it," and if you're trusting in yourself rather than God. If you're trusting in yourself, then all men will fail you, and yourself more than anybody else. If you're trusting in your own strength you won't have contentment because your strength is going to fail you. If you're trusting in your purity or your abilities, that is not the source of contentment. I've talked to many people who are not content, but what it usually comes down to is they're not willing to do the work to be content because it really takes work. To learn to be content also means you have to put away sin because sin disturbs things and disturbs your peace. If you're in serious sin, you can't be content. You have to repent in order to be content. In God's mercy, that's part of the fruit of God's mercy, if you're in sin you need to confess your sin. You lose contentment if you're not dealing with sin. **Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."** If you want to do the work to be content you actually have to use His word as, "This is the direction I should go." That's what we need to do to be content. If we aren't willing to look at God's word and see what is right and what is wrong and say how does it apply to this situation, we won't achieve contentment, we are back to the same problem. We are relying on our own strength instead of God's strength. To learn contentment we also need to beg God to help us because it is through God's mercy that we learn contentment. As a teacher, the student that comes up to ask the most questions, he is the one who gets the most answers, he learns the most. The one who wants to pursue the teacher, he is the one who the teacher is going to give the most instruction and time to. And it's not that God is constrained to time, but He puts these pictures in the world for a reason. He puts the picture of the student who pursues the teacher vs. the student who says the teacher has to come to me. Make sure you pursue the teacher. Contentment is great gain, don't forget godliness with contentment is great gain. It's the greatest gain that you can receive in this life. And obviously every Christian has it to some extent, but the more you have it the greater the gain.

So Paul continues with, "whatever state I am to be content." Be content is the peace that surpasses all understanding. This is the peace that the rich man desires, the poor man desires, but it's the peace that only truly comes from God. The contentment only truly comes from God. The end of the worldly is always more and more. They publish reports on the richest people in the world because people seek for the title, gaining a title will only make them want more. Bill Gates got as much money as he could spend, and now that he has it all so he gives it away for the applause. He isn't content, he only wants more. The heart of the godly is only through having godly contentment. Paul learned that by being in many different circumstances, by being stoned and left for dead, but he also learned about it in seeing the church weeping for him because they cared for him and thought they would never see them again. He learned it by making tents and by being provided for by churches. God put him through circumstances and Paul learned contentment not by the circumstances, but from the God who put him there. Trusting that God had directed the circumstances. One of the ways we learn contentment is to remember the difficult circumstances we have been through in the past is by saying, "How did God use that? Sure, these people meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, why was it good? Yes, we had this happen, yes we had a time where there was poverty, and a time where there was wealth, how did God use these times so that our focus isn't on these things that are in the midst of this world, but our focus is on what God is doing?" That's one of the ways to learn contentment, to think about how God has used them.

Let's consider what contentment is and what it isn't. Contentment is not saying I like everything that happens. That's to be stoic, like you have no emotions. It's valid to weep with those who weep, it's valid to grieve if a loved one dies. It's valid to not even be too thrilled with God's will, Christ was content, but in the Garden of Gethsemane, he said, **"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."** Luke 22:42. That's the heart of contentment, not my will, but Your will be done. It was not sin for Christ to say, "I don't want to drink this cup." It was not sin for Christ to appeal to God the Father to say, "Don't make me drink this cup." But where we see contentment is He trusts the Father. He says, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done." That's the heart of contentment, it's not that we say this is what we wouldn't have chosen, it's not that we become sadistic and say, "I like the pain of this injury," or, "I don't care that my relative died." You can be content in the midst of mourning, in the midst of suffering, because you're saying, "God knows what he is doing and my desire is for God's will to be done." Contentment is having what it says in **1 Peter 5:6-7, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."** It's in the midst of those circumstances of not raising your fist and shaking it against God saying, "How dare you." It's saying, "I don't like this, but I know you're wiser than I am." That's what it looks like to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Contentment is not that you don't have petitions to make to God, it's when you make them that you can't accept the answer. **2 Cor. 12:7-9, "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."** Paul wasn't discontent because he made a prayer for the thorn in his flesh to be removed from him. It was a testimony that he was content that when God said, "No," he said, "Thy will be done." When he said, "My grace is sufficient for you, my strength is perfected in weakness," Paul accepted it, that's the sign of contentment. It's fine to make a petition with boldness, but you have to accept the results, that's when you have really turned it over to God instead of just ordering off a menu. When you take these things that make you anxious and turn them over to God, that's exactly what Paul did. Paul was content because he said, "Thy will be done." Contentment requires that you have more faith in God's judgement than in your own judgement. As a Christian, contentment means you never get shaken to the point that you don't know who you are in the sight of God, you don't get tossed to and fro, you don't thrash. You actually have assurance of salvation, and again, contentment is a sign of maturity, not a sign of salvation. I want to exhort you to work to receive contentment, to reach that point because it is achievable in this life. Contentment is about not getting shaken, it's about staying fixed on Christ even in the midst of trials, in the midst of difficulties. We saw an example of Paul this morning where even though he is beaten, he's not being tossed around, as soon as he gets an opportunity, he preaches the gospel. That's what contentment looks like, he sees the circumstances God has him in and it doesn't change what his duty is before God. Contentment also means that you don't become despondent. You know, there's a popular book called *Christians Get Depressed Too*, and I'm not saying Christians don't get depressed, but I am saying that's not what God wants for us. Depression is because of sin. When we are not dealing with our sin is why we get depressed. God is not a Father that wants us to be depressed. Godliness with contentment is great gain. Depression is against contentment. Depression is an effect of sin. When we become depressed, we should recognize that it's connected to sin and if we deal with the sin we will fix the depression. Even in the church people don't actually want to deal with sin, when people are depressed it's caused by sin and it produces more sin. If we embrace depression instead of fighting it, it just destroys the person. Someone can lose contentment because it feels like issues are overwhelming

you but that's not how it's supposed to be. That's what depression looks like, it means that they are failing to take that anxiety and turn it over to God. It doesn't mean that they can't be Christians, but it does mean that they aren't mature in Christ. Panic is not rightly associated with contentment, if we panic, regardless of the circumstances, that panic is a testimony that we aren't trusting God. We are looking at our own strength and see its insufficient, so we panic.

Contentment is sharing in the divine nature, everything God does pleases you. When our hearts are aligned with His we will be pleased with everything He does, we are partaking of God's divine nature. This is what we are supposed to do, align our hearts off this world and align it with God. That is getting divine contentment when we turn our hearts from things we want in this world, but we work to turn our hearts to the things of God. That's how we get godly contentment, and yes there can be ungodly contentment. The sluggard that never does anything but lay around and sleep can be content in his slothfulness, but that's not the contentedness we should be seeking. **1 Tim 6:6-8, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."**

Contentment is about focusing on the things that are important. What's important is not this world. What's important is the world to come. What's important is eternal life. And the way we have contentment is we have that view of it being about eternal life. Another thing that contentment isn't is that it's not an external affection. It's not putting on a face, not putting on a façade, not pretending. One person might appear to be really content when they're actually very far from contentment. They want people to think they are calm and happy when the reality is they're nothing like that. True contentment is in the heart, its faith maturing so that you're looking at the world through faith. If you're looking at the world through faith, you will be content because you will say God is sovereign over all things. It's the working understanding of faith that God is sovereign over all things, that's how we have contentment. We say God is doing the right thing. Paul wrote to Timothy, it's not dependent on things that we have, whatever we receive is more than what we have a right to because God can take it all. We rebel against Him, so anything He gives us is a blessing. True contentment can't be taken away, it's not external. It doesn't matter if someone robs you, there is not circumstance that can take away true godly contentment because it's the maturing of faith and God protects our faith. He guards our hearts and minds so it won't be shaken. If it's an external show, then it will be shaken easily. If it's truly rooted in our heart, then it won't be shaken. It was started by God and preserved by God. Contentment is also a habit, meaning it requires practice. It also gets to be easier the more you practice, if we don't practice and work and say, "No, I'm going to repent of not being content," then what we will never achieve is contentment. As we have to practice where we say, "Wait, I'm being anxious, let me turn it over to God and rest in assurance that He will do the right thing," you can work back to contentment. When it first starts, it ebbs and flows, but as you get the pattern of taking every thought captive, and the pattern of being content, contentment stops having these ups and downs and becomes steady. What you're doing is developing a lens through which you look at the world, looking at the world through faith and that God is sovereign over all things. But it doesn't spring out of nothing, it springs out of labor, working at it, developing it, nurturing it, practicing it, that's how we get to divine contentment.

#### Advantages of contentment

1. The true source of comfort. **Luke 12:15, "And he said to them, take heed and beware of covetousness for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses."** If we

are looking to this world for comfort, we won't find it. We won't find comfort in our possessions, we won't find comfort in our abilities. The only true comfort is what we find in God so we should seek for contentment because this is comfort. This is what abundant life looks like. We find our comfort in God then because we have godly contentment, we are looking to God and saying everything is controlled by Him, those circumstances were given to us by God, then we can have contentment through any circumstance. It's not based on the ebbs and flows of life. It's not based on what's going on in the world, it's based on the consistency of God. There will always be seasons in life and if we are looking for our comfort in the world, there will always be times where the world can't provide comfort. If we are looking for comfort in God, it will be consistent.

2. It stops us from putting other things before the kingdom of God. When we don't have godly contentment, if we are looking to the world we are going to prioritize those things that God has specifically told us not to prioritize. Seek first the kingdom of God. If we are content in God, then we will realize we don't need to seek things of the world. When we aren't content we seek after our pride, wealth, power, all these other things in the world. To be fruitful in the kingdom of God you need to learn to be content. Contentment in suffering allows us to see a point to the suffering, we can say that it won't last forever, God is using it for good. All of a sudden if we have contentment, we cannot get tied up in these things here. I have seen people have miscarriages and they mourn for months. And it's valid to mourn, but if you're content in God it doesn't last for months because you have eternal life to seek after.
3. It gives us a reason for others to ask for the hope that is within us. This is the hope that is within us, when we can stay content regardless of what's going on, when we aren't shaken, when there is poverty or wealth, and all these things that someone can see that we don't move with them. We don't move with the circumstance of this world, that is the hope that others are seeking because they get tossed to and fro with every circumstance because they are looking to the world for answers.

#### Motives towards seeking contentment

1. To a Christian, contentment is a form of carrying heaven wherever we go. The picture of keeping our eyes on heaven instead of this earth. When our contentment comes from God, we aren't thinking about the next thing that happens here, except how it applies to God and how it is part of His plan. Our focus changes and our focus becomes on heaven rather than on the earth. Contentment is about understanding that God is present NOW. It's also a rest, Hebrews 4 talks about heaven as a rest. When we are content, there is a sense of rest, not chasing after the world. A picture of being a citizen of heaven instead of earth. We should recognize that that is where peace and joy is, when the focus of our citizenship is heaven and not earth.
2. When Christ promises abundant life, this is abundant life. It's not having more stuff, more things, it's not getting rid of stuff. There have always been people like the Sadducees that think godliness is about getting more things, power, and prestige. Or there's the stoics who think that following God is not getting stuff, its putting stuff away, the aesthetics, just get rid of everything. Both of them are wrong. Abundant life is about being outside of the stuff, having the focus on God, not on this world. Whether our focus is to get more or less, the focus is wrong in the first place if it isn't on God. Divine contentment diminishes focus on the world, that's what abundant life looks like. We aren't tossed to and fro with what happens in the world. Our life is focused on God.
3. Contentment puts us in tune to serve God. When we're not content, we're always looking to this world. When we are content we are looking to the next world. If we're looking into the next world, that's when we can actually do things to serve God and the kingdom of God. We have to

start by having a view that God is our sufficiency. Then we can treat Him like our master. When we look at him and say He is the one who provides for us, we can say that obedience to him is the first thing we should do. Paul relates how he was poured out a drink offering, all of it is consumed. Paul couldn't be poured out like a drink offering unless he had divine contentment. If we want to be that faithful of a servant, we should learn divine contentment because that makes us far more fruitful.

4. Strength to bear burdens. The content are looking to bear a load, they aren't looking and shifting around. They're the ones who can further the kingdom of God. You should be seeking divine contentment, to look at the world through the lens of God. Contentment protects against sin. Those that aren't content look at other women and lust, look at things that they can steal, or see the opportunity to lie. These are the things that people do, covetousness in their heart produces evil. Contentment protects against coveting. Signs of lack of contentment is murmuring, grumbling, and complaining. When we do those things, we do them when we are focused on this world. We get protected against sin if we look towards God and are satisfied with Him. Contentment sweetens everything else. Contentment sweetens the joys, sweetens worship, sweetens our time with our children. Being discontent affects everything, being content affects everything as well; one negative, one positive. Contentment is the best commentary on providence. You can talk about believing in the providence of God, but unless you're content you're not actually practicing the belief in the providence of God. Putting the belief that God is sovereign into practice is the basis of contentment. It is saying, "God is sovereign, those circumstances are from the hand of God. Problems and blessing are from the hand of God so I can be content in all things."

#### Sources of contentment

1. You have to receive Christ. If you're of this world you will be discontent. You might close your eyes to it, blare loud music to it, might go to church, but you won't be able to truly achieve contentment if you have not received Christ. We are content because He is all that we need. We can be content because He is our sufficiency. We can be content because he is what our heart is to long for.
2. The graces of the Spirit, the Spirit working in us, that gives us the ability to be content. If we didn't have the Spirit, we wouldn't be content.
3. God has defeated death; we can put this world on the lower consideration because these things are finished. We don't need to worry about Satan because He has been defeated. That doesn't mean that we don't resist the devil and he will flee. Yes, we're supposed to resist the devil. But we can be contented in the midst of that because Satan has already been defeated.
4. God has given us victory over our sin. We don't need to be slaves to the flesh. If we were slaves to the flesh we couldn't have contentment. but we can have contentment because that slavery has been broken.
5. The promise that, "**All things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purposes.**" **Romans 8:28**. God is sovereign over all things and promises good for His people in all things.
6. Life is just a vapor. It's easy to think 90 years is a long time, but it's nothing compared to eternity. When we have problems in this life, one of the ways that we can be content in the midst of challenges, the midst of the sorrow and suffering, is to remember that life is just a vapor. It's here today and gone tomorrow. Eternal life is eternity, it is forever. So part of our contentment is



recognizing the proper state of this life. It's exceedingly brief, the suffering might happen for a moment, but we must remember it's just a moment.

7. The thought that whatever we suffer is the fullness of that taste hell will receive. Hell is the product of sin, the just results, what we deserve to receive for sin. God gave foretastes of hell here on this earth that our sin produces really negative consequences, not just on the person sinning, but the other people. When we suffer or see the effect of sickness, as part of this world, we can remember that we deserve eternal hell and, as a Christian, this is the only taste of hell that we will receive. Instead of saying, "Woe is me because of this illness!" or, "I lost a job!" we can say, "Praise God because in his mercy he saved us from an eternity in hell!"

#### Ways to learn contentment

1. Nurture it. Nurture faith by walking by faith and not by sight. The more that you trust God and recognize that He is sovereign, contentment is the outworking of truly believing in the sovereignty of God. The more you trust in the sovereignty of God, the more content you will be. One of the simplest ways to work at contentment is to say that I am going to do what the Scriptures say, I am going to walk by faith and not what I think is right because this will work better for me. You won't achieve contentment until you learn to walk by faith.
2. Work out with fear and trembling the assurance of salvation. God commands us to do this. The person tossed to and fro about whether they are saved or not will not be content. Content is even a step beyond the assurance of salvation. Work to humble yourself and take deliberate steps when you see pride rising up in you. Remind yourself who you are, that you are a worm, dust. Remind yourself you are rising up against God when you rise up against someone else, that you are putting yourself higher than what you should be.
3. If you want to learn contentment learn how to repent. No one is content who is harboring sin that they can just keep over in a corner and say, "Well, I'm just going to pretend that it doesn't exist, I'm not going to deal with that sin." The troubled conscience fights against contentment. learn to deal with your sin. Learn to deny yourself, make no provision for the flesh. Mortify the flesh. Recognize that you don't need to be dependent upon the world. This doesn't mean that we don't eat and drink, it means we don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Whether it's gluttony or drunkenness, or whatever else, recognize that as we are seeking to fulfill the lusts of the flesh we are robbing ourselves of contentment. We're not that much different than Esau who said he was starving and offered his birthright for a pot of porridge. He was more concerned about his flesh than his spiritual inheritance. Make sure you're not the same way.
4. Don't compare your condition to others. What you're doing is comparing how much money you have or your state, whatever it is, that produces covetousness. Comparing starts that attitude of coveting.
5. Don't bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition. –Thomas Watson. What does that mean? If you go, "I want this," and you take that, that condition of lacking something brings it into your mind and makes your mind think, "I'm lacking this, I'm lacking that," you will never be content because you took your condition and brought it into your mind. Instead if you say, "I need this," you should put your mind to, "I need to solve the problem and get it." Don't bring your condition to your mind, bring your mind to your condition.

Recognizing contentment is truly believing. Like Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He said, "let this cup pass, nevertheless let thy will be done." Contentment is when you say, "Let God's will be done." That's when we have contentment, and godliness with contentment is great gain.