

The Problem of Satisfaction

PART 4

Satisfaction In The Present

II Corinthians 12:7-9 *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* ^(NIV)

SUMMARY REVIEW

- Obtaining satisfaction is a fundamental frustration of the human experience. However, a fundamental principle of life is that man cannot achieve lasting satisfaction. Such satisfaction is a gift.
- The main theme of our study is comprised by these three principles:
 - *God's grace is always enough in every situation.*
 - *We should be content with that grace.*
 - *The world cannot understand this satisfaction because we live a life of paradox.*
- In the paradoxical life to which the Christian is called, there is a sense in which one should be satisfied in the present but also a sense in which one will never be satisfied in this life. Too many Christians have followed the world, being content where they should be dissatisfied and vice versa.
- The world is not satisfied with the God of Scripture instead opting for a god of their own making.
- The world takes God's good gifts, refuses to be thankful, and takes credit for such things themselves.
- Everything was created for God's good pleasure. When man makes his own satisfaction his primary goal, he is assuming the place reserved for God.
- Man cannot be satisfied with accomplishments or material goods. Without God, everything is empty.
- If one does not find satisfaction in God he will not be satisfied with anything else.
- Genuine satisfaction is the reward of living one's life to God's glory.
- Genuine, lasting satisfaction cannot be found in creation. Perfect satisfaction can only be found in perfection and perfection is found only in God.
- Many Christians are satisfied with their distorted view of God and dissatisfied with His provision.
- There are particular things with which Christians ought to be dissatisfied in this life.
 - *We long for the fullness of blessing that only accompanies Christ's return.*
 - *We live in a process of sanctification that will never be completed in this life.*
 - *Since we belong to the age to come, we can never be satisfied with anything this world offers.*
- This dissatisfaction and constant longing in our souls motivates us to run the race with diligence, pursue God's good purpose, and live for the consummation, longing and praying for Christ's return.

THE BLESSED HOPE

As with the world, there is a sense in the Christian will never be satisfied this side of eternity. The difference is that, in addition to the deep, inarticulate longing in the souls of all of mankind, the elect of God have been given a glimpse of what is yet to come. Nothing this world offers can be compared with what God has prepared for His own. Thus, we must not invest our time, resources, and expectations in this world. The blessed hope is clearly defined in Scripture as Christ's return.

LEARNING TO BE SATISFIED

Christians need to learn to be satisfied as the Scripture commands. The overarching principle is that we should be satisfied with God's grace to us which does not ensure the absence of difficulty or trouble. While we may not always understand why God ordained the circumstances we face, we should be content with whatever He has determined is best for us. His grace is all we need.

Being Satisfied With God

- Genuine, lasting satisfaction is only found in God for we were made for His glory.
- The glorious promise of eternity is that God will satisfy His people with Himself.
- A certain measure of this satisfaction belongs to God's people here and now.
 - *God has come to live in us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.*
 - *This presence of the Spirit is but a down-payment on what is yet to come.*
- David believed he would finally be satisfied at the resurrection when, in righteousness, he would be able to behold the face of God.
- Any such satisfaction in this life is a foretaste of that ultimate satisfaction yet to come.

The Nature of Satisfaction in the Present

- Godly satisfaction is independent of temporal circumstances resting instead in the knowledge of God's providential goodness.
- The experience of godly contentment requires a long-range perspective.
 - *The world seeks satisfaction in the immediate gratification of this fleeting age.*
 - *We live for eternity and endure the suffering which works out God's purpose.*
- We are called to fear God, not circumstances. Then our contentment will not be disrupted.
- Troubles will undoubtedly assail us. While we feel their pain, such troubles cannot penetrate.

Contentment In God's Purpose

- God's people are called to be content with whatever He chooses to give to them.
- The Apostle Paul's contentment was independent of his circumstances. He had learned to be content despite the level of his provisions or the reception he was given.
- Paul had enough to face any situation for he was empowered by Christ's strength (Ph 4¹³).
- Christians are called to be content with the gifts God gives, the vocation to which we are called, and His provision. The love of money is expressly condemned (cf. 1 Tim 6, Heb 13).
- There has never been a society where people have had so much nor been so dissatisfied.

CONCLUSION

God's grace is always enough. Still, we must distinguish between the sensation of emptiness and the objective reality of God's provision. Some aspects of our emptiness will only be satiated in the coming age. Nonetheless, while longing for that day, we may yet sing, "it is well with my soul."

Ps 17:15 *And I-- in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.* ^(NIV)

Prov 19:23 *The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.* ^(NIV)

Phil 4:10-13 *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* ^(NKJ)

SCRIPTURE SIDEBAR

1 Tim 6:6-8, 10a *But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that...¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...* ^(NIV)

Heb 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."* ^(NIV)