

Day 1

A Secret for 2017 - Contentment

12 I 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. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:12-13)

“Fear not” and similar phrases are mentioned 365 times in the Bible. God has promised to supply our needs according to His great riches, so why should we be afraid? Paul says that he has “learned the secret of being content.” So what does contentment look like?

1. I have everything I need at this present moment.
2. If I need anything else, God will give it to me.
3. When I need anything else, God will give it to me.

Contentment doesn't come from having an abundance of excess. Contentment comes from the understanding that God has provided everything that we need right now and that He will provide what we need when a new need arises.

Think about a time when you had a need and God provided. Thank Him for His abundant provision.

What are your needs today? How do they differ from your wants? Do you believe God will supply your needs? Do you give Him the credit or do you pretend that you were the one who met your own needs?

Day 2

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25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt. 6:25-34)

God has promised to supply our needs.

- God has promised to clothe and feed us. (Matt. 6:26,30)
- God has promised to hear our prayers (1 John 5:14)
- God has promised the Holy Spirit to guide us (John 14:15-17, 15:26)
- God has promised a way of escape when temptation comes (1 Cor. 10:13)
- God has sent His angels to encamp around us (Psalm 34:7)
- God has removed the fear of death (1 Cor. 15:55-57)
- God has promised to never leave or forsake us (Heb. 13:5)

Meditate on God’s promises. Can you think of other promises not listed above? Thank God for providing everything we need.

Day 3

A Secret for 2017 - Contentment

12 I 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. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:12-13)

God has taken care of our past, our present and our future. How can we doubt God will give us what we need, when He's already given so much? But notice above that contentment:

1.) Is not automatic, it must be learned over time

Vs. 12 – "I have learned the secret of being content"

Contentment doesn't come to us automatically. It must be learned. Think about a child. Unless a mother weans her child, they will never grow up. To wean is to remove something from your life that you didn't realize you could do without. Similarly, God uses our circumstances to wean us off of the worldly things so that we can feed on something more lasting. As God weans us off the world, we learn contentment with what He has given us.

2.) Contentment doesn't come from your circumstances, but from confidence in God.

Vs. 12 – "in any and every situation"

Contentment comes from God and is independent of your circumstances.

How can you be content when things in your life seem to be going nowhere but down? There is only one way; God's supernatural power.

Day 4

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The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. (Prov 16:33)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jer 1:5)

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 2:10)

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:16)

Truth #1

1.) God has ordained every circumstance of my life.

God is in the process of working out His plan in our life even if we can't always see or know what He is doing. This can be a tough truth for us. We have a hard time believing that a good God would let his children suffer. But look at the words God uses; "I knew you", "we are God's handiwork", "all the days ordained for me were written in your book". We may never know why some things happen in this life, but scripture says that God doesn't take our suffering lightly. God knows us better than we know ourselves. God calls us His handiwork. He is carefully crafting us into the man or woman He wants us to be. God ordained all our days. He has reviewed each and every situation in our life before we have to face it. God doesn't allow just any situation in our life, only those that fit into His purpose. God is a good and faithful God, which is why Jesus told us "Don't worry about tomorrow" (Matt 6:34).

Does knowing God has ordained every situation a comfort to you or is it disturbing? Pray asking God to reveal Himself in every circumstance and for comfort knowing He is there.

Day 5

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I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:13)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Josh 1:9)

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. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9-10)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa 41:10)

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Rom 5:3-5)

Truth #2

2.) God will give me strength in every circumstance to do His will.

God will give us the power to be content. When and if the time comes, God will give us the strength to do His will in whatever circumstance we face. Not one of our struggles is in vain. God will use our struggles to produce His will in us. We will suffer in this life, but we have the power of the indwelling spirit. Power to overcome any situation. Power to look ahead to the rewards and peace in Heaven. Power to see where God has been faithful in the past.

Thank God for the strength He gives us during the tough times.

How have you seen Him working during these times in your life?

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6 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. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. (1 Tim 6:6-12a)

In the movie Cool Runnings, John Candy played a dishonored coach who was convinced to start a Jamaican Bobsled Team by a sprinter who didn't qualify for the Olympics due to an accident. Near the end of the movie John Candy's character makes this statement "a gold medal is a wonderful thing, but if you're not enough without it, you'll never be enough with it." Contentment isn't about how much stuff you own or how many friends you have. Contentment is learning how to be satisfied in whatever situation God has you in, knowing that He has a purpose for your life and that He is carefully looking after you.

1. The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Have you learned the secret of contentment? Review God's promises and spend time thanking God for His love.