

# Discontentment



## *Learning to Wait Thankfully*

*by Shannon Warden*

*A certain father loved his daughter dearly. He supplied all of her needs and many of her wants. Most of the time, the daughter was happy. Yet, one day, the daughter was dissatisfied so much so that she stopped being thankful for what she had and began dreaming of what she really wanted. Her dreaming soon turned to coveting and her coveting to sadness. At first, she did not tell her father. She thought she could acquire the thing she wanted on her own. When she couldn't, she became angry at herself for failing to get what she wanted and angry at her father for not giving her what she wanted.*

*The father was fully aware of how his daughter felt, so he calmly and quietly approached her and said, "I know you are upset with me, but it is my job to provide you with what you need. And, where it is in your best interest, I give you what you want." The girl thought for a minute and was reminded of all her father had done for her. As she remembered her father's many gifts to her, the daughter felt something familiar happening in her heart—Peace began replacing worry.*

*Embarrassed by her selfishness, the daughter ran to her father, who met her with a loving embrace as*

*he had so many times before. "I am sorry," she whispered. "I love you," he replied. Relieved of her sadness and anger, the daughter skipped away a little wiser than before. The father knew his daughter would grow discontent again, and yet he smiled as she ran off because she had shared her burden with him and allowed him to restore her peace. This certain father loved his daughter more than she could ever know.*

I am so thankful for my Heavenly Father's loving embrace and unconditional acceptance of me. Surely, He must love me more than I can comprehend. How else would He allow me time and again to say, "Father, what you have given me is not enough. I want more." Sure, maybe I don't say these exact words, but I might as well be saying them. At least, that's what my sadness, anger, and self-reliance communicate when I do not want what I have and want what I do not have.

As I write this, I am recovering from a recent bout of discontentment, which I view as a spirit sickness. I strongly suspect you, too, have battled this disease, so please feel free to substitute in your own object of desire. For me, it was a new

house. My husband and I, who own a perfectly good house, have been considering purchasing a newer, larger house. Through this process, I thought I had achieved a peace about what we should and should not try to afford. And, maybe I did indeed have peace about that. But, when we looked at a certain house, I was confused as to whether or not to pursue the house seriously. In retrospect, I had gained a peace about our price range but had not gained peace about when to buy. I have since received God's readily available remedy for my spirit sickness and know that He will provide the right house at the right time. However, just a couple of weeks ago, discontentment attacked my spirit, caught me off guard, and left me temporarily out of balance with God. Thanks to His mercy and goodness, I regained perspective on God's divine plan for our lives, and in doing so, I regained peace. Another way of thinking on this is that my discontentment temporarily cut off the flow of God's peace in my life.

Again, I suspect that you know how awful this is. I was burdened down with frustration because I couldn't

know God's will for us quickly enough, sadness because I couldn't have what I wasn't even totally sure that I wanted, and anger because I couldn't relieve my own sadness and frustration. Is it just me, or do you also see the potential for a vicious cycle in this?

Fortunately, I'm accustomed to running to my Father for comfort and reassurance although I, like the girl in the story, run reluctantly at times. But, what about when we don't run to God? What happens to our discontentment?

Obviously, if not on God, we're relying on ourselves, other people, or things to relieve us of discontentment. We certainly don't like to carry around unresolved discontentment. So, when left to our own devices, we may seek relief through work, money, material gain, status gain, diets, exercise regimens, drugs, alcohol, sex, adulterous affairs, and so on. These may successfully numb the pain of discontentment by replacing it with short-lived, superficial distraction, but they are poor remedies in comparison to God's perfect cure.

Another possible self-remedy for discontentment is

depression. This is certainly not something someone would choose, and it can at times have nothing to do with discontentment. However, depression can set in when a person feels initially defeated by discontentment or after they have exhausted their own self-remedies and are still denying God's perfect cure.

At this moment, I am free of discontentment. Praise God! But, I know it will be back. This world is too full of enticing temptations that appeal to my sin nature for me to never be discontent again. Two weeks ago, my object of desire was a house. Two months from now it may be status, power, clothes, money, etc. So, for now, I will enjoy the sweet embrace of my Father, who supplies all my needs and many of my wants. I will honor Him for His patience in never growing tired of teaching me. I will pray for His will in mine and Stephen's lives. I will wait on His perfect timing. And, I will praise Him for His many gifts, especially for His ultimate gift of eternal life through His Son's shed blood.

Don't get me wrong. Wanting things is not bad. Wanting

them when they may not be in God's plan for us is wrong. And, certainly it is wrong to say to God, "What you have given me is not enough." Are you saying this in some way through your discontentment? Do you want what you have? Or, do you covet what you do not have? Maybe you, too, need to run to your Heavenly Father for peace and reassurance of His perfect plan in your life!

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." CJohn 14:27*

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