



WEEKLY SERMON

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Message: Character

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Text: See lesson

The great hymn “**How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word,**” dates to the time of John Rippon, who began a 63 year pastorate at London’s Carter’s Lane Baptist Church in 1775. During his ministry, Rippon edited a new hymnal, assisted by his minister of Music, Robert Keene, who is believed to be the author of this classic hymn.

The Bible stands as the world's greatest classic, and for good reason. Whether for spiritual or inspirational reasons, the Bible is read by more people than any other book in the world. And for purely literary reasons, it is a classic among the world's greatest works. But there is another reason people return to the Bible over and over. It is because the Bible is the world’s only living book.

In Hebrews 4:12 we read, “**For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**”

Did you notice the word “**quick**” in the verse? To define it with today’s language, it means “**living**” or “**alive**.” What does it mean that the Bible is “**living**”? It means that it is superintended by the Spirit of God himself. The Holy Spirit is the one who “**breathed**” the Bible into existence as He inspired the authors who wrote parts of it.

In II Timothy 3:16 we read, “**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**”

In II Peter 1:20-21 we read, “**Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (21) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**”

The hymn “**How Firm a Foundation**” proclaims truth. Pick up a book of philosophy and you’ll get a compilation of thoughts – mainly questions – by baffled men trying to make sense out of life. When you open the Bible, you get a collection of truths, doctrines, promises, and commands that are consistent, logical, truthful, centered on the person of Christ, and satisfying to both mind and soul. They give us the answers to both life and death.

When we read the Bible, it is the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see truth, just as Jesus promised He would. Depending on our level of maturity and the needs we have as we are reading, the Holy Spirit will cause insights to become apparent today that we did not see, or need to see, yesterday. It is how God spurs us on and challenges us in our spiritual growth. We will never see all that can be seen from Scripture at one reading. It’s pages are as infinitely deep as the person of God himself.

It is so easy for Christians to get "comfortable" with the Word of God especially those who have been saints for decades. If that is happening to you, you are reading the Bible only out of obligation; you are not reading it for the best reason. Therefore, since the Bible is a "living book," here are two ways to refocus.

First, make a new commitment to read the Word of God on a daily basis. The Holy Spirit needs your eyes to be on the words before He can show you new truth.

Second, before you begin to read, pray the prayer of Psalm 119:18, "**Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.**" If you will pray and ask God to open your eyes, He will answer. And the Bible will regain its treasured status in your life.

From Genesis to Revelation, there are 66 books that touch every theme found on the shelves of a major bookstore: **drama, romance, biography, military history, theology, church history, ancient near eastern history, geography, marriage and family, future world events, self-help and humor.** And the best part is, you already own all 66 of these books! You can curl up with the best seller – any time you like. This year, we trust that the Word of God will become more alive in your life than ever before.

Don't let the Bible become a rare edition in your life.

Don't let it go out of print in your experience.

Curl up with the Bible this year and get to know its contents and author more intimately. Make sure you read your Bible daily. It's a firm foundation for your faith!

In His Amazing Grace,

Pastor David Miklas

Even In This Dysfunctional World We Can Still Experience Contentment Every Day

Bible Study Objectives:

1. To remind us that contentment will not find those who pursue money/things: (Exodus 20:17, Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, 5:10)
2. To remind us that contentment will find those who know/obey God's word: (Job14:1, Philippians 4:6-19, Isaiah 26:3)

Bible Study

1. Contentment will find us when we focus on God's promises and not our circumstances: (II Chronicles 20:12)
 - a. God can supernaturally cause interpersonal conflict to vanish when our behavior pleases Him: (Proverbs 16:7)
 - b. Our prayers will be answered when our conduct is consistently pleasing to almighty God: (Psalms 66:18, I Peter 3:7)
2. Contentment will find us when we focus on heavenly things not earthly things: (Matthew 6:20, Philippians 3:19)
 - a. Strength/courage to endure hardships, illness, and disappointment is dependent on seeing the invisible: (Hebrews 11:27)
 - b. Only a focus on eternal things will produce perfect peace regardless of your present possessions: (Luke 12:15)
 - c. Only a fool gives his/her life to the acquisition of stuff while giving no thought to eternal values: (Luke 12:20-22)
3. Contentment will find us when we focus on growing our character/competence/chemistry: (Matthew 5:13)
 - a. We must be like salt, we must use words that improve the flavor of any conversation: (Ephesians 4:29-32)
 - b. We must be like salt, we must be instantly recognized as a person that adds positive value: (Colossians 4:6)
 - c. We must be like salt, we must be a preservative factor in our daily private and public life: (I Peter 1:22-25)
 - d. We must be like salt, we must penetrate/change every environment we come into contact with: (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - e. We must be like salt, we must always respond and not react as a Christian: (I Peter 3:4,15, I Thessalonians 4:11-12)
4. Contentment will find us when we focus on witnessing to others about Christ: (Matthew 5:14-16)

- a. We must be like light, we must be clear/pure/clean and avoiding the many sins of the flesh: (Ephesians 5:1-8)
 - b. We must be like light, we must penetrate our dark world and tell them of Jesus: (John 14:6, John 12:36, Acts 1:8)
 - c. We must be like light, we must show to others the dangers of wickedness and its consequences: (Philippians 2:15)
 - d. We must be like light, we must show people how to keep from falling and hurting themselves/others: (Jude 1:24)
5. Contentment will find us when we focus on Biblical answers to address relationship issues: (Matthew 7:1)
- a. We must not judge/condemn/find fault/put down others but focus on our own shortcomings: (Galatians 6:1-9)
 - b. We must not judge/condemn/find fault/put down others because we too are guilty of many sins: (John 8:1-11)
 - c. We must not judge/condemn/find fault/put down others because only God knows all the facts: (I Samuel 16:7)
 - d. We must not judge/condemn/find fault/put down others because judging is God's job not ours: (James 4:11-12)
 - e. We must not judge/condemn/find fault/put down others because we will reap exactly as we sow: (Luke 6:36-37)
 - f. We are to judge/make a decision about the trustworthiness of others based on their behavior: (Matthew 7:15-20)
 - g. We are to warn those who chose to live in violation of Biblical principles: (Ezekiel 33:8-9, I Thessalonians 5:14)
6. Contentment will find us when we focus on daily practicing the habit of thanksgiving: (Colossians 3:15)
- a. We are to learn to give thanks when going through the good and the bad times of life: (I Thessalonians 5:18)
 - b. We are to constantly rejoice, give thanks because our names are written in heaven: (Luke 10:20, Revelation 20:15)

Bible Study Summary:

The "If ONLY I HAD" game stops, when we realize that we have enough with Jesus as our Shepherd: (Philippians 1:21) Someone wrote:

Contentment is a sense of rest – peace - satisfaction that comes from being right with God and knowing that He is in control of all that happens to us. We must remember that we brought nothing into the world and we will take nothing out of it. Life is a pilgrimage from one moment of nakedness to another.

Contentment finds us when we finally realize exactly how little we need to possess in order to be satisfied: (I Timothy 6:8, Hebrews 13:5, Luke 12:15, I Timothy 6:10, Luke 10:20)

Contentment is not being complacent. While God will take care of us, we are to be diligent in being a good and faithful steward of all the things that God has entrusted to us: (Ecclesiastes 2:24)

**The Above lesson was written by Tommy Dowling
a Sunday School Teacher for over 40 years.**

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon, **“Even In This Dysfunctional World We Can Still Experience Contentment Every Day,”** right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, **“...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”**

Romans 10:13, **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”**

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: **“I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.”**

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, please let me know. Please send an e-mail to pastormiklas@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.