

The Evangel

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PLEASE PRAY!

These brothers and sisters would appreciate your prayers in the days ahead:

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THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT

Jeremiah Burroughs was a 17th century Puritan pastor in Rotterdam, Holland and, after 1641, in England. He is cited as “worthily reckoned as belonging to the front rank of English puritan preachers.” He was a pastor who sought to nurture “peace and contentment in the hearts of individual believers during what he describes as ‘sad and sinking times.’” Surely the times in which we live threaten our peace of mind, peace of heart, and peace of spirit.

Given the times in which we live, a fresh look at personal, Christian contentment seems gloriously worthwhile. In Burrough’s book, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, he defines contentment as “the inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to and taking pleasure in God’s disposal in every condition.” It is the personal realization of the apostle Paul’s incredible testimony, “I have learned in whatever state I find myself, to be content.” It is being so completely satisfied with the Father and the Son in the Spirit that even our worst moments become occasions for genuine praise.

Early in his book Burroughs tackles a real life issue with contentment. He asks the question, “How do we join together a reasonable, sensible discontent with our circumstances and a

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Constitution Committee Closing in on Final Draft

John Hay, Dave Avery, John Hill, Irene Laine, and Pastor Dale McIntire have worked prayerfully and diligently for well over a year to draft a revised constitution to present to the congregation at Cornerstone for discussion, revision, and, ultimately, approval. The first section, the Affirmation of Faith, has already been written and approved by congregational vote. The final sections should be ready soon.

A primary goal adopted early on by the committee has been to create a document that leads the congregation to the Scriptures for answers to questions rather than a document that replaces Scripture in our life together.

holy, satisfied contentment despite our circumstances?" How can we avoid a carnal attitude of angry resignation at our circumstances, as if God's will leaves us no option other than to give up and surrender? How can we be truly satisfied with God and with His will, when His will hurts?

Burroughs offers these incites into the mystery of Christian contentment:

1. *Recognize that one who gains true Christian contentment will be at the same time the most contented man in the world and the most unsatisfied man in the world.*

No matter how well he comes to know and trust God, he will always want to know and trust God more completely in every ensuing circumstance, and, since God can never be fully known by any but God, that man will always be unsatisfied and seek more no matter how content he is in what he knows.



“A little in the world will content a Christian for his passage, but all the world, and ten thousand times more, will not content a Christian for his portion.”

Jeremiah Burroughs, The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment

2. *Recognize that a Christian comes to contentment, not so much by way of addition, as by way of subtraction.* It is not so much that God adds more to our possessions, material or spiritual, that brings us contentment, but that He subtracts from us the desire for more things. He “brings our desires down to our possessions.”
3. *Recognize that a Christian comes to contentment, not so much by getting rid of the burden that is on him, as by adding another burden to himself.* God doesn't make life easier, instead, He causes us to realize just how awful is the load of sin we bear. “The heavier the burden of your sin is to your heart, the lighter will the burden of your affliction be to your heart . . . if you can get your heart to be more burdened with your sin, you will be less burdened with your afflictions.”
4. *Recognize that it is not so much the removing of the affliction that is upon us as the changing of the affliction* There is a power of grace to turn our affliction into good and thereby take away the sting and poison of it.

5. *Recognize that a Christian comes to contentment not by making up the wants of his circumstances, but by the performance of the work of his circumstances.* This simply means to examine your current circumstances to discern God's will for you in it, and then commit to His will, doing all that is in your power to do to exemplify His glory in your situation. If these circumstances come from God to work humility, then work at being humble before God. If they come to work patience, then work at being patient. Whatever work of God these circumstances reveal, give your strength to doing the work called forth by your circumstances.

6. *Recognize that a gracious heart is contented by the melting of his will and desires into God's will and desires; by this means he gets contentment.* Do you want something other or more than God's will for you this moment? If so, give this desire, this want, over to Christ; embrace God's will for

you as of utmost importance, as though it were the very air necessary for life, and in that surrender you will find real contentment.

7. *Recognize that the mystery of Christian contentment consists not in bringing anything from outside to make my condition more comfortable, but in purging out something that is within.* The president you wanted, the social agenda you desire, the promotion you crave, the riches you long for, none of these will truly satisfy, for what you need for contentment does not come from adding something from the outside into your life, rather it comes from purging from our hearts the lust that craves for things other than God!

True contentment in troubled times and troubling circumstances comes when our hearts find that Christ is enough for every need and more than adequate for every want.