

Pouring Concrete: Contentment

Heb 13⁵ *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."* ⁶ So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

► We've been looking at the four topics of ch13 which are crucial to our _____ & _____.

Today we look at Contentment.

► Being content in the Bible means being at _____ with what God has given you. It's the opposite of *covetous*, which comes from believing your _____ depends on obtaining something others have, but you lack. Coveting is your desire for the thing. _____ is your attitude toward the person who has it.

Exo 20¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Prov 24¹ Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them

Gen 26¹⁴ [Isaac] had ... flocks and ... herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him ¹⁵ ... [and] stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug

Acts 7⁹ "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt." (cf. Gn 37.11)

Mk 15¹⁰ [Pilate] knew that the chief priests had handed [Jesus] over because of envy. (cf. Mt 27.18)

► Billionaire investor Charlie Munger observed, "The world is not driven by _____, it's driven by _____."

(Youtube video at 8:42–10:58, <https://youtu.be/iH2ddOyw8KU>)

► What is the effect of envy and self-seeking in the church?

Jm 3¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. (cf. Jm 4.1-4)

Jm 4¹ What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. [NASB]

► There is zero correlation between happiness and all the things we _____, and between happiness and all the people we _____ because we think they have "it." On the other hand, there is an extremely high correlation between happiness and _____.

► How do we pursue contentment while purging coveting and envy from our hearts?

► 1) We have to understand that contentment is not an end in itself, rather it is a _____ of actively pursuing God and his kingdom in good times and bad, while resting in Him for the results.

► 2) What we have to guard against most in good times is _____ that every good thing we can come by in this life is the gift of God, for which we should ever thank Him.

James 1¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights

1Cor 4⁷ Who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Deut 8² [R]emember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness ... ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna ..., that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but ... by

every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD ... ⁵You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you ... ⁷[T]he LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, ... ⁹... in which you will eat bread without scarcity ... [and] lack nothing ... ¹⁰When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. ¹¹Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God ... ¹²lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses ... ¹³and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied ... ¹⁷then you say in your heart, “My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.” ¹⁸And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant ... ¹⁹[I]f you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

► 3) One of best ways God has given us to remember that every good thing is the gift of God, is the _____.
It means “tenth part.” It is God’s way for us to formally acknowledge Him as King and the Giver of every good thing. The tithe is connected to the *tribute offering*, commonly called the *grain offering*, but the Hebrew word means *tribute*. Think of the Magi and their tribute gifts to Jesus.

Lev 2 ¹When anyone offers a grain [lit., “tribute”] offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it.

► 4) In hard times, we must guard most against becoming _____ of the wicked. Look at Ps 37 & 73, both written in hard times:

– Ps 37: *Evildoers and workers of iniquity (1), who prosper in their way and bring wicked schemes to pass (7), who plot against the just (12), who draw the sword and bend the bow to slay the upright (14), and indeed sometimes they succeed, and the good man falls (24).*

– Ps 73: *The boastful and wicked prosper (3), they have no pangs in their death (4), they are not in trouble as other men (5), they are proud and violent (6), they are wealthy and have more than heart could wish (7), they plot and boast of how they will oppress (8), and set their mouth against the heavens (9).*

- What do David and Asaph say to do?
 - Guard your heart — watch out for becoming envious of the wicked.

Ps 37 ¹Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity ... ⁸Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm.

Ps 73 ²As for me, my feet had almost stumbled ... ³For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked ... ¹³Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain

- Actively pursue God and his kingdom, while resting in Him for the results.

Ps 37³Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. ⁴Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. ⁶He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. ⁷Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. ⁸Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm. ⁹For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. ¹⁰For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. ¹¹But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Ps 73 ¹⁷[When] I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. ¹⁸Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction ... ²²I was so foolish and ignorant ... ²³Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. ²⁴You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. ²⁵Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. ²⁶My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

- This is the same thing Hb13 is talking about in the two OT quotes it gives:
 - Vs 5 quotes Josh 1.5 “*I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.*”
 - Vs 6 quotes Ps 118.6 *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*

Both of these OT texts pertain to Kingdom conquest against overwhelming opposition.

► Coveting and envy are two of the most destructive forces in the world. They work harm both to the object and to the _____. The produce chaos and every evil thing in every context in which they appear. Our lives must be characterized by _____, and there must be no place for coveting and _____.