



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Lesson 27

Lesson Title: Thanksgiving...A Marvelous Memory

Take Home Point: Thanksgiving beats the lie of "gotta have it." In Jesus we have victory and thanksgiving.

Warm-Up:

By the early 1900s, steel magnate John Rockefeller was considered one of the wealthiest and most powerful businessmen in the world. During an interview he was asked, "You are rich beyond anyone's dreams. How much is enough?" Rockefeller replied, "Just a little bit more." In those five words he succinctly articulated the mindset of the discontented. Whatever he had was not enough. And with Rockefeller's focus on gaining what he didn't have, thanksgiving to the God who provided what he did have was forgotten. During his lifetime he considered Christians to be weak and Jesus to be a matter for others. He died a bitter hard-hearted man, still looking for an edge in money and power over anyone and everyone else.

Read: Philippians 4:11-13 and Psalm 136:3

Observation (What happened?):

What was Paul's secret for being content?

What did Paul say he could do in God's strength?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Do you think Paul depended on his feelings for his contentment? What did he depend on?

Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-27. Do you think Paul was tempted in these circumstances to be discontented?

Insight:

Paul talks about his contentment. Yet in 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 he says, *"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly."* Does this sound like someone contented? Actually, yes. There is an enormous difference between contentment and complacency. Paul was content with where the Lord put him and what he had, because he knew God was in control. But he was never complacent about the state of his life. He continually worked to be sensitive to God's leading, to be holy by seeking God's transformation of his life, and to be the witness to the world he was called to be. The danger for us is that the emotional sensations for contentment and complacency are very similar. We need to be vigilant against being spiritually lax while at the same time resting in the knowledge that God is still in control.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What are you doing to resist the temptation to be discontented in your current circumstances?

Take a few moments to thank God for the contentment he offers no matter what.

Lookin' for a Leader, Lesson 27