

# Not Wanting What You Have

By: Lenny Chapman

Most of us can look back at a time when we really desired to have a certain item. It may have been a stereo system, a big screen TV, a piece of furniture, or perhaps something for the yard. Once acquired, this item was certainly something to behold. Maybe you called some of your friends to tell them about it, and maybe, you even invited them over to see it! However, after a few months, this magnificent item that you had been so focused on became just another “thing.” The value of the “must have” item even in your own mind has now lessened, and you may even be on your way to the next cherished item you “must” have. This is how it goes for so many.

Why do we sometimes act like this? When this kind of behavior is seen in others it is not pleasant nor is it something we aspire to. How many times must people be told to be content with what they have? In the Bible the Hebrew writer sends a very clear message, ***“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”*** (Heb. 13:5). It appears from this verse that one of the determining factors in not being content with what we have, is that we are actually coveting what others have! The writer continues to say that the reason we should not be covetous of what others have, is because God is with us and showers us with blessings from above. If we take a moment to think on this, it is easy for us to see that there is nothing we can buy that will out do, outperform, or give us more comfort, than God himself!

The apostle Paul taught this very valuable lesson to the Christians in Philippi. One can look at Paul’s life and wonder what it was that he had to be thankful for. When we are first introduced to the young man Saul of Tarsus, we see that he was well educated and had studied under one of the most respected doctors of the law, (Acts 5:34; 22:3). A Pharisee, he went from a life of high-level friends, to a life of persecution from the very same people. Paul spoke of the many trials and tribulations he suffered as an apostle of the Lord in 2 Corinthians 11. This life would have many turn back to their old way of life, but not Paul. He went on to say that he had more joy in what he was now doing than ever before. He said that his new found happiness was because of the Lord himself.

Even though many think Paul could have had much negative to say about his new found life, Paul said he was content. Yes, he could also see all the things that others had, but that never changed his thoughts. ***“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.... For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account”*** (Phi. 4:10-17).

As Paul met with the younger preacher and co-laborer Timothy, Paul did his best to instill the most important life concepts to him. Contentment was one of those important life lessons. We can read in the first letter that Paul penned to Timothy, ***“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”*** (1Tim. 6:6-10).

There was a current pop song written and released back in 2002 that used the lyrics, "*not having what you want, not wanting what you got.*" This sums up the idea of not being content with what God has blessed us with. Let us not be ungrateful children to the Father in heaven. Let us do our best to see and enjoy our place in life, and the blessings we have, rather than caught up in Satan's lies, perceiving that the grass is always greener in someone else's yard!