



Practical Christian Living

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". Matthew 6:33
Course 4 Lesson 15

LEARNING TO BE *CONTENT*



KEY VERSE:

*"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19*

God wants us to learn how to face life with joy and confidence. To do this we must learn to be content in all the varying circumstances of life. In this lesson we are going to learn a great truth that can change our life.

What is this truth? It is this: **God and what God provides for me is all I need.**

GOD THE PROVIDER

The Bible teaches that the sovereign God of the universe loves us and has promised to provide all the things that we really need. He has not promised to give us all our "wants," but He has promised to meet our needs. The Apostle Paul said,

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

● God supplies our material needs.

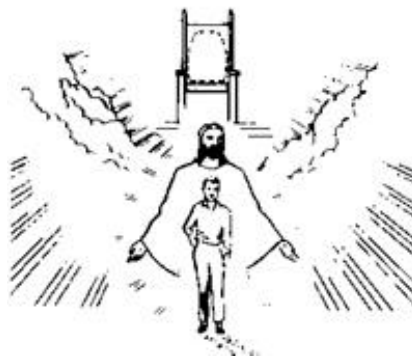
In Matthew, chapter five, the Lord Jesus tells us not to be anxious about our material needs, such as food, clothing, and other necessities of life. Jesus said,

*"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on ... for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
Matthew 6:25,32,33*

● God supplies our deepest inner needs.

In our last two lessons we have seen how God supplies our need for significance and security. He has made us members of Christ's body, and every member of the body of Christ is important. He has "accepted us in the Beloved." He loves us unconditionally. God says to us,

*"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love"
Jeremiah 31:3*



God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

● God supplies our spiritual needs.

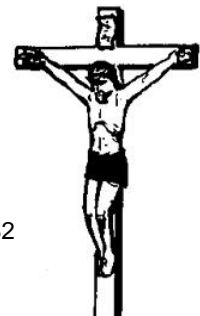
In Christ, God has given us everything we need for our spiritual life. The Bible says,

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS in heavenly places in Christ."
Ephesians 1:3*

● God freely gives us all things.

In giving us His Son, God has given us the greatest gift of all. Since He has given us the greatest gift, His Son, we can be sure that He will give us whatever else we may need. The Bible says,

*"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
Romans 8:32*



"He that spared not His own Son..."
Romans 8:32

It is wonderful to know that we have a heavenly Father who has taken upon Himself the responsibility of meeting all our needs. A. W. Tozer said,

"With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures."¹

SATAN THE TEMPTER

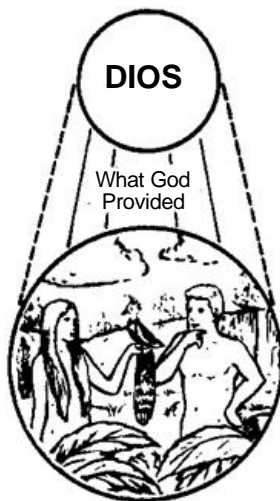
Although God has provided for all our needs, we must not forget that we have an enemy who hates us and wants to destroy us. The Bible says,

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8

We need to understand how Satan tempts us. Most, if not all, of Satan's temptations have to do with putting wrong thoughts into our mind. Satan puts thoughts like these into our mind: "God has not provided all you need. You need something other than God and what He has provided for you." This was exactly the way Satan tempted the first man and woman.

Adam and Eve were created by God and placed in a beautiful garden which God Himself had planted for them. In the Garden of Eden was every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. Adam and Eve had a work to do for God - they took care of the garden God had planted. They were loved and accepted by God. They had daily fellowship with Him. They had a perfect environment.

Picture a circle and let it represent the world God provided for Adam and Eve. In the world that was theirs. Adam and Eve had everything they needed. If they had needed anything else, God surely would have provided it. Adam and Eve could truly say, "God and what God has provided for us is all we need."



God and what God provided for Adam and Eve was all they needed.

We might wonder how Satan could tempt someone who was living in a perfect environment, but Satan's temptation to Eve was very simple. He suggested to Eve that she and her husband needed something other than what God had provided for them. Satan wanted Eve to think, "God is holding back from us something that is good."

Eve accepted Satan's lie. It became a belief in her mind and she acted on it. She ate the forbidden fruit. She gave some to her husband and he also ate it. Their disobedience brought sin and death into the world, along with all the sorrow, misery, and heart-ache that results from sin.

HOW SATAN TEMPTS US

Again, let each of us picture a circle and let it represent the circumstances that God has arranged for us. Inside the circle that is ours, God has provided all that we really need.

Things are not perfect in our little "circle," nor will they ever be in this life. We live in a world that is under the curse of sin. Therefore we will face many trials and troubles. God has not promised us an easy time in this life, nor has He promised to give us every-

thing we want. But He has promised to meet our needs and to be with us always. I can truly say, "God and what God provides for me is all I need."

Satan, our great enemy, will seek to deceive us as he deceived Adam and Eve. He will seek to put wrong thoughts into our minds. Satan will point to something outside of our "circle," and suggest to us, "You need this. In fact, you cannot be happy unless you have it."

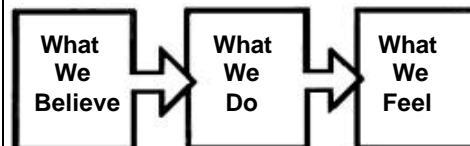
THE DANGER OF ACCEPTING WRONG THOUGHTS

We may not be able to keep Satan from suggesting a wrong thought to us, but we can refuse to accept.



Satan is the great deceiver.

To see the danger of accepting wrong thoughts, we need to be reminded of this truth: **We are controlled by the way we inwardly see and believe things to be. What we believe determines what we do and what we feel.**



"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

If we accept a wrong thought, it becomes a wrong belief, and wrong beliefs lead to wrong actions and wrong feelings. These wrong feelings usually lead to inner problems.

HANDLING OUR INNER PROBLEMS

Christians, as well as un-saved people, have inner problems such as resentment, fear, worry, guilt, and feelings of rejection. To overcome these problems, we must discover what causes them and how to deal with them.

At the root of most inner problems is the wrong belief that we need something other than God and what God has provided for us.

Let us consider some common problems and see the wrong thinking that is involved in each of them.

◆ Resentment

Resentment comes when we believe that what God has provided for us is not best. We may resent something about ourselves. We may resent our parents or some member of our family. We may resent our circumstances. We may even resent God.

The solution to this problem is believing that God and what He gives us is what we need. We may not understand our situation, but we must not be offended by what the Lord does or does not do. Jesus said,

*"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."
Matthew 11:6*

Wrong belief: God is not good to me because He has not given me that which is best.

Right belief: What God has given me is best for me even though I may not understand it.

◆ Fear

When I am fearful, it means that I am not trusting God to take

care of me. God knows our hearts and He knows the tendency we have toward fear. Hundreds of times in the Bible, He says to us, "Fear not." The reason we are not to fear is that God Himself is with us. God says,

*"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."
Isaiah 41:10*

Wrong belief: God is not able to take care of me.

Right belief: God is with me; therefore I do not need to be afraid

◆ Worry

We worry or become anxious because we do not believe that God will take care of us or meet our needs.

Worry has a destructive effect on us. It is also a sin against God. Worry is sinful because it doubts God's love, it doubts God's wisdom, and it doubts God's power. David learned the cure for worry. He said,

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1

Wrong belief: God is not able to meet my needs.

Right belief: God will meet my needs.

◆ Guilt

Guilt is that feeling of condemnation that we have when we think about our sins. Constantly remembering our sins can cause us great distress.

At the root of this problem is our failure to realize and count on

the fact that God has provided absolute forgiveness for us. He has provided a Savior - the perfect Savior, Jesus Christ. The Bible says,

"Be it known unto you ...that through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS...." Acts 13:38,39

God has told us that, in Christ, we are forgiven of every sin. When we continue to condemn ourselves for our sins, we are not believing God. The Bible says,

*"There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus...."
Romans 8:1*

Wrong belief: I must punish myself for my past sins.

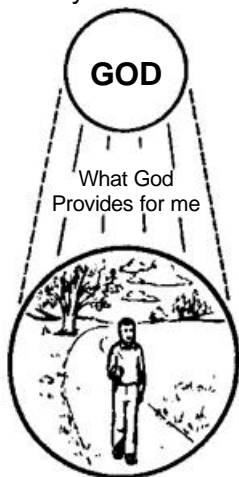
Right belief: God has forgiven me of every sin. There is no condemnation to them that are IN CHRIST.

◆ Feelings of rejection

Sometime our interest in a particular person grows until we feel that we must have that person's love in order to be happy. Yet the person does not seem to care for us. As a consequence, we feel rejected and hurt, and maybe even angry.

At the root of the problem is the belief that I must have that particular person's love to meet my need. This is a wrong belief. God has promised to meet all my needs. The fact that He has not provided me with that person's love means that I do not really need it. I may feel that I need that person's love, and I may be grieved and hurt because I do not have it. But I must come back to this great truth: **God and what God provides for me is all I need.**

It is not wrong to love someone and to be grieved when that person does not respond to your love. But you must never assume that you must have that person's love to meet your need.



God and what God provides for me is all I need.

Actually, Christ, and only Christ, can fully satisfy our heart. No human being can do this. If we seek from people what can be found only in Christ, we will be disappointed. The love of Christ alone can fully satisfy our heart.

Wrong belief: I must have this person's love to meet my needs.

Right belief: God and what God chooses to give me is all I need.

While each of these inner problems is different, all have the same root. The root cause in each case is the wrong belief that we need something other than God and what God has provided for us. In each case, the remedy is to come back to this great truth:

God and what God provides for me is all I need.

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

The Apostle Paul did not have an easy life. He suffered much persecution. He was poor and often in distress. He had physical problems from which he got not relief. He was in prison much of the time. Yet with all of this, Paul was a contented Christian. Paul said,

*"... I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
Philippians 4:11*

Whether he had much or little, whether he was out of prison or in prison, whether he was abounding or in distress, Paul had learned to be content. He had learned that God and what God provided for him was all he needed. Paul said,

*"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."
Philippians 4:12*

What is the secret of contentment? **The secret of contentment is believing that God and what God has provided for me is all I need.** It is learning to be content in whatever "circle" God has provided for me.

God says that we are to live without covetousness. To "covet" means to strongly desire some-

thing that belongs to someone else. We are commanded not to be content with the things we have. The Bible says,

*"Let your conversation (your manner of living) be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."
Hebrews 13:5*

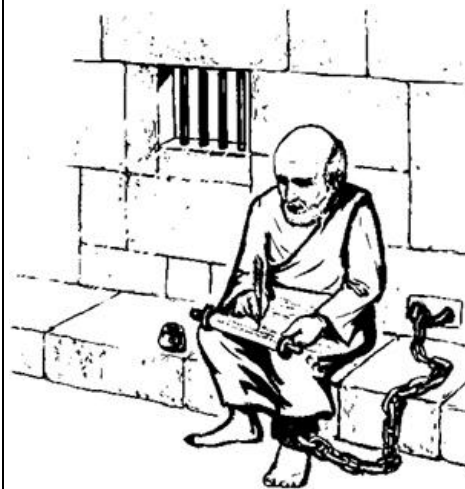
In this verse, God tells us why we are to be content. We are to be content because (1) we have the Lord Himself living in us, and (2) we have the things that He has provided for us. This is all we need.



Discovered Gem

God and what God provides for me is all I need.

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Paul wrote, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Philippians 4:11)

MEDITATION GUIDE

(TO STUDY AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEXT LESSON)

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages there is a Meditation Guide for each of the three lessons in this booklet. Each Guide has a key verse, comments, and questions that will help you to see from the Bible the main message of the lesson.

AFTER YOU FINISH the Question Pages, and have sent them in, we suggest that you work on the meditations. Do NOT send

in your meditations. They are for you to personally use and keep.

THE PURPOSE of the Meditation Guide is to help you learn how to study the Bible on your own. It will help you to think (meditate) about a portion of Scripture in order to understand it. It will help you learn how to get in touch with God through His Word and through prayer.

MEDITATION. What does "meditation" mean? It does not mean to let your mind go blank. Quite the contrary, meditation means that you get hold of your thoughts and bring them all together to concentrate on a portion of God's Word. As you do this, it gives the Lord an opportunity to make Himself known to you.

PAUSE TO PRAY. Before beginning each meditation, pause to pray, quieting your heart before the Lord so that you will be ready to hear what He has to say to you from the Bible.

If there are any words you do not understand, be sure to look them up in a dictionary.

MEMORY VERSE. You may wish to memorize the Key Verses, or other verses found in these Meditation Guides. Memorizing Scripture is one of the best means to meditate on God's Word. It would also be very helpful in keeping before you the main truth of each lesson.

NOTE: The King James Bible was used in preparing these Meditation Guides.

KEEP THIS GUIDE - DO NOT SEND IT IN

Lesson 15: LEARNING TO BE CONTENT

Key Verse:

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

Find the key verse in your Bible and underline it. This is a good verse to memorize.

In this meditation let us look at some situations that cause us to be discontent, and then discover the solution from the Bible.

1. "I'm afraid." Turn to Isaiah 41:10 ("Be not dismayed" means "do not lose courage"). Underline this verse. After reading the verse carefully several times, list the two things that we are not to do.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____

God gives us five reasons why we need not do them. List them.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____

2. "I worry that I will not have what I need." Read Matthew 6:31,33. We are not to worry about _____
Why? _____

3. "I feel guilty and unforgiven." Read 1 John 1:7,9.

What takes away sin? (verse 7) _____ What do I do to have my sins forgiven?
(verse 9) _____

What does God do? (verse 9) _____

Go back over what you have just written. What do you discover about God and what He does? _____

We can be content in any situation if our attention is focused on God.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Turn to the Question Page as you finish each lesson. Fill in the answers for that lesson before going on to the next lesson.
- 2. When you have studied all the lessons and have completed the Question Pages, prepare for mailing. Don't forget to write in your name and return address. Send in your ANSWER SHEET ONLY!

EXAM

Lesson 15

1. The truth that can change my life is this: _____
 _____ In Philippians 4:19, God has promised to meet all our _____
 Has He promised to meet all our "wants"? _____

2. Most, if not all, of Satan's temptations have to do with _____
 _____. To see the danger of wrong thoughts, we need to remind ourselves
 of this truth: We are controlled by _____

Fill in:



3. At the root of most emotional problems is the wrong belief _____

4. The secret of contentment is _____

5. In Hebrews 13:5, God tells us why we are to be content. We are to be content because

- (1) we have _____ and
 - (2) we have _____.
- That is all we _____.

Send your exam to the following address:
Latin Evangelical Outreach
 P.O. Box 549
 Irvington, New Jersey 07111-0549

Your Name and Address.....Please Print

Complete Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

ZIP Code _____

Do you have friends who would like to receive these lessons?

Please send us their address:

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