

NBC Devotional
November 11, 2020
“Contentment”

Philippians 4:11-13

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.
12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. [1]

2 Corinthians 9:8

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.[2]

It was my sixth birthday; I felt so special. We had a party with hats, pretty plates, special punch and a great big birthday cake. All my friends came, that was good. All my friends came with presents, that was better. I made my wish, blew out the candles and smiled. I felt invincible on August 27, 1965, like everything would always go my way.

I was not quite thirteen. We lived on the plains of West Texas, where the wind howled, rattlesnakes slithered, and everyone worked hard. One afternoon, I was helping a farmer move his equipment from one section of land to another. He drove the tractor, I drove his bright red, new Chevrolet pickup.

I put my foot on the accelerator trying to catch up to him, the wheels turned sharply when the front end hit a sandbar in the middle of the dirt road, the pickup went from one side of the road to the other until, finally, I lost control. It crashed into the bar ditch through a barb wired fence onto a nearby field. The impact thrust me through the windshield leaving me bleeding, dirty and disoriented. I didn't feel invincible.

Most days, I'm not the birthday boy. People don't bring presents and there are no candles to blow out. Neither do I go crashing through the windshield of the boss' pickup.

Today is somewhere between those experiences. Not everything will go right, but neither will everything go wrong.

We are not better because of the sum of our good experiences, nor are we worse because of our negative ones. Life is full of both. How we handle prosperity and adversity shows everyone who we really are. Our attitude determines our happiness.[3]

There is a lot of speculation about the direction of the United States due to the contested election we just participated in. How does this atmosphere affect your daily outlook?

In the midst of controversy, whether on the national level, the local level, or even at your personal daily level, do you feel the same as Paul?

What, if any, changes will you make so that you can “be content whatever the circumstances”?

Reading from Every Moment Holy (McKelvey, Douglas (2017) Nashville, TN: Rabbit Room Press):

“A Liturgy for Those Flooded by Too Much Information”

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