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Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. Philippians 4:11. NLT.Pastor Josh Hubbard preached from this verse this past Sunday and it stirred my heart. To me it is one of those "re-setting" verses in the Bible that remind me of not only whose I am, but also life's processes. Paul makes it clear that contentment is a learned attribute and is attainable. Most definitions of biblical contentment include the state of being satisfied, at peace, and emotionally fulfilled with what one has or the circumstance one finds themselves in.. I don't know about you, but I definitely move in and out of the state of contentment. Tuesday, we celebrated Eva Bunica's 83 birthday. She is my daughter in law's aunt, and I have known her for fourteen years. She has had many struggles in her life. She grew up in Romania under Communist rule. It was very difficult to be a believer during that era. But it was the religious persecution that God used to bring her and ultimately her brother's family to the United States. Over the years, as we have talked, it was clear that it took the Holy Spirit time to heal and restore her from fear and anxiety they lived under. Their bodies were free, but their souls needed His restoration. I think it would be right to say, it took awhile for them to be content in a new country as well.This has not been an easy year for her. Many health issues and a surprise needed pacemaker are only a part of her challenges. But there is a new peace and I would have to add contentment to her. We spent some time quietly talking, and she actually quoted this verse. She said, "I've learned to be content" about everything in my life. He is with me, so why not? As we talked she shared how she spent time with the Lord and during that time, her attitude was changed. Her outward situation didn't. But she did. I think that is what Paul was trying to convey with Philippians 4: 12-13. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Contentment has to do with our perspective and attitude, not our circumstances. It involves capturing those thoughts that would run to fear, anxiety, doubt or unbelief. It is choosing faith over those things, with knowing God is in charge, not you. So no matter what you face, He is there with His purpose and plan. I Timothy 6:6 For godliness with contentment is great gain (or wealth). Hebrews 13:5 Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you. So we can say with confidence. The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me.Learning to be content is something our teacher, the Holy Spirit longs to teach each of us. Young moms struggling with toddler tantrums and nap refusals may find it difficult to feel contentment. I remember those days, but I found contentment in knowing that I was in my calling. It was my assignment to help those little humans to learn about life. My contentment was in His purpose. I also regularly cried out for His wisdom on how to do it!Abiding in Christ's contentment does not mean we can not or should not have an ambition for change. Seeking Him for His changes often comes from a place of peace where we can hear His voice. It is harder to find His leadings when we are in the midst of chaos and turmoil in our own souls. When we are contented we stop complaining and start to enjoy our life, even while believing for that promotion or relationship to show up! Take time to reflect on your current circumstance. Are you content? Or are you striving? Are you looking for something to change so you can "be happy"? You haven't arrived at the state of contentment yet. It is amazing how our faith is tied in with contentment. When we are "content" faith is much more easily released than when we are discontent. Grumbling, complaining and irritation block joy and faith. Gratitude, thankfulness and peace flow from a contented person. So what is your contentment level? My friends, do not be afraid to check it. If you realize you need to grow in this area, simply ask Him. Sitting in His Presence worshipping is a great way to start. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Hebrews 12:1-3. NLT It comes down again, to keeping our focus on Him, not ourselves or our circumstances. Discontentment comes from giving in to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh or the pride of life. Listening to lies about how we aren't good enough, or why do they have this or that does not lead to contentment. It takes practice to keep our eyes focused on Him. If they drift away, repent and start again. It gets easier and easier with practice. We do not have to live lives with nagging thoughts plaguing us. That never was His plan. Father, I ask you to teach us how to live in the state of contentment. Reveal areas of our soul where we struggle to find peace in Your will and Your way. Help us to trust Your plan in every area of our lives, In Jesus' Name, amen.. |