

# X'ENT NEWS

PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP  
THROUGH QUALITY CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Volume 15 Issue 1

April 2007

## Being Content in All Things

In Jeremiah Burroughs' book, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (Banner of Truth Trust; Carlisle, Pennsylvania 1998 reprint), he offers this definition of contentment (p. 19):

*Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.*

By God's providence and gracious hand, after eight years in full-time youth ministry, we find ourselves back in Texas. I am, once again, teaching high school math in the public schools. Although my family and I are still actively involved in the local church, ministry has, for us, taken on a different flavor. Our circumstances are not what we thought they would be, yet by God's sovereign grace, we are learning to be content.

Contentment in life, in ministry, in everything is a gift from God and only comes when one fully understands and fulfills his purpose in life. What is the purpose of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever! How do I know that I am glorifying God? I think John Piper answered it best when he said, "God is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him." (*Desiring God*, Multnomah Books; Sisters, Oregon 1996, p. 9)

The Apostle Paul demonstrated what it meant to be content. He was most content because he was most satisfied in God. Even while in

prison he was most satisfied in God and therefore content with his circumstances. The apostle knew how...*to be content in whatever circumstances*...he found himself (Philippians 4:11). His contentment was independent from his circumstances because his satisfaction was in God.

Let's face it; Paul's life was not a testimonial for the health and wealth gospel that is so prevalent in our culture. Just a brief study of 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 shows that Paul did not live comfortably according to human standards. Yet he was content. Paul did not focus on the things he experienced; his attention was in being satisfied in God. Paul possessed that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit which allowed him to delight in God's sovereign providence. Paul's delight and satisfaction in God was so extreme that he was able to view all he went through as "momentary, light affliction" (2 Corinthians 4:17). The great Westminster Chapel preacher, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, said this of the Apostle Paul (*The Life of Joy and Peace*; Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, Michigan 1990, p.445) . . .

*He had a love for the Lord that rendered him independent of all that was happening, or that might happen – in everything, in all things, wherever he might be, whatever was happening, he was content. Abased or abounding, in need or plenty, it did not matter; he had this life, this hidden life with Christ.*

Christ is our ultimate example of contentment. We read in Hebrews 12:2 that, "*for the joy set before Him endured the cross...*" Christ's

2 Timothy 2:2  
*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

joy was to glorify God in all things. This was accomplished when He fulfilled the Father's will. The cross was the Father's will and it was Christ's joy to fulfill it. Jesus glorified His Father while on earth by totally exhibiting the Father's attributes and by fully doing the Father's will.

As Christians, those who belong to God by faith in Jesus Christ, we do not run for the prize of heaven. Heaven is already ours. We run for the prize for which Jesus ran and we achieve it the same way He did. We run for the exaltation of God by allowing His attributes to shine through us and by obeying His will in every circumstance. When this is accomplished in our lives, we are content in all things.

For God to be most glorified in me, I must be most satisfied in Him. In other words, I must possess this hidden life with Christ that enables me to see only Christ and His glory in all circumstances. When this is accomplished, then I am content. Jeremiah Burroughs said it this way (pp.89-90) . . .

*No-one ever denied Himself as much as Jesus Christ did: He gave his cheeks to the smiters, He opened not His mouth, He was as a lamb when He was led to the slaughter; He made no noise in the street. He denied Himself above all, and was willing to empty Himself, and so He was the most contented that ever any was in the world; and the nearer we come to learning to deny ourselves as Christ did, the more contented shall we be...*

♦ Bryan Ryan

*Ministry Bummer*



*Just a Quick Visit*

One of my greatest joys is to visit the hospital after a new baby has been born to a member of the congregation. I get the privilege of holding the new little one and rejoicing with the family at God's gracious gift. There is however, only one small catch to experiencing this joy – one has to actually make it to the hospital at the right time and be able to get to the room where the baby has been born. While for most pastors this simple task is accomplished with ease and skill, for others there are hidden barriers and difficulties – I am one such other.

Several months ago I was informed that one of our expectant mothers would be going into the hospital early on a Monday morning. They are a new family so I was anxious to be there to show support and encouragement – unfortunately a little too anxious. Without much thought, I grabbed one of the church elders (an older, godly man, with much experience in visiting hospitals) and headed up to the hospital for a visit. After driving nearly 35 minutes we arrived at what must be the most convoluted hospital on the planet (I realize that “convoluted hospital” may be a redundancy). We walked in the main doors and asked how to get to the maternity ward. The two attendants looked at each other condescendingly (as if to say, “they

aren't from around here are they”) and told us that we would have to go outside the building and walk around on the street because trying to get through the hospital would be too difficult to explain. After braving the “Knoxville 500”, we managed to make it to the maternity unit where the “information” attendant, who was having an in-depth conversation on the phone, looked up the name, barked out a number, then waved impatiently towards a little white phone – all this without slowing a syllable in her conversation. I called the room and the husband answered, but instead of a cheery hello, I got a long silence (not a good sign in visitation work). I asked if everything was alright and he responded that his wife's water had just broken and it “was not a good time for her to be seen.” We beat a hasty retreat. On the 35 minute drive home, my gracious elder friend quietly remarked about how easy it is to get a hold of hospitals ahead of time in this day of cell phones.

Never one to be daunted, however, I embarked back to the hospital the next morning (after having received word that a little baby girl had been born to the happy couple). I bypassed the two condescending information attendants and made it safely to the maternity ward. This time, no one was manning the “information” booth and I had to ring a little bell several times to alert the “attendant” (same one and still taking on the phone as if she had never gone home) to my existence. Again she barked the number and waved toward the phone and this time I was cheerily invited up to see the new baby – then the trouble began. I unwittingly entered the elevator, as I have done hundreds of times before, waited for the doors to close, punched the proper floor number, and then looked up to watch the little number above the door light

up (this is the prescribed elevator ritual, no matter what country you are in). However, nothing happened. Thinking I might not have pressed the number hard enough, I did it again, this time with authority. Despite my show of strength, there was no response. Somewhat confused, I quickly glanced around the elevator (as though someone would be watching me) and punched the button one more time...nada. Now I began to get a little worried. Had the elevator malfunctioned... was I trapped inside? Rather stupidly, I continued to push the “three” button until a little sign beneath a silver punch pad caught my eye. The sign informed me that I had to punch in a special code in order for the elevator to access the maternity ward. At a loss as to how to exit the elevator, my brain finally registered the fact that the “door open” button was the most likely means of obtaining my freedom. Thankfully this button did work and I stepped into the hall, again glancing around to see if perhaps someone had noticed my idiocy. The attendant, of course, was nowhere to be seen and so my pride was intact for the moment.

Again to the little white phone. The new mom told me the code they had given her the day before and I bounded onto the elevator and punched in the number...the little floor light did not so much as flicker. I sheepishly crept off the elevator and was sure that someone, somewhere was rolling on the floor in laughter. Sigh, back to the white phone. The mom assured me that the nurse would be in soon to give out the new code. Wanting to make the most of my time, I decided to quickly stop by the gift shop (which was rumored to be close by) to purchase a gift (which I had forgotten to bring). This time the “attendant” could not be located and

*(Bummer continued on page 3)*



# Book Nook

## Let The Nations Be Glad by John Piper

**L**et the Nations Be Glad by John Piper (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, Michigan 2003) is a book about missions. Specifically, it is book about the supremacy of God in missions. He is the One who is exalted through the missionary endeavor. God Himself is the goal, the power, and the motivation for missions. This book seeks to prevent Christians from thinking that missions are insignificant, or that missions are a man-centered endeavor. To the contrary, missions are a crucial part of God's eternal plan to glorify Himself through joyful worshippers.

John Piper's famous line, "God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him," plays a crucial role in this book. The *delight* of God's people ("let the Nations be glad!") in God's glory is the very thing that God desires. That is what makes missions essential. Missions are about people being used by God

to call others to worship Him through joy in Christ the Savior.

In the first section of the book, Piper proves that God is supreme in missions by examining the purpose, the power, and the price of missions. The purpose of missions is the worship of God, the power of missions is prayer to God, and the price of missions is sacrifice for God. God is the beginning and end of missions, being the author of them and the goal of them.

In the second section of the book, Piper proves that God is supreme through examining two major issues in missions. The first issue is the necessity of Christ for salvation. God is supreme in missions, because Christ is supreme. The second issue is the desire of God to see men and women from every people group turn to Him. God's supremacy is seen in the diversity of the children He is calling from every "tribe and tongue and people and nation."

This book serves two major purposes. The first purpose is to show Christians that God is at the very center of missions. Though people are the target of missions work, God's glory is the ultimate goal of it. The second purpose is to show Christians the importance of making God the center of our missionary endeavors. It is not

enough to recognize that God is the focus of missions. Christians must make it their ambition to see God exalted through missions.

There are two things that a person should know before reading this book. First, this book is more general than specific. It is not a biography or a collection of missionary stories, but a treatise on the Bible's teaching about missions. It takes a look at the big picture of missions and brings out the key components.

Secondly, this book is more theoretical than practical. This book will not necessarily give a person direction for his involvement in missions or answer specific questions he has about it. It should, however, give the Christian a framework for thinking about missions and reasons for believing in the importance of them.

I highly recommend this book, whether you are young or old, pastor or layperson, or pursuing a lifetime of missions or not. This book gives a theology for missions that all Christians must understand. It tells us why, according to the Bible, we should care about missions. If you only read one book on missions, *Let the Nations Be Glad* is an excellent choice.

♦ Peter Scarborough

(Bummer continued from page 2)

a nurse wandering by was kind enough to show me the little pamphlet on the wall that contained fifteen lines of directions to get me to the gift shop. After getting lost only three times, and almost being inadvertently operated on, I arrived at the gift shop...only to find it closed. The last line of the instructions said, "to return to the maternity ward, follow the directions in reverse (really, that's what it said). I attempted this and finally stumbled



back into the maternity ward, nearly a beaten man. I picked up the white phone for the final time and was pleased to receive the new code. I entered the vital number, and have never been so happy in all my life to see the number three light up. All went well until it was time to leave. I located the elevator I had

ridden up in (no easy task) and stepped on. Just as the doors closed I noticed that the code was necessary to go back to the lobby . . .and my mind went blank. With a sigh of resignation, I opened the doors, stepped out, and asked the attendant if I could have the code. I returned to the elevator and as the doors shut for the final time, I was sure I heard the sounds of hysterical laughter.

♦ Chris Riser

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*"And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*  
-Matthew 22:37-40

# *The* **GREATEST COMMANDMENTS**

**Mark your calendars on October 3rd — 7th!**

**Please go to the XL Ministries website ([www.xlministries.org](http://www.xlministries.org)) or contact XL Ministries at (817) 490-0915 for additional information.**

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