

# The Power of Contentment

## Philippians 4

In the last book of the Bible, we find that Jesus went on a journey visiting seven churches on that particular Sunday, recorded in chapters 2-3. Jesus went to church, reminding us He comes to watch us as we gather today.

When Jesus chose to use the number seven (always used in the Bible for completion, or a complete set of something) He was demonstrating to us what He saw in all churches at that time, in every place, and also I believe, what Christ's church would be characterized by throughout all the ages.

### The Day Jesus Came to Church

The final church in the list is Laodicea in Revelation 3. As we turn to Christ's letter to that final church we see not only what Jesus saw at that geographic place and in the people there, but also what He said the final era of His church, at the end of the age, would look like. We each are living in what I earnestly believe is the final or Laodicean age of Christ's church described in Revelation 3:14-22.

As we listen to His letter, we should hear what most of the church in America looks like to God, and what many of us here today may actually look like as Jesus walks around here today, unseen by us, but seeing us clearly. Please listen, and as I read these words, instead of following along, you may want to look around and see Christ walking up and down these aisles saying these very words to each of us!

*Revelation 3:14-22 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"*

Did you know that as we sit here today, and go through life each day, that Jesus is watching us?

## Jesus is Watching Us

Jesus is watching us, and warning that choices we make can blind us to spiritual realities around us. In this final church, Jesus warned them that their longing for riches caused them to be blinded to their real spiritual condition and needs.

Riches piled up often reflect discontent; and a lack of contentment always has dangerous effects upon our spiritual life. Jesus says we need to ask Him to help us see what love of money can do to us. One area of blindness that discontentment with wealth can produce is an insensitivity to the needs of the less fortunate around us. We often need to check how we are doing in having Christlike compassion for the poor.

To help us all wake up to the needs of the world, and to stir up Christlike compassion, join me in a look at the world as God sees it. One of the great tools to check our heart for those who are in great need is to pause and reflect on the World Population Clock<sup>1</sup>.

It is a very moving sight to watch each second as the numbers changed. The math of this US Census Bureau site is simple:

The number goes up by 4.3 births and down by 1.8 deaths for a net gain of 2.5 new immortal souls on Earth—**each second!**

The United Nations estimates that we have about 6.945 billion souls alive at this moment. Of course, only our True and Living God knows exactly how many there really are, as well as the number of hairs on each of their heads!

But to get a bit of perspective as we sit here alive and relatively safe in Michigan, here in the struggling but prosperous American heartland—we need to reflect on the people who share life with us here on Earth.

According to the International Programs Center, U.S. Bureau of the Census, the total population of the World, displayed on Thursday 9/24/09 at 11:41:59 AM EST is **6,945,634,492.**

That number is just about 100 million more living souls from last year this on this date! And for all of us alive in Michigan, despite our current economic woes, we are better off financially, economically, and comfortably than the vast majority of all the others alive today. Which is just another way of saying:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html> ; 9/24/09; plus materials from 021117AM GDGW-36  
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# How Rich We Are

For a moment, imagine with me that the whole world was represented in just this auditorium. That means, if we were to reduce that unimaginable number of our global population, which is just 6 months shy of 7 billion people (a 7 with nine zeros after it). So if we made all 7 billion souls distilled down to a representative group of people sitting in chairs, here is how it would look today.

Our world shrunk down to a community of 100 persons we would have a town which all of us would live in the balcony:

- 1/7<sup>th</sup> or about 15% **of us** live high on a hill called the developed world – that would be the balcony;
- 6/7<sup>th</sup>s or about 85% **of them** live on the rocky bottomland called the rest of the world.

Those of us in the balcony are the world's richest. We have houses, which provide us with an average of more than 2 rooms per person; while those in the rest of the world have housing that averages 5+ people per room.

The people in the rest of the world outside the 1 billion in the developed nations (code for wealthy countries) live on much less than we do.

One Billion people, or 1/7<sup>th</sup> are in complete poverty existing on less than US \$1 per day.

Three Billion people are a lot better off, than the first billion, they live on about US \$2 each day.

For the masses of humans who live down in the economic lowlands (which is most of the world), 3/4<sup>th</sup>s of these poor people will not ever live to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

| Wealth | GDP              | Population | Pop totals    | Region                             |
|--------|------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 26%    | \$ 15.6 Trillion | 5%         | 307,553,450   | USA                                |
| 23%    | \$ 13.6 Trillion | 7%         | 492,000,000   | Europe                             |
| 12%    | \$ 7.5 Trillion  | 3%         | 221,000,000   | SE Asia (Jap, Taiwan, Korea, Aust) |
| 39%    | \$ 23.4 Trillion | 85%        | 5,890,000,000 | Rest of World                      |

## The Rich and The Not Rich

We, the fortunate 15 on the hill hold over 60% of the wealth of the whole town, which means that us fortunate 15 people who live up in our "balcony" of wealth own over half of all the homes in town and each of us have an average of two rooms per person in our homes.

- We also own 85 percent of all the automobiles,
- We own about 80 percent of all the TV sets,
- We own almost 80 percent of all the telephones,
- And we make an average income of over \$ 35,000 per person per year.

The not-so-fortunate 85 people on the bottom, in the less developed world (when the super-rich who have business dealings with the developed nations are factored out of their region) have learned to survive on 1/50<sup>th</sup> of our incomes, or roughly \$700 per person per year.

But even the poor are more poor and less poor, and the vast majority of the poor of this world live on less than \$300 per year, living with 5 other people in their room, all of whom will never live to see 50 candles on their birthday cake (if they had ever seen a birthday cake)!

How do we the fortunate group of hill-dwellers use our incredible wealth? Well, as a group we spend less than one half of 1% of our income to aid the lower land. In the United States, for example, of every \$1 we earned (averages of 2008<sup>2</sup>):

|     |                                                                                                  |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 27% | is spent on our homes                                                                            |
| 25% | is spent on taxes and fees                                                                       |
| 14% | we spend on transportation                                                                       |
| 11% | goes for food                                                                                    |
| 9%  | miscellaneous                                                                                    |
| 4%  | is for health care                                                                               |
| 4%  | is spent on recreation and amusement                                                             |
| 3%  | buys clothes                                                                                     |
| 2%  | is given for religious and charitable uses (and only a small part of that goes outside the U.S). |

Veteran Missionary to India and noted author Dr. Paul Brandt once asked, "I wonder how the villagers on the crowded plain (a third of whose people are suffering from malnutrition) feel about us folks up there on the hill?"<sup>3</sup> This takes us right back to Christ's words to His church and brings up:

## The Question of Compassion

What was Christ's most frequent emotion? Compassion<sup>4</sup>, right? He was moved with compassion. When we aren't there is usually one cause, we are rich and increased with goods, feeling we need nothing, and are not sacrificing for others.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mymoneyblog.com/images/0908/moneygo900.jpg> If all of the USA was averaged we would be a household of: 2.5 people, with 1.9 cars, with 1.3 earners, making an annual income of \$63,000, with 67% of us owning a house, and we would have an average age of being 48.8 years old.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 61-62.

<sup>4</sup> Eleven times noted in the Gospels by Matthew 9.36; 14.14; 15.32; 18.27; 18.33; 20.34; and Mark 1.41; 5.19; 6.34; 8.2; (9.22); and Luke 7.13; (10.33; 15.20).

Now turn back to the almost last book of God's Word I John, as we listen to Christ's words from the Bible in I John 3.10-18

In this the **children of God and the children of the devil are manifest:** Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that **we should love one another**, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, **because we love the brethren**. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 **But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?** 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Jesus wants us to view money as a tool to use for Him, not as a commodity to endlessly stack up for ourselves and our own pleasures. So, contentment is a key tool to stimulate us to:

## **Learn How to Lay Hold Upon Eternal Life**

Turn with me to Matthew 4, and listen as Jesus reminds us is the real reason we live each day.

Jesus talks to us about temporal Life, which is everyday life. Life that has aches and pains, deadlines and pressures, hopes and fears, ups and downs. It is life getting up, going to school or work, and waiting for special things like dinners, dates, vacations, and events. It is a life that is framed by our body, our car, our job and our world we have experienced. In other words it is **LIFE**, as we all know it.

Now, when we were saved, and the Lord regenerated us by the new birth, we were born a second time. Our first birth put us in the Temporal Life; our second birth puts us in the Eternal Life. Both run parallel for 30, 40, 50, 60 or even 80 plus years. In fact most of us barely experience the Eternal part of Life. We know it is there, we hope in it for the future but we don't exactly know what to do with Eternal Life today as we are so completely overwhelmed by our Temporal or physical world.

Jesus warns us that when we lack contentment we **begin to live for the temporal** and the earthly; and then materialism gets us in its grip. Jesus in the Gospels explains signs of a life dominated by the temporal. He spends many hours pointing out the symptoms. Follow along at the back of the crowd and hear what He so often says:

- Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall **not live by bread alone**, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"
- Matthew 6:19-28 "Do not **lay up for yourselves treasures** on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 **but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25 "Therefore I say to you, **do not worry about your life**, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;
- Luke 12:13-21 Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" ' 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "**So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**"

## **Living for Eternity**

Contentment frees us to stop wanting more and to learn how to be rich in eternal terms instead of mere physical terms.

Contentment frees us to invests in Heaven instead of laying up our treasures on earth.

Contentment helps us see that our life span and our resources were all given us by Another who owns us and wants a return on His investment.

The power of contentment comes as we surrender all we have and are to Jesus.

Hymn # 366 "I Surrender All"

# How to Pray for those We Love

1. **Living like Christ's Child** – means to pray for REALITY IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE: is seeing them genuinely saved, loving God's Word, living in victory, thinking of heaven, finding sin repulsive, staying tender toward God.
2. **Looking Christ like** – means to pray for INTEGRITY IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE: is seeing them maintaining a clear conscience, learning to stand alone, seeking to stay pure, cultivating a servant's heart, never becoming bitter in trials.
3. **Loving One Another** -- means to pray for STABILITY IN THEIR RELATIONAL LIFE: which is seeing them cultivating a love for their brothers and sisters, learning to trust God with hard situations and not to rebel, each loving the way God made them as men and women, waiting to meet God's chosen life partner for them.
4. **Laying Hold on Eternal Life** – means to pray for VITALITY IN THEIR ETERNAL LIFE.

## Spiritual Reality

We must pray in complete agreement, for them to cultivate **reality in their spiritual life:**

1. Seeing them ***genuinely saved***. Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, *in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*
  - 1 Timothy 2:4 who ***wants all men to be saved*** and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (NIV)
  - 2 Timothy 3:15
2. Seeing them ***loving God's Word***. Job 23:12 I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary *food*.
  - Psalm 119:97, 165
  - Jeremiah 15:16 Your ***words were found, and I ate them***, And Your word was to me the ***joy and rejoicing of my heart***; For I am ***called by Your name***, O LORD God of hosts. (NKJV)
3. Seeing them ***living in victory***. John 8:32, 36 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." <sup>36</sup> Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

- John 17:15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You **should keep them from the evil one**. (NKJV)
4. Seeing them **thinking of heaven**. Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
    - 2 Corinthians 4:16-17
    - 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
    - 1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life**, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NKJV)
  5. Seeing them **finding sin repulsive**. Psalm 38:18 For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.
    - Proverbs 20:17 .
    - Luke 15:17-18
    - Hebrews 11:25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy **the passing pleasures of sin**, (NKJV)
  6. Seeing them **responding to God**. Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.

## Personal Integrity

Secondly, we must pray in complete agreement, for them to cultivate **integrity in their personal life**:

1. Seeing them ***maintaining a clear conscience*** (I Timothy 1:5). Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith,
  - 2 Chronicles 34:27 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the Lord.
  - Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.
  - Acts 24:16 "This [being] so, I myself ***always strive*** to have a **conscience without offense toward God and men**. (NKJV)
  - 1 Timothy 1:5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, [from] **a good conscience**, and [from] sincere faith, (NKJV)
  - 1 Timothy 1:19 having faith and a **good conscience**, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, (NKJV)



2. Seeing them **learning to stand alone** (Daniel 1:8). But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (which means a conviction that their character is more important than their popularity).
  - Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. "If that [is the case,] our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver [us] from your hand, O king. "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." (NKJV)
  - 2 Peter 1:3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, (NKJV)
  
3. Seeing them **seeking to stay pure** (I Peter 2:11). Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,
  - Genesis 39:9 "[There is] no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you [are] his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (NKJV)
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. (NKJV)
  
4. Seeing them **cultivating a servant's heart** (Mark 10:44-45). And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
  - *Philippians 2:5-7 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.* (NKJV)
  
5. Seeing them **avoiding bitterness in trials** (Ephesians 4:30-32). And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. <sup>32</sup> And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

- II Samuel 16:11 "... Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him."
- 1 Kings 11:14 Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was a descendant of the king in Edom.
- Job 2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (NKJV)
- Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled; (KJV)

## Relational Stability

Thirdly, we must pray in complete agreement, for them to cultivate **stability in their relational life:**

1. Seeing them **loving their brothers and sisters** (I John 4:7-8). Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
  - John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
  - 1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, (NKJV);
  - 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (NKJV);
  - 1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (NKJV)
2. Seeing them **trusting God with hard situations and not rebelling** (I Samuel 15:23a). For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."
  - Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (NKJV);
  - Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. (NKJV)

3. Seeing them **loving the way God made them as men and women** (Psalm 27:11). Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.
- Psalm 139:13-18 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. (NKJV)
  - 1 Timothy 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (NIV) The Message says: Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. ... Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them...Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it.
  - Titus 2:4-5 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.
  - 1 Peter 3:1-7 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. The Message paraphrases this passage as: The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your life of holy beauty. What matters is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes—but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.
4. Seeing them **waiting to meet God's chosen life partner for them** (II Corinthians 6:14). Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

- Proverbs 31:10-12 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. (NKJV)
- Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD. (NIV)
- Proverbs 19:13-14 A foolish son is the ruin of his father, And the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping. 14 Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

## Eternal Priorities

Finally, we must pray in complete agreement, for them to cultivate **living for eternity during their earthly life**.

1. Seeing them **choosing a life of contentment**<sup>5</sup>. Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for **I have learned** in whatever state I am, to be content:
  - 1 Timothy 6:9-12 *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. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* (NKJV)
  - Philippians 4:11 *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* (KJV)

The New Testament mentions contentment five times<sup>6</sup>. CONTENTMENT is a chosen discipline that becomes a habit of life that helps us avoid things that deeply offend and grieve our Heavenly Father, Some of the evils that

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<sup>5</sup> CONTENTMENT is a habit of life that helps us avoid things that deeply offend and grieve our Heavenly Father. Some of these are: The desire for things more than God; The desire for pleasure more than godliness; The desire for satisfaction through things more than to be satisfied by God; The desire for better things and other things that others have more than thanking God for what we have; The desire for the rewards of the physical world more than a desire for eternal rewards.

<sup>6</sup> Two different Greek words are used. Let's look at them and learn a lesson on being content. Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content [#714 satisfied] with your wages. (KJV); Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content [#842 independent of external circumstances]. (KJV) (Being willing to accept where God has placed me in life and willing to devote my energies to the advancement of His kingdom and not my own.); 1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment [#714 satisfaction] is great gain. (KJV) (Contentment is not about what is mine, but that all that I have belongs to Him); 1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content [#842 independent of external circumstances] . (KJV) (Not wanting too be like, have or do what others are doing!); Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (NIV) ("It means to be free from inner turmoil, satisfied with one's material and financial state, and in possession of a sense of peace regardless of one's circumstances or feelings.")

contentment helps us avoid are: the desire for things more than God; and the desire for pleasure more than godliness; and the desire for satisfaction through things more than to be satisfied by God; and the desire for better things and other things that others have, more than thanking God for what we have; and the desire for the rewards of the physical world more than a desire for eternal rewards.

2. Seeing them ***choosing a life of personally knowing, serving, loving and obeying the Lord.*** 1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.

- 1 Chronicles 28:9 " As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (NKJV)
- 1 Chronicles 29:19 "And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision." (NKJV)
- 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (KJV)
- Romans 12:1-2

**3. THIS MEANS SEEING THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF CONSECRATION.** 1 Timothy 6:9-12 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. But you, O man of God, ***flee these things and pursue*** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, ***lay hold on eternal life***, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NKJV)

Now, lets learn the verses we pray from to see Consecration in our children.

- ***A Consecrated Christian Believes That Losers Are Keepers.*** Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

- ***A Consecrated Christian chooses to return to the Lord the title deed to all we own.*** Luke 14:26-33 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be **My disciple**. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be **My disciple**. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be **My disciple**.
- ***A Consecrated Christian Believes in*** GIVING OUR BODIES, MINDS, AND EVERYTHING ELSE TO THE LORD. Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
- ***A Consecrated Christian Believes*** THAT WE WERE BOUGHT AND PAID FOR BY THE LORD. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.
- ***A Consecrated Christian Believes in*** GIVING OUR SELF BACK TO GOD. 2 Corinthians 8:5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.
- ***A Consecrated Christian chooses to not love money.*** 1 Timothy 6:9-12 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. But you, O man of God, **flee these things and pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life**, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NKJV)