

Not Satisfied at All

By David Wright

Many Christians seem to have mixed-up contentment priorities. On the one hand, external circumstances tend to make us feel dissatisfied. We may be unhappy about our physical appearance, lack of money needed to purchase a coveted item, or even the weather. On the other hand, we tend to be perfectly content with our spiritual growth—or lack of it.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul revealed that his priorities were just the opposite. Imprisoned in a Roman dungeon, he lacked even the most basic human needs (e.g., proper nourishment, warmth, freedom to move about freely). But his want failed to depress his spirits: “Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:11-13). Although Paul had reached this unusual level of spiritual maturity, he was far from satisfied with his progress. Acknowledging his imperfection, he pressed on (3:12).

How would adopting Paul’s excellent priorities affect our daily conduct? We would, for instance, feel considerably less satisfied with our knowledge of the Scriptures. Six or seven decades ago, when an eighth grade education was common in the United States, members of the Lord’s church were known for their thorough Bible knowledge. Now, though, even equipped with a college education, the average Christian seems to be more familiar with the 66 buttons on the remote than the 66 books of the Bible. If we are satisfied with this shortcoming, we will never grow.

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