

**Chapter 12: I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

The times in which we Christians struggle the most are when we forget the place in which we dwell . . . the presence of the Lord. Our remembrance of such will drive away a multitude of fears and ungodly reactions to those fears. And this is what the Shepherd strives for as well – for us to remember that He is always with us. Keller states on page 166 that the shepherd develops a great affection and devotion to his flock and he would never think of parting with such sheep. Sheep that are healthy, contented, productive are the shepherds delight and profit. As we look at Christ being our Shepherd, we can easily see that we are

. . . healthy because of His blessings.

. . . content because we realize His blessings.

. . . productive because we use His blessings for His glory!

Somehow, we jump and miss the middle acknowledgment of being “content because we realize His blessings.” Is it because we are so eager to see accomplishment in our walk with Christ that we jump immediately to being productive? Does this jump sometimes take our eyes off Christ because we try to be productive in our own strength?

Many times we get content and complacent mixed up. In doing so, we create confusion in our walk with Christ. According to the dictionary;

. . . *to be content* is to be satisfied with what one is or has; not wanting more or anything else.

. . . *to be complacent* is to be pleased, especially with oneself or one's merits, advantages, situation, etc., often without awareness of some potential danger or defect; self-satisfied.

From these explicit definitions we obtain that complacency does not belong in a Christian's life. First we see that we should not look to self for our own merits. Instead, we should be content in who we are and not want more than what is within that identity. This makes us focus more on what the Father's will is because we are content in who we are in Christ. Who we are is one who seeks to bring the Father glory by doing His will. Therefore, we see to be content, even though it is used as a synonym for complacent, when we refer to it in our Christian walk it doesn't mean to be complacent. In our Christian walk, to be complacent is to be pleased with our own self and our own merits and not with what Christ has established us to be in Him. Therefore, to be complacent would hinder our following the Shepherd.

How have you been complacent? Are you looking to be pleased, especially with your own merits, advantages, situation, etc.? Are you not aware of the potential danger that is around the corner for such a focus? Are you looking to be pleased by the Father or are you looking to please Him?

*How does my contentment and realization of dwelling in the house of the Lord affect my witness?*

Knowing that Christ is the one and only way to the Father and knowing that we are to show Christ's light to this world; how are we showing others that we are content in dwelling in the house of the Lord? Since you encounter unbelievers daily, prayerfully consider these questions that Keller asked himself and placed at the bottom of page 170:

- ... What is my impact upon unbelievers?
- ... Is my life so serene, so satisfying, so radiant because I walk and talk and live with God, that they become envious?
- ... Do they see in me the benefits of being under Christ's control?
- ... Do they see something of Him reflected in my conduct and character?
- ... Does my life and conversations lead them to Him; into the knowledge of eternal life and thus possibly into life everlasting?

Consider the following Scriptures on being content. Some you may want to add to your memory verses.

Hebrews 13:5

1 Timothy 6:6-8

Philippians 4:11-13

In regards to bearing witness . . .

John 8:17-18

John 5:31, 36-38