**"CONTENTMENT IN MARRIAGE"**

INTRODUCTION:

Today more than ever, it seems that no one is truly content. Man's greedy nature is never satisfied, so the more he has, the more he wants.

In pride we view ourselves as worthy of more than we have or really deserve. ILLUS: A man said to a friend, "How come you never married?" His friend replied, "It was like this. I kept looking for the ideal woman." "And you never found her?" "Oh, I found her, but just my luck--she was looking for the ideal man."

*Whether you are single, married, widowed, etc., you (as a believer) should be content!

ILLUS: of Paul. Read Phil. 4:11-13.

A content person is one who is satisfied, one who is thankful and happy with what he/she has.

Content - to have enough, to be sufficient.

The opposite is contention (3 letters make a big difference!) - struggle, strife, conflict, clashing, striving against what God wants for you.

**I. Be Content With Your God-Given State (I Cor. 7)**
(Contentment whether married or not)

State = situation in life, circumstances, status, condition (cp. Phil. 4:11)

A. Be Content if you are single

1. It is good to be single (desirable though not necessary) (7:1, 7-9)

2. It may be beneficial to be single (7:26-27)

JOKE: "Doctors say that married men live longer than bachelors," said a young girl to an unmarried man. "Well, I've heard that, too," he replied, "but my married friends claim that it only seems longer."

a. Many difficulties are overcome by being single (NOTE: Lk.

21:23-24)

b. Attention can be totally focused on serving Christ (READ v. 32-35) (v. 39-40)

NOTE: Strong suggestion in verse 27b - "Do not seek a wife." (present tense. Don't live a life of just continually seeking a partner. Leave it in God's hands and let Him lead.

ILLUS: How God led me to Terri.

B. Be Content if you are <u>married</u>

1. Contentment is being satisfied with the <u>will</u> of God (v. 17, 20, 24)

(It is easier to be content when you submit to the <u>sovereignty</u> of God and realize that what you have has been assigned by God's wisdom.)

2. Contentment is <u>not looking for a way out</u> (v. 27)

(Beware: "The grass always seems greener on the other side of the fence.")

READ Heb. 13:4-6

**II. Be Content With Your God-Given <u>Mate</u> (Prov. 5:15-19)**
(Contentment with your relationship)

Mate = "better half," equal, match, complement, completer, companion, co-worker, yoke-fellow, fellow heir.

ILLUS: Wedding day at altar - How beautiful she looked, saw sparkle in her eyes, heard sweet, soft voice, smelled the freshness of her hair, felt the excitement and anticipation of a life-time to fulfill dreams and aspirations.

NOTE: God never intended your satisfaction to end.
But has it?

A. Be filled (v. 15-17) "Drink of your own"

1. "Cistern" - cisterns were hewn from rock and then plastered. They stored water collected during the rainy season for use in the dry season.

--You must drink, or you open temptation to drink elsewhere.

EX: The king of Assyria warned, "Drink ye everyone the waters of his own cistern" (Is 36:16).

In time, the water in a cistern would stagnate if left alone, and often earthquakes would crack the rock and plaster. Jeremiah contrasted Jehovah (an artesian well) with idolatry (a stagnant, leaky cistern) -- Jer. 2:13.

2. "Well" (a step up from a cistern) - Wells were dug in the earth, and water was discovered. This discovery was an occasion for rejoicing. Water was drawn out. The discovery of a flowing well ("living water") was considered good fortune (Gen. 26:19).

One's beloved is a well of living water (Song 4:15).

--In a land where water was scarce, wells were a source of contention (Gn. 26:19-22). EX: Philistines and Isaac.

--Therefore, each was to drink from his own well!

No one is to share in your springs of water!

ILLUS: "Yours alone" = A wedding ring is like a tourniquet (wrapped around to stop bleeding), which is worn on a couple's left hands to stop their circulation -- they date around no longer!

ILLUS: Christ's jealousy over His bride (II Cor. 11:2 - chaste virgin. Eph. 5:25-27 - Christ cleansed the church that He might present her to himself "without spot or wrinkle"!

V. 18 - "Fountain" - a noun of place. Emphasizes the source of flowing water.

"Blessed" - endued with power for success, prosperity, longevity, fruitful productivity (offspring).

B. Be joyful (v. 18) "Rejoice with your own"

1. "Rejoice" = be glad, joyful with your whole disposition.

   ILLUS: Find your joy in the one who brought you joy when you were dating.

2. "Wife of your youth"

   In Mal. 2:14-16, the wife of your youth is called "your companion," your wife by "covenant" (agreement, vow).

   Ecc. 9:9 - "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity..."

C. Be satisfied (v. 19a) "Be satisfied with your own"

"Keep thy eyes wide open before marriage, and half shut afterwards" - Ben Franklin

"Deer and Gazelle" - depict grace, beauty, tenderness, affection, vigor (liveliness).

"At all times" - not just in youth or novelty

D. Be ravished (v. 19b) "Be captivated by your own"

"Ravish" - to cause to wander, lead away, to captivate with this result: exhilaration, intoxication!

Three bad things that cause one to wander:

1) Alcoholic drink (Prov. 20;1)

2) Evil instruction (Prov. 19:27)

3) The strange woman, adulterers (Prov. 5:20, 23)

**III. Be Content With Your God-Given Place (Eph. 5:22-33)**
(Contentment with your role in the home)

A. Wives - Be "submissive supporters" (Eph. 4:22-24, 33)

1. "Submit" (v. 22) = to place self under authority, leadership.

How? As you do "to the Lord" (you won't submit to husband if you don't submit to Lord).

"Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." (Prov. 31:30).

Why? Husband is head (v. 23-24)

I Cor. 11:3 - "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God (Father) is the head of Christ."

NOTE: Headship does not imply superiority of person but difference in function.

2. "Reverence" (v. 33) = respect, think highly of him, admire (remember when you couldn't wait to share the last name of your fiance).

READ I Pet. 3:1-6. Note Sarah called Abraham "Lord."

Contentment - Thank God for the role He has given you. Don't allow what He has not given to spoil what you have.

Discontentment - reveals a heart of ingratitude to God.

B. Husbands - Be "Loving Leaders" (5:25-33)

1. Lover - Gives despite worthiness of receiver, to meet need

a. Sacrificially (v. 25)

b. Continually (present tense)

c. Similarly as "himself" (v. 28, 29)

1) not with hatred
2) nourish - feet
3) cherish - show affection

d. Faithfully (v. 31-33)

"Cleave" = glue, cement

2. Leader (v. 23 [implied])

a. Providing leader ("I Tim. 5:8 - "If any provide not for his own..."

b. Spiritual leader - teach wife etc. (I Cor. 14:35)

Lead in child training (Eph. 6:4)

See that all in the family are growing and going to church.

--Thou inexcusable, one reason wives don't submit is because husbands don't lead!

--A leader sets the example.

--Followers never go any further than their leader.

Are you content with your roles - your place?

ILLUS: Baseball team who tries to fill each others' positions.

CONCLUSION:

Success in marriage consists not merely in <u>finding</u> the right mate, but in <u>being</u> the right mate.

Be content with your God-given state...mate...place.

"Contentment makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor" (Ben Franklin).

The happiest people I know are those who are content!

Are you?  You can be!  Determine to be so right now!