

5 Crucial Choices to Help You Cultivate Contentment

Have you ever noticed that people who are content with life have a contagious positivity? They seem to have a deep well of joy and an undercurrent of peace running through their souls. What's their secret? I believe contentment begins with a few good choices.

Even though life is challenging, contentment is an attitude that God wants developed in our lives. It is His will that you be content. The great news is that contentment is an attitude that can be learned with the help of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul wrote, "I have learned in whatever state I am to be content" (Phil. 4:11b). The incredible thing about those words is that Paul wrote about contentment while in prison. I can only imagine how difficult it would be to feel content in a jail cell. But Paul had learned to make some choices in the secret places of his heart that helped him cultivate contentment wherever he was.

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Choose to praise and thank God. Life happens—and sometimes it's frustrating. Instead of complaining, try praising God for who He is. Think of the character traits of God and spend some time praising Him for His Almighty character. Or make a "thankful list" and write down the good gifts that God has given you. David wrote, "Thus will I bless you while I live" (Psalm 63:4a).

Start singing! Yup, you read that correctly. Bust out some tunes in your car or bellow out a song in the shower. Don't worry if you can't carry a tune; God hears in perfect pitch. He loves your singing! On top of that, it will brighten your mood. It's amazing how singing can cultivate a deep

satisfaction in your soul. David wrote, “In the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice” (Ps. 63:7).

Do something nice for someone. Several years ago, I was feeling discouraged and a bit dissatisfied. I went to the grocery store and felt heavy-hearted. When I went through the check-out line, I noticed the lady in front of me was elderly and fumbling for her wallet. As she fumbled, I handed the cashier my credit card and said to the elderly woman, “Ma’am, please, let me buy your groceries.” As I paid, I felt instantly encouraged. This week, try doing something nice for someone—you’ll see an instant uplift in your mood!

Memorize a verse or two. When life feels difficult, you can refocus your thoughts on God by rehearsing His Word. David writes in Psalm 63:6, “I ... meditate on You in the night watches.” If you have a few good verses memorized, you don’t have to turn on the light in the middle of the night when you can’t sleep. Instead, rehearse the verses in your mind and refocus your brain on the goodness of God’s Word.

At the end of each day, remember the good and give thanks. Every night at dinner, Steve and I record the three top blessings of each of our days. By remembering the good ways God has blessed us, we can sink into a restful sleep rather than obsessing on what went wrong that day. In Psalm 77:11, Asaph wrote, “I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old.” Every day is filled with tiny miracles. If you don’t take the time to pause and reflect on those, you’ll miss the opportunity to cultivate contentment. {eoa}

Becky Harling, an author, certified speaker, leadership coach and trainer with the John Maxwell Team, is an energetic and motivational international speaker inspiring audiences to overcome their greatest life challenges and reach their full God-given potential. Her most recent book is *How to Listen So People Will Talk*. Her husband, Steve Harling, is the president

of Reach Beyond, a nonprofit organization seeking to be the voice and hands of Jesus around the world.

This article originally appeared at .