

5 Spirit-Filled Steps to Cultivate Contentment

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

Even though life is challenging, contentment is an attitude God wants us to develop 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, "For I have learned in whatever state I am to be content" (Phil. 4:11b). The incredible thing about those words is that Paul wrote them from 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. So, how can we cultivate contentment?

5 Positive Choices You Can Make

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

Sing! Yes, 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 note—God hears in perfect pitch. It's all good. He loves your singing voice. It's amazing how singing will lift your spirits and cultivate a deep satisfaction in your soul. David writes, "I sing in the shadow of Your wings"

(Ps. 63:7, NIV). Because we are loved and sheltered by God, we have the freedom to sing and be satisfied in Him.

Listen to friends. When life feels hard, it's easy to become self-focused. Instead, next time you feel discontent with your life, why not call a friend and go for coffee? Then, intentionally ask your friend questions about their life. If they share a problem, don't try to "relate" or dive in with your problem. Instead, make your focus listening to understand. Here's the exciting thing: When you offer empathy, you benefit as well. Why? Because God hard-wired your brain with mirror neurons. Those neurons are wired to respond to the emotions of others so that we can mirror their feelings. When you connect with another person by offering them empathy, your own mood will be boosted—and you might just walk away more contented.

Memorize a verse or two. When life feels difficult, refocus your thoughts on God by rehearsing His Word. David writes in Psalm 63:6 (MEV): "I remember You on my bed, and 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 every day, remember the good. During a particularly rough season in my life, right before bed, I reflected back on the day and wrote down three good things that happened. By remembering the good ways God had blessed me, I was able to sink into a restful sleep rather than obsess on what went wrong that day. In Psalm 77:11, Asaph writes, "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 nurture your contentment.

I'd love to hear from you! How have you cultivated contentment

in your life? Leave a comment. {eoa}

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