

On 1 Cor. 7 & Contentment – excerpt from an e-mail response

1 Cor. 7 can be offered as a great chapter on "contentment." Of course, true, biblical contentment means we only want that which God wants (Lk. 22:42). In areas about which the bible seems to be silent (as pertaining to the individual's specific case), in other words, we are not to really have our own expectations or desires. *This is hard for the flesh*. But, this is why the single person, for example, should not expect, or anticipate, a marriage. The bible only goes so far in addressing whether this person can/should marry. The rest is not revealed beforehand. Marriage simply may not be God's will for him/her, and His children are to desire what *He* desires. Of course, the child of God can rejoice over and in situations, really enjoy something, and be excited about a prospect of something or other. But, this ought to only be in the larger context of obedience and being in objective awe of how the Master runs things. In other words, one may rejoice, and be excited about an upcoming bible conference, for example, but not necessarily because it is seen as a fulfillment of one's desires. Rather, the joy and anticipation ought to be 1) in realizing that in this He is working in us to fulfill His expressed command to assemble, preach and to study, and it is always a great thing to do those things which are in obedience to His word, and 2) we are given the privilege of being a part of, and therefore "eyewitnesses" of, His marvelous work in these last days.

Of course, to be content would mean one does not compete, as competition reveals the opposite heart attitude of contentment, that of "covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). This is just the tip of the iceberg with competition. There are many other sins that are involved, like pride, lack of humility, lasciviousness. Satan's chief sin, in fact, is "being lifted up with pride" (1 Tim. 3:6). As Satan dares to challenge God, he is competing for the dominion of the earth. Here in his competing with Christ for the same prize (2 Cor. 11:3), we see clearly that Satan is 1) not content with his lot, 2) covetous of Christ's bride, and 3) NOT submissive to the authority of God. So when competition is in view, the issues of **humility** and **submission** must also be discussed. Even the slave/master relationship can be found discussed in 1 Cor. 7, thus, as well as the wife's relationship to her husband, as that which binds. 1 Cor. 7 teaches one is to remain in the calling wherein he is called. This is the opposite of being discontented, or covetous. Thus God teaches contentment in 1 Cor. 7, first in the context of sexual relationships in and out of marriage, since divorce is a great expression of covetousness, and being not content in one's current lot in life. Going back to the single person, thus, when he/she desires marriage, this person is not being too content in his present calling - that of being single - is he?

I pray this helps a bit.