

The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment

In 1648 *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, by Jeremiah Burroughs was published. In 1636, before writing the book Burroughs had been removed from his pastorate as a pastor in the Church of England. He had been unwilling to do some things he had been ordered to do because he felt they were contrary to what the Bible taught. As a consequence, he lost his job, his home, and his congregation. Because there was no separation of church and state, to avoid imprisonment, he escaped to Holland, in the city of Rotterdam. He lived there from 1636-1641. When he returned to England, he became a Congregationalist, a denomination that makes decisions by a congregational vote. This put him at odds with the majority of Christians living in England at the time. As a result, He was not trusted by most other Christians because of his convictions.

We will focus on the parts of the book that quote from the Bible. We will not quote much from the book Burroughs wrote. But consider the source that put these verses together in this way, Jeremiah Burroughs, who

...

- Lost his pastorate
- Lost his home
- Lived in exile
- Endured church conflict
- Pastored through a war (the civil war in England 1642-1651)
- Endured economic hardship
- Lived in fear of suffering

Despite everything he had experienced Burroughs was known as a patient, gentle man. Over the door of his study, he posted his motto over the door, “Difference of belief and unity of believers are not inconsistent.” When Burroughs referred to differences of belief, he was referring to some Puritan Christians who felt they could remain in the Church of England, and others, like himself, who felt they could not.

This study will use some of the Bible verses Burroughs used in addition to some I added. We will look at a few of his comments on the verses, but we will focus mostly on the Bible itself. If you’d like a free copy of Burroughs book you can find it on the internet as a pdf file. [https:](https://)

Christian Contentment Described

Lesson 2

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:7–9 (ESV)

Can anyone attain such contentment? The purpose of this study is to help you to understand this mysterious process of attaining Christian contentment.

A Christian can face affliction differently than someone who is not a Christian. By God's grace we can come to recognize that we are being afflicted yet we can trust God in such a way that we count it all as joy.

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4, (ESV)

How can a Christian face affliction and be joyful about it?

How to open our minds to an understanding of the mystery of contentment.

1. **The first thing is to show that there is great mystery in it.** "I say, a contented man, just as he is the most contented, so he is the most unsatisfied man in the world."¹

Consider the following passage as explaining what a Christian should be "unsatisfied". We should hate the sinful temptations of this world.

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)

When we experience blessings from God, as we experience the good things in our lives, we recognize these come from God, who is not of this world but from the heavens. The good things we have known are not from the sinful world but come from the hand of God Himself.

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17 (ESV)

The greatest blessing a believer can receive is to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. No one can take away what the believer has in Christ. The joy of believers is rooted in their union with the resurrected Christ. This world brings sorrow, but Jesus Christ brings joy.

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:8–9 (ESV)

¹ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 36). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

Believers know that they have a genuine connection to God in heaven, and it is worth far more than anything this world has to offer.

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. Psalm 73:25 (ESV)

How can a Christian be both content and unsatisfied?

2. A CHRISTIAN COMES TO CONTENTMENT, NOT SO MUCH BY WAY OF ADDITION, AS BY WAY OF SUBTRACTION.

The word “subtraction” refers to the subtraction of sinful desires.

“The Christian has another way to contentment, that is, he can bring his desires down to his possessions, and so he attains his contentment.”²

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. 1 Timothy 6:6–10 (ESV)

¹⁶ Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it. Proverbs 15:16 (ESV)

What tempting desire do you most need to set aside so that you might be more free to experience contentment?

3 A CHRISTIAN COMES TO CONTENTMENT, NOT SO MUCH BY GETTING RID OF THE BURDEN THAT IS ON HIM, AS BY ADDING ANOTHER BURDEN TO HIMSELF.

“Add therefore to the breaking of your estate, the breaking of your heart, and that is the way to be contented in a Christian manner, which is the third mystery in Christian contentment.”

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalm 51:17 (ESV)

¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18 (ESV)

¹⁵ For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. Isaiah 57:15 (ESV)

⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:8–10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10 (ESV)

What burden do you carry that you know you should sacrifice to the Lord? (This burden very likely keeps you in bondage to discontentment).

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Lesson 2 – part 2

4. IT IS NOT SO MUCH THE REMOVING OF THE AFFLICION THAT IS UPON US AS THE CHANGING OF THE AFFLICION, THE METAMORPHOSING OF THE AFFLICION, SO THAT IT IS QUITE TURNED AND CHANGED INTO SOMETHING ELSE.

¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went away. ¹⁶ And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰ The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. ²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.” ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” ²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first. Matthew 19:15–30 (ESV)

“There is a power of grace to turn this affliction into good; it takes away the sting and poison of it. Take the case of poverty, a man's possessions are lost: Well, is there no way to be contented till your possessions are made up again? Till your poverty is removed? Yes, certainly, Christianity would teach contentment, though poverty continues. It will teach you how to turn your poverty to spiritual riches. You shall be poor still as to your outward possessions, but this shall be altered; whereas before it was a natural evil to you, it comes now to be turned to a spiritual benefit to you. And so you come to be content.³”

If this kind of contentment could be achieved by selling everything and giving to the poor, how would it change the way a person lived after selling everything? What sinful desire keeps you from being totally free to experience the fullness of joy that is found in knowing Jesus?

5. A CHRISTIAN COMES TO THIS CONTENTMENT NOT BY MAKING UP THE WANTS OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT BY THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WORK OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES.

¹⁰ Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. 1 Kings 2:10 (ESV)

³⁶ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, Acts 13:36 (ESV)

“There is a remarkable Scripture concerning David, of whom it is said that he served his generation: 'After David had served his generation according to the will of God, then he slept.' It is a saying of Paul concerning him in Acts 13:36. In your Bibles it is, 'After he had served his own generation according to the will of God', but the word that is translated will, means the counsel of God, and so it may be translated as well, 'That after David in his generation had served God's counsel, then he fell asleep'. We ordinarily take the words thus, That David served his generation: that is, he did the work of his generation—that is to serve a man's generation. But it is clearer if you read it thus, After David in his generation had served the counsel of God, then David fell asleep. O that should be the care of a Christian, to serve out God's counsels. What is the counsel of

³ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (pp. 44-45). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

God? The circumstances that I am in, God has put me into by his own counsel, the counsel of his own will. Now I must serve God's counsel in my generation; whatever is the counsel of God in my circumstances, I must be careful to serve that. So I shall have my heart quieted for the present, and shall live and die peaceably and comfortably, if I am careful to serve God's counsel.”⁴

A carnally minded person seeks contentment by satisfying sinful desires. A spiritually minded person finds true joy by sacrificing sinful desires on the altar of service to Jesus. How would this kind of contentment change the way a person lives?

6. A GRACIOUS HEART IS CONTENTED BY THE MELTING OF HIS WILL AND DESIRES INTO GOD'S WILL AND DESIRES; BY THIS MEANS HE GETS CONTENTMENT.

¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 1 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2 (ESV)

¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13 (ESV)

“You will say, This is hard! I will express it a little more: A gracious heart must needs have satisfaction in this way, because godliness teaches him this, to see that his good is more in God than in himself. The good of my life and comforts and my happiness and my glory and my riches are more in God than in myself.”⁵

How can a person come to replace his or her will with God's will?

7. THE MYSTERY CONSISTS NOT IN BRINGING ANYTHING FROM OUTSIDE TO MAKE MY CONDITION MORE COMFORTABLE, BUT IN PURGING OUT SOMETHING THAT IS WITHIN.

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? James 4:1 (ESV)

So, what exactly is it that is in your hearts that must be removed? What should you pray so that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, will remove it from you?

The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment by Jeremiah Burroughs, 1648

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⁴ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 49). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 51). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

8. HE LIVES UPON THE DEW OF GOD'S BLESSING.

⁸ Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice. Proverbs 16:8 (ESV)

Here are five reasons a godly man or woman has reason to be content:

a. The love of God is in the believer.

a. ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 1 John 4:16 (ESV)

b. Everything a believer has is given to them by God for their good.

a. John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. John 3:27 (ESV)
b. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19 (ESV)
c. ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32 (ESV)
d. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

c. What we have in Christ is freely given, at no cost to the believer.

a. ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Romans 3:24 (ESV)
b. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Romans 5:15–17 (ESV)
c. ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." John 4:10 (ESV)

d. Believers have a right to what God has given them because Jesus paid for what they have with his death on the cross. Non-believers must pay for everything they receive.

a. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (ESV)
b. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)
c. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Colossians 2:13–14 (ESV)
d. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. John 3:17–18 (ESV)

"Wicked men have certain outward things; I do not say they are usurpers of what they have; they have a right to it, and that before God, but how? It is a right by mere donation, that is, God by his free bounty gives it to them; but the right that the saints have is a right of purchase: it is paid for, and it is their own, and they may in a holy manner and holy way claim whatever they have need of. We cannot express the difference between the right of a holy man, and the right of the wicked more fully than by the following simile: a criminal is condemned to die, and yet by favor he has his supper provided overnight. Now though the criminal has forfeited all his right to all things, to every bit of bread, yet if he is given his supper he does not steal it. This is true though he has forfeited all rights by his fault, and after he has once been condemned he has no right to anything. So it is with the wicked: they have forfeited all their right to the comforts of this world, they are condemned by God as criminals, and are going to execution; but if God in his bounty gives them something to preserve them here in the world, they cannot be said to be thieves or robbers. But if a man is given a supper overnight before his execution, is that like the supper that he was wont to have in his own house, when he ate his own bread, and had his wife and children about him? Oh, a dish of green herbs at home would be a great deal better than any dainties in such a supper as that. But a child of God has not a right merely by donation; what he has is his own, through the purchase of Christ. Every bit of bread you eat, if you are a godly man or woman, Jesus Christ has

bought it for you. You go to market and buy your meat and drink with your money, but know that before you buy it, or pay money, Christ has bought it at the hand of God the Father with his blood. You have it at the hands of men for money, but Christ has bought it at the hand of his Father by his blood. Certainly it is a great deal better and sweeter now, though it is but a little.”⁶

e. The blessings believers receive are glimpses of the great blessings of heaven that belong to them.

- a. The blessings believers receive are glimpses of the great blessings of heaven that belong to them.
- b. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:23 (ESV)
- c. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 1 Peter 1:3–4 (ESV)
- d. ⁸ Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice. Proverbs 16:8 (ESV)

Which of the five reasons do you find most helpful? Which is least helpful, and why?

What about your rights as a person who is in Christ? What rights are yours? How did you get those rights?

9. NOT ONLY IN GOOD THINGS DOES A CHRISTIAN HAVE THE DEW OF GOD'S BLESSING.

“The truth is that the afflictions of God's people come from the same eternal love that Jesus Christ came from. All God's strokes are strokes of love and mercy, all God's ways are mercy and truth, to those that fear him and love him (Psalm 25:10). The ways of God, the ways of affliction, as well as the ways of prosperity, are mercy and love to him. Grace gives a man an eye, a piercing eye to pierce the counsel of God, those eternal counsels of God for good to him, even in his afflictions; he can see the love of God in every affliction as well as in prosperity. Now this is a mystery to a carnal heart. They can see no such thing; perhaps them rich, but they think God loves them when he prospers them and makes them rich, but they think God loves them not when he afflicts mystery, grace enables men to see love in the very frown of God's face, and so comes to receive contentment.”⁷

¹⁰ All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. Psalm 25:10 (ESV)

Do you think God can really use what is intended for evil to bring about a good result in the life of a believer?

⁶ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (pp. 55-56). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

⁷ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (pp. 57-58). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

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Lesson 2 - part 4

10. A GODLY MAN HAS CONTENTMENT AS A MYSTERY, because just as he sees all his afflictions come from the same love that Jesus Christ did, so he sees them all sanctified in Jesus Christ, sanctified in a Mediator.

"He sees, I say, all the sting and venom and poison of them taken out by the virtue of Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man. For instance, when a Christian would have contentment he works it out thus: what is my affliction? Is it poverty that God strikes me with?-Jesus Christ had not a house to hide his head in, the fowls of the air had nests, and the foxes holes, but the Son of man had not a hole to hide his head in; now my poverty is sanctified by Christ's poverty. I can see by faith the curse and sting and venom taken out of my poverty by the poverty of Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus was poor in this world to deliver me from the curse of my poverty. ... Whereas another man's heart is overwhelmed with dishonor, and disgrace, and he seeks in this way to get contentment: perhaps you have been spoken ill of and you have no other way to ease and right yourselves, but if they abuse you, you will abuse them back; and so you think to ease yourselves. Oh, but a Christian has another way to ease himself: others abuse and speak ill of me, but did they not abuse Jesus Christ, and speak ill of him? And what am I in comparison of Christ? ⁸

²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. Romans 8:27–30 (ESV)

What does Romans 8:28 tell us about experiencing contentment in Christ?

11. THERE IS STILL A FURTHER MYSTERY ... say, the eleventh mystery in contentment is this: A gracious heart has contentment by getting strength from Jesus Christ; he is able to bear his burden by getting strength from someone else.

Paul prayed that the Christians in Colossae might have contentment from Christ:

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; Colossians 1:9–11 (ESV)

If you have experienced this, what was it like? If you haven't experienced it yet, what do you think you should do so that you can experience it?

⁸ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (pp. 58-59). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

12. A GODLY HEART ENJOYS MUCH OF GOD IN EVERYTHING HE HAS, AND KNOWS HOW TO MAKE UP ALL WANTS IN GOD HIMSELF ... God is able to let out a great deal of his power in little things.

“Such and such a man is a poor man, the plunderers came and took away everything that he had; what shall he do now that all is gone? But when all is gone, there is an art and skill that godliness teaches, to make up all those losses in God. Many men whose houses have been burnt go about gathering, and so get together by many hands a little; but a godly man knows where to go, to get up all, even in God himself, so that he may enjoy the quintessence of the same good and comfort as he had before, for a godly man does not live so much in himself as he lives in God. Now this is a mystery to a carnal heart.”⁹

16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; 17 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; 18 so I say, “My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord.”

19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! 20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. 21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

25 The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. 27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28 Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; 29 let him put his mouth in the dust—there may yet be hope; 30 let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults.

31 For the Lord will not cast off forever, 32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; 33 for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.

34 To crush underfoot all the prisoners of the earth, 35 to deny a man justice in the presence of the Most High, 36 to subvert a man in his lawsuit, the Lord does not approve. Lamentations 3:16–36 (ESV)

“There is one text in the Revelation that speaks of the glorious condition of the Church that is likely to be here even in this world: ‘And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof’ (Revelation 21:22–24).”¹⁰

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, Revelation 21:22–24 (ESV)

I once knew a man who felt he couldn't do anything for God because God hadn't given him anything big and important to do, just little things. How would these verses have helped him?

⁹ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 63). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (pp. 65-66). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

13. A GRACIOUS HEART GETS CONTENTMENT FROM THE COVENANT THAT GOD HAS MADE WITH HIM.

¹ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” ³ For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ⁸ You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. ⁹ Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—¹⁰ no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. ¹² On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. ¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot. ¹⁴ “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. ¹⁵ When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.” Psalm 91 (ESV)

How does Psalm 91 help a believer to experience contentment in knowing God? What do you think it means to make “the Lord your dwelling place”?

“Now this is a great mystery, to have the Kingdom of Heaven in the soul; no man can know this but that soul which has it. The Heaven which is within the soul for the present is like the white stone and the new name, that none but those that have it can understand it. It is a miserable condition, my brethren, to depend altogether upon creatures for our contentment.” ¹¹

⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:4 (ESV)

What is happening in each believer that will help them to stay faithful to Jesus until their earthly journey is complete?

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:9–11 (ESV)

²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. 1 John 3:24 (ESV)

In what sense does someone who is in Christ become a dwelling place of God? So when is God’s presence strongest in a believer? (trick question)

¹¹ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 74). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:20 (ESV)

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4–7 (ESV)

Christ was seated at the right hand of God the Father after ascending to heaven (see Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11). Everyone who is in Christ is already “raised up and seated with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” How does it change things when a believer knows that some of Heaven is possession?

“The next thing that the mystery of contentment consists in is this, That a gracious heart gets its supply of all things from the Covenant, and so comes to have contentment, which is a dry thing to a carnal spirit. There are two things in this:

1. He gets contentment from the Covenant in general, that is, from the great covenant that God has made with him in Christ.
2. He gets it from the particular promises that God has made with him in the Covenant.¹²

⁵ “For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire? 2 Samuel 23:5 (ESV)

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Isaiah 43:2 (ESV)

⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Joshua 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

¹⁷ no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord.” Isaiah 54:17 (ESV)

“Therefore when you look into the book of God and find any promise there, you may make it your own; just as an heir who rides over a lot of fields and meadows says, This meadow is my inheritance, and this corn field is my inheritance, and then he sees a fine house, and says, This fine house is my inheritance. He looks at them with a different eye from a stranger who rides over those fields. A carnal heart reads the promises, and reads them merely as stories, not that he has any great interest in them. But every time a godly man reads the Scriptures (remember this when you are reading the Scripture) and there meets with a promise, he ought to lay his hand upon it and say, This is part of my inheritance, it is mine, and I am to live upon it. This will make you contented; it is a mysterious way of getting contentment. And there are several other promises that bring contentment (Psalm 34:10, 37:6; Isaiah 58:10). So much for the mystery of contentment by way of the Covenant.”¹³

What are some of your favorite Bible verses that help you to experience contentment in your relationship with God?

¹² Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 77). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

¹³ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (pp. 82-83). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

14. HE HAS CONTENTMENT BY REALIZING THE GLORIOUS THINGS OF HEAVEN TO HIM.

"He has the kingdom of Heaven as present, and the glory that is to come; by faith he makes it present. So the martyrs had contentment in their sufferings, for some of them said, 'Though we have but a hard breakfast, yet we shall have a good dinner, we shall very soon be in heaven.' 'Do but shut your eyes', said one, 'and you shall be in heaven at once.' 'We faint not', says the Apostle (2 Corinthians 4:16). Why? Because these light afflictions that are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They see heaven before them and that contents them." ¹⁴

How can a believer experience heaven as being here and now?

15. THE LAST THING THAT I WOULD MENTION IS THIS, A godly man has contentment by opening and letting out his heart to God.

"Do you find that you can come away from prayer and not look sad? It is said of Hannah, that when she had been at prayer her countenance was no more sad (1 Samuel 1:18), she was comforted: this is the right way to contentment."¹⁵

How can we experience the comfort of prayer?

¹⁴ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 83). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition

¹⁵ Jeremiah Burroughs. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment (p. 84). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.