



“Letters to the Corinthians” Study Notes

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Lesson 14: Bloom Where God Has Planted You

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Read Philippians 4:10-13. Paul wrote these words while he was in prison. Keeping that in mind, what did Paul rejoice in here, what did he value? What has Paul learned? What is the “answer” to every circumstance? Is there any exception given to this? What “things” can be done? (Hint: this isn't about new cars or houses.) How does this correlate with 1 Corinthians 7:17-24?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18. How should the believers (us included) encourage each other? What things should be done “always” or “without ceasing”? What is God's will for us? Again, is there any exceptional circumstance that can justify being ungrateful?

Read James 1:2-4. What should we consider “all joy”? Why should we consider this all joy? What is the ultimate purpose? Again, what is the “completion” talking about here? How does this view relate with the world's view of suffering? Why is it important to know that?

Read Hebrews 13:5-6. What is the basis of our contentment? Why should that truth be enough to make us content in every circumstance in life?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Why did God send this “thorn” in Paul's side? Why did God NOT remove this thorn? What is Paul's response to this? Is he cranky and whiny? Why not? What should be our perspective on suffering?

Over and over in Scripture we see that contentment is an expectation for God's people. Knowing that we have been redeemed, knowing that we have eternity with God to look forward to, any circumstance we may find ourselves in in this life is merely an opportunity to glorify God. Even in circumstances that we find ourselves in because of our own sin, God will still be glorified when we repent and rest in Him.

Today, as you spend time with God, consider your circumstances. What circumstance are you fighting against? Is your fight honoring to God, or is it for selfish reasons? Sometimes, it is honoring to God to find a way to leave the circumstance you are in (situations of abuse or debauchery come to mind) but

if those factors are not at play, ask God to help you to honor Him in your life and your circumstances today. If you are looking to anything, even a physical ailment as a reason why you don't have to be content, remember Paul and his "thorn". Stop making excuses or justifying your discontentment. Ask God to help you to be content, ask Him to help you to obey and seek to honor Him even when you don't feel like it or even when you don't want to. Ask Him to change your heart and attitudes to desire to honor Him in everything. And pray that God will help you, too, to be able to say "I will give thanks in all circumstances, because this is Your will for me, Father."