

## **Contentment at Work at Work**

Recall the fable of the goose that laid golden eggs? How the farmer who owned the goose cut open the goose seeking the source of the gold. As a result he had neither more golden eggs nor a goose. His discontent cost him his real blessing.

Contentment at work can be somewhat like the golden goose proposition. We can find that contentment is taking out of our current situation what there is in it, being satisfied with the blessings of the moment.

Yes, being content can be a two edges sword. If we are content, we might not be motivated to improve. Yet, if we are not content, we are can be prey to envy, avarice, and covetousness. There is always someone who has gotten more, faster, and easier than we have. There are occasions of injustice done to ourselves or to others. Contentment does not mean denying our feelings about wanting to improve our circumstances or to address the injustice. It means choosing not to be controlled by those desires or injustices.

The convolution of being both content and desiring to improve requires wisdom, gratitude, and humility to deal with the complexity. We have to recognize and be grateful when we are doing the best we can with whatever the talents, gifts, and the situation we are in allows us to do. We can be content with the rewards of our honest efforts even as we seek to improve ourselves, our abilities, and our relationships with those around us.

What it comes down to is a choice. We can choose our attitude day-by-day, situation-by-situation. Our contentment comes from within, from accepting and being satisfied with the calling God has given us for this day. He has made us to work as his agents in our part of this world, in this particular setting with these particular gifts and problems. With trust in God, we can do this.

Contentment is of the heart. We cannot be content if we are holding onto past failures, wrongs, and mistakes. Once we face them, admit them, and then leave them to God, we can forgive them in ourselves and in others. We can, in a sense, walk away from them. Then, from our inner strength and new calmness, we can help the people around us. We can help them because it is good to do so and because we want to.

That perhaps is the heart of contentment at work at work. When we choose contentment, we do not need to choose competition with our co-workers for advancement in pay or position. We can choose to help others meet their needs insofar as we can without worry about them getting ahead of us. We can choose to use the opportunities of the day to improve our skills, our knowledge, our relationships again without worry about moving ahead. Our attitude and improvement, being internal to us, stays with us no matter the external happenings of the workplace.

Rudyard Kipling once told a graduation class, "Beware of overconcern for money, or position, or glory. Someday you will meet a man who cares for none of these things." We have met such a man. He is Jesus the Christ.

## **CONTENTMENT — A Faith Based Value at Work**

1. What does applying the faith-based value of contentment in your workplace mean to you? What do you think it would mean to those with whom you work? How does its meaning change for your different workplaces, for example, home or where you volunteer?
2. Why is it important to gain an understanding of contentment in the workplace and how to apply that understanding?
3. How do/could you apply the concept of contentment in your workplace(s)?
4. What would happen in your workplace if you took and actively applied the value of faith-based contentment in your workplace(s)? How would the workplace sound different? Look different? Feel different?
5. What first step are you willing to take this week?