

# 11. *The Dissatisfied Heart*

By John Thiel, *Seeking to Please God Series*, [mp3](#)

*Scripture reading: Deuteronomy 26:11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good [thing] which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that [is] among you.*

We live in the antitypical day of atonement, in which God has called His people to afflict their souls, to do a deep heart searching, because we are being investigated. And what is Jesus discovering as He investigates? *Investigation* is quite a chilling term. In the world around us today there are investigators that investigate into certain people's lives, and it sends a chill through their system. They wonder if something wrong is going to be found somewhere. But this investigative judgment should not chill us; it should fill us with deep, earnest searching of heart to respond to what we have read in the past researches, that God is revealing to us the things that mar our life. He does not want us, in this investigative judgment, to be ignorant of what He is finding there; He wants to bring us to repentance and for us to turn from those things that mar our life.

This is the issue as we continue to research the word of God in reference to this examining of the heart. It is not to fill us with a

sense of condemnation and an overwhelming sense of unworthiness, but only to incite us to come and thank God that He is revealing it to us so that we might confess our sins to Him and open our hearts to His pardon. At this time we want to meditate on the thought expressed in the following scripture:

## Contentment

**Hebrews 13:5 [Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

These words are introducing our minds to a consideration of contentment. To be *content*. Content with what? Content with the things which I have. It is important as we examine our hearts now to examine: Am I content with the things I have? Or am I constantly looking for something else that would make my feelings better in regards to my properties, the dress of my person, or whatever it may be? Am I content with what I have? He says here: *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. This is a statement connected with being content with whatever I have, “*for/because He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

We want to connect these words with our scripture reading. In the following words of Deuteronomy, God actually draws our attention to the fact that He, with His presence, gives us things:

**Deuteronomy 26:11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good [thing] which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that [is] among you.**

Everyone. God is a father who gives all things for us richly to enjoy. So what He has given us we are actually commanded to *enjoy*? He says: *Rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God gives you.* There is something to think about here. We want to actually explore this. To be content with the things that I have; and not just to be content, but to enjoy those things that I have, so that I don't reach out for things that I don't have. This is further expanded in the following; the apostle talks here about *godliness*, a relationship with God, a godly engagement with Him:

**1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.**

*Having food and raiment*—having our necessities supplied, praising God and enjoying the food that He gives us; enjoying our home, a roof over our head; enjoying the fulfilment of God's blessing which He gives us richly to enjoy (and which He wants us to rejoice in), the *good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee.* What is it that He has given unto us? Here we are told to be content with godliness, with the things that we have, realising that what we have is a gift from God, because we have brought noth-

ing into this world. Interesting thinking. We have *brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*. So what I have is what the Lord has supplied, and I should be content with that which He has supplied to fulfil my necessity.

## Dealing with Affluence

So God actually commands us to rejoice in the things that we have. Let us consider closely this command given in Deuteronomy. As we are living in these days of the antitypical day of atonement, which started in 1844, we are living in an affluent society. Already in Sister White's time the affluence was beginning to gather momentum; and today we are living in extremely affluent situations. We have comforts which they didn't even have back then, because the technology was not so advanced. We are able to enjoy the things that God has richly given us to enjoy, and there is something for us to examine closely in the affluent society in which we live, to see whether or not we are affected by the affluence.

Apostle Paul gives us a very wonderful example in consideration of being contented; being contented because God is not forsaking us, but is blessing us. These are the words of the apostle in his experience of being blessed with provisions because his needs are being supplied by the church, just like any minister is being supplied and helped by the church; but not always did he have all that he needed. I can appreciate what he is talking about. He says:

**Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.**

Whatever situation I am in, he says, I am content, according to the provision that God gives. So there is here a mind-set that is given us in the apostle's words; a mind-set that, as we have what we have, we should be content with it, even if sometimes we don't have the things we really desire.

In these prevailing circumstances in which we today are living, we have affluence; we have more than what we need. We absolutely have. You go to the places that I have been in, like Kenya or Papua New Guinea, and they don't have what we have. We have plenty, and we can enjoy it. You know, just to have a proper shower, turning on the hot water service, without having to go and heat it up beforehand, just turning on the tap and having all this lovely hot water. In PNG that wasn't the case unless you were living in the affluent city. You had to go out there and pour water over yourself. Kenya was the same. Just the amenities of a toilet, for example, was something I was rejoicing to come back to, because over there it is just a hole in the ground. We are living in affluence when you compare. But as we live in this and we are

conditioned to have all this affluence around us, are there situations where we become a little tired of what we have, and we think, I want a change? Do we ever have that? I have what I have, but I want a change; so I get rid of what I have, and I buy something else. But I don't need it; it's just because I want a change. This is the affluent society in which we live today. People are doing it around us all the time. From childhood I have been brought up in an affluent society, and toys come my way in childhood. Then after a while of enjoying those toys, they get pushed into a corner, and I want something different. Childhood has already developed that disposition in this affluent society. At first I rejoiced in receiving certain gifts; but then those gifts became stale.

I see this in grown up children today. People have never learned to be content without change. Homes, the décor, we have everything we need; but the décor has to be changed because "I want a change; I want to have a little bit of something different." Why when I have it and I should enjoy what I have? This is the counsel of God's word. He has provided us with what we have, but we want something different, and we are not enjoying what I have. This is what happens in today's affluent society. You see this in Australia: they have these roadside pickup and they throw out their furniture, because they are going to replace it with something that satisfies their whim of change. But the furniture which is left there in the open, as we have experienced ourselves, is absolutely serviceable; it is perfectly alright. What went wrong? Why are they throwing it out? Dissatisfaction. Bored with what I

have; I want a change. The possessions we have, that which we have in our homes which is serviceable, comfortable, is to be enjoyed. Then when I get a little bit bored because the flesh gets bored of it, the Lord is saying, Enjoy! And enjoy it again! And enjoy it again. God commands us to enjoy what He has given us. This is the way we read it in Deuteronomy.

## Gratitude and Cheerfulness

**Thanksgiving and praise should be expressed to God for temporal blessings and for whatever comforts He bestows upon us. {SD 122.2}**

Remember, He says, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. I am not forsaking you, He says; I am giving you the things that you need for your comfort—*temporal blessings* and *comforts He bestows upon us*.

**God would have every family that He is preparing to inhabit the eternal mansions above, give glory to Him for the rich treasures of His grace. Were children, in the home life, educated and trained to be grateful to the Giver of all good things, we would see an element of heavenly grace manifest in our families. {Ibid.}**

Children educated to be contented and grateful for the things that they have, instead of getting bored and wanting to get something

better. This is necessary. And that would produce *an element of heavenly grace manifest in our families.*

**Cheerfulness would be seen in the home life, {*Ibid.*}**

No discontent, but cheerfulness.

**...and coming from such homes, the youth would bring a spirit of respect and reverence with them into the schoolroom, and into the church. There would be an attendance in the sanctuary where God meets with His people, a reverence for all the ordinances of His worship, and grateful praise and thanksgiving would be offered for all the gifts of His providence. {*Ibid.*}**

When I read this, something goes on in my mind. “There would be an attendance in the sanctuary where God meets with His people, *a reverence for all the ordinances of His worship.*” Children who become dissatisfied with what they have and want something new, when you come regularly to the church and you go through the same activity week after week after week, and you are a person from childhood who wants change, this is what is happening in the churches. They are not contented with the old-fashioned, primitive ways of repetition and of enjoying the repetition. They want a change. A that is why there is irreverence in the house of God.

But we are told that if the children were rightly educated, there would “a reverence for all the ordinances of His worship, and

grateful praise and thanksgiving would be offered for all the gifts of His providence.”

**Every temporal blessing would be received with gratitude, and every spiritual blessing become doubly precious because the perception of each member of the household had become sanctified by the Word of truth. {SD 122.3}**

Sanctified by the word of truth—that affects our gratitude for everything that we have been provided with.

**The Lord Jesus is very near to those who thus appreciate His gracious gifts, tracing all their good things back to the benevolent, loving, care-taking God, and recognizing Him as the great Fountain of all comfort and consolation, the inexhaustible Source of grace. {Ibid.}**

We want Jesus close? Appreciate His gifts, and He will be close. Here the Spirit of Prophecy combines our temporal blessings with our spiritual blessings. If we are content and happy and joyful, enjoying the temporal blessings without wanting a change all the time, we will then enjoy the spiritual blessings without wanting change all the time. Can you see what has happened in the fallen Adventist circles of today? The old-fashioned, primitive worship of God in the sanctuary has been replaced by modern activities. This is because people are dissatisfied with the old repetition. Can't enjoy it anymore. It's really a sickness that has taken over.

## *It Is an Idol*

All around us people will buy and buy and buy something new, constantly getting a thrill because I am buying something else that is new and fresh to me, and the old material has to be thrown out because I have bought something new; but the old material was perfectly serviceable. So what am I doing? Spending money because I am not content with what I have.

**If ever there was a time when sacrifices should be made, it is now. My brethren and sisters, practice economy in your homes. Put away the idols that you have placed before God. {CS 37.1}**

God has provided for us the luxuries and the comforts of life, and we should be rejoicing and enjoying them over and over again, and always be happy that we have this, instead of thinking, I'm tired of this one. When we become dissatisfied with the things that God has given us and we want something else, what does it boil down to, according to those words above?

**Put away the idols that you have placed before God. {CS 37.1}**

He has *given us all things richly to enjoy*, and what He has given us we should enjoy. And if I am no longer happy with them, it means I want something above God. I want something above that which God is giving me—I have an idol. It is an idol. We are examining ourselves here.

**Give up your selfish pleasures. Do not, I beg of you, spend means in embellishing your houses; for your money belongs to God, and to Him you must give an account for its use. Do not use the Lord's money to gratify the fancies of your children. Teach them that God has a claim on all they possess, and that nothing can ever cancel this claim. {CS 37.1}**

What a thought. The children need to be taught differently to the way that it is happening in society today. Don't spend money *to gratify the fancies of your children* when they already have what they need, in due consideration of everything we have read so far.

**Teach them that God has a claim on all they possess, {CS 37.1}**

He claims that they should rejoice in what He has given them. It is their possession; He wants them to enjoy it. This is what is written in Deuteronomy 26. Teach them this, that *God has a claim on all they possess, and that nothing can ever cancel this claim*. So much to meditate here. This really shows us how we should examine our hearts in regards to the dissatisfaction and discontent that develops in this present society in which we live.

**Practice economy in your homes. By many, idols are cherished and worshiped. Put away your idols. Give up your selfish pleasures. Do not, I entreat you, absorb means in embellishing your houses, for it is God's money, and it will be required of you again. {6T 450.3}**

This is a slight variation of the previously quoted statements. Here we can see that the Spirit of Prophecy is actually entreating us. *I entreat you*, He says to us, *Do not absorb means in embellishing your houses*. When you have a serviceable situation in your house and you want to embellish it some more, do not do this, I entreat you. This is what the Lord is saying to us. So we examine ourselves: Am I doing this? Where am I doing this? I want to please God.

I have seen and experienced the difference by going to places like Kenya and Papua New Guinea. Then I went to America, and what a difference there was there. When you travel, especially for missionary work, you discover vast differences. Because as a true missionary, you don't go around maintaining your comfort zone. I'll never forget when I first went to Kenya; the brother that invited me there lived in a mud house. He said to me, in his imperfect English, Do you want to stay in a hotel? I only have a "mad house". I said to him, As a servant of God, I come to stay with you. He was used to Seventh-day Adventist ministers visiting the people, but living in a hotel or motel. He was surprised that I was happy to live in his mud house.

Indeed, as we travel as missionaries, we can see the contrast of unnecessary affluence and that which we should be contented with. You sense it; you feel it. And as soon as we begin to think, I'd like this and that a little bit different, we are going off the track of enjoying what the Lord has given us. What are we? What are we as Christians in these last days? And as Christians at any time

in earth's history? What is the term used for God's people living in this world?

## What Are We?

**1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;**

*Fleshly lusts*—we usually read that to say “immoral behaviour”. No; this is not all that is meant with “fleshly lusts”. The fleshly desire where we already have serviceable material around us, we are already dressed warmly, but we want change. *Fleshly lusts*. So the Lord says: I beseech you, remember that you are *strangers and pilgrims* in this world.

This is what we are—*pilgrims*. And when you are travelling and you are a pilgrim, you don't enter into a settling state in which I just want to live for this present comfort of the world. No; I will thank God for the comforts He has given me, for the serviceable blessings that I am surrounded with, and that is what I am contented with, because I have brought nothing into this world, and I will take nothing out again. The only thing I will take out with me is my character. And if my character is of a nature that I am not contented with what I have, I will take that to heaven and I'm not going to be contented with everything I have there either. That's a reality. Because my character has developed that sort of mentality. We will be in eternity living in the same situation.

Let us read again this concept of pilgrims in Hebrews 11. Speaking of these faithful souls who have gone before us, it says:

**Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that [country] from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.**

So we will not take anything out of this world; and if I have a serviceable situation that I am surrounded by, as a pilgrim, I am going to thank God for that, because it is more than what I even expected; and I am rejoicing in what He has given me, because He is going to give me something much better afterwards; I am only a pilgrim here. So let us remember this.

**We are travelers, pilgrims and strangers, on earth. Let us not spend our means in gratifying desires that God bids us repress. Let us rather set a right example before our associates. Let us fitly represent our faith by restricting our wants. Let the churches arise as one, and work earnestly as those who are walking in the full light of truth for these last days. Let your**

**influence impress souls with the sacredness of God's requirements. {6T 452.2}**

We are pilgrims, travellers, and strangers; let us remember that. *And let us not spend our means in gratifying desires that God bids us repress.* In everything we do, whether it be embellishing our houses, dressing ourselves, whatever it may be, what are we to do? To repress the desires that God wants us to repress. So we need to examine this, and this is what we are here doing.

In this current series of meditation, we are occupied in seeking to please God. Now in reference to this subject there is something very important:

**When the mind is fixed upon pleasing God alone, all the needless embellishments of the person disappear. {FLB 243.6}**

All the needless embellishments disappear when we fix our mind upon pleasing God. And what is pleasing to God? He says, I want you to enjoy the things that I am giving you. Now that you have them, don't enter into needless embellishments. What is that? *Needless*—here is the key. Do I need it? Or do I just want it for a change? Interesting heart-searching meditation. We want to please God. *When the mind is fixed upon pleasing God alone, all the needless embellishments ... disappear.*

What are we focusing on? I am a pilgrim in these last days; I am concentrating on getting my life right with God, forming a character that is perfect, by focusing on the truth that I am to study

and occupy my mind with. Our bearings are guided by the truth that we embrace. I have my bearings; I know exactly what I have to do and how I am to live. In our efforts to follow these bearings, there is a direction given us. We are to carefully be guided as to the efforts we put into the lifestyle we are living.

## Losing My Bearings

**The time has come when we must find our bearings. We must come to our senses, and know where we are standing. We are on the very borders of the eternal world. We cannot tell what may happen next. {19MR 52.6}**

Therefore, because we cannot tell what may happen next, if we have some need that is coming next, because we have spent our means on needless embellishments, we have lost our bearings.

*The time has come when we must find our bearings. Where are we? We must come to our senses, and know where we are standing. We are on the very borders of the eternal world; we are pilgrims about to enter into the eternal world.*

**He [Christ] came . . . to elevate and ennoble our mental powers, so that our efforts in this life might not be misdirected and lost. . . {SD 125.2}**

If I am putting efforts into things that I don't really need, am I misdirecting them? When we read the word of God, our minds need to be governed by God's thoughts. I am putting efforts into

this and that and the other thing; and if I am putting efforts into trying to satisfy my discontent because I am not contented with the things I have, then what am I doing? Am I misdirecting my energies and losing my bearings? These are things we are to examine closely, because we are in the day of afflicting ourselves in this day of judgement.

What is marring my life? Am I rejoicing in what I have again and again, even though it's the same thing? Or are the thoughts of my heart something like this: "I have to look again and again at the same thing in my house, and everything is perfectly serviceable, but, Ahh... I'm getting tired of that." This is losing my bearings.

Our bearings are clearly guided by these following words:

**1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**

Doing the will of God, pleasing God, as we have just examined it. If I have a love for the world, for the pride of life, for the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh, so that I want things which are not what God has given me, and I spend my efforts and money that is for Him on things that are unnecessary, I am being misled. God is giving me directions that I am on the borders of the land,

and *godliness with contentment* is what is needed. This is what this is about. This is my bearings; because I don't love the world to stay here. I love the world that God is preparing for me. So I will make do with the things He has given me.

Now in examining ourselves, we may feel, You've just spoiled my fun. But for our motivation to be moulded aright, where is my fun? What were the early Christians talking about? What were they excited about? Everything was about Jesus. That's my joy. And also the things that He has provided for me—this is my joy; it came from His hand. I can enjoy it, because it comes from *Him*. It is connected with the bliss of His loving care for me. And I am not going to be discontented with what I have to enjoy. I see in Jesus that He is wonderfully merciful to me; He has given me more than what I even expected; and as I look to Jesus, what do I learn in reference to my contentment?

## **Permit Nothing to Divert Your Mind**

**The Lord Jesus came to strengthen every earnest seeker for truth, He came to reveal the Father. He allowed nothing to divert His mind from the great work of restoring the moral image of God in man. {SD 125.3}**

What did Jesus do? Remember, He said, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.* He permitted nothing to divert His mind from the work He was doing. We are called upon to permit nothing to divert our

mind and efforts and attention from the work that we are to do and the bearings that we are to hold.

**Romans 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself;**

He came to work for our benefit and blessing. We are told to let this mind be in us. And as I let this mind be in me and I look at Jesus, what did Jesus do for me so that I may receive the blessing He came to give?

**Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

He was obedient; He came here with one purpose in mind. He didn't lose His bearings. He didn't permit anything to divert His mind. This is our Example. I must permit nothing to divert my mind from what my mind is to be preoccupied with—God, my personal Saviour, the wonderful Provider for all my needs. And as I have all that I have, and all my needs are met, even the needs to make my home comfortable, stop there. Enjoy it. Let this mind be in you. Obey God's directions as Jesus did.

**We think it costs us something to stand in this position before the world; and so it does. But what has our salvation cost the**

**heavenly universe? To make us partakers of the divine nature, heaven gave its most costly treasure. The Son of God laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown and came to our earth as a little child. {CTr 197.5}**

Here is our motivation—beholding Jesus. Thus, when I, in my fleshly desires, in the fleshly desires of my eyes, and in my pride of life, I have all these things wanting to come exercise themselves, I may consider what it costs my Saviour, so that I may be a partaker of the divine nature. A most costly treasure was given me; Jesus laid down the precious opulence of heaven. Will I give up the opulence of earth? Absolutely.

May our close attachment to Jesus govern all our surroundings and everything personal about us, so that everything may reflect Jesus, the One who is supplying our needs, while we remain content with His provision. God grant us that we will indeed, in examining our hearts, regain our bearings and directions, and live according to the name of our movement—Advent *Pilgrims* Fellowship.

Amen.