

# False Contentment

“Not that I have already grasped it all or have already become perfect, but I press on if I may also take hold of that for which I was even taken hold of by Christ Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:12-14 (NASB)

It is interesting to listen to people describe their relationship to the Lord. We can learn much from hearing about the faith journey of others. I have been blessed as people open up concerning the Lord's way in their lives. I have also been spared making some mistakes by listening to the mistakes of others.

Yet, some claims by believers have puzzled me. Years ago, when a new believer, I heard some Christians claiming to lead “the deeper life”. Others said they were living “the higher life”. Then some claimed to live “the crucified life”. Lately, I have heard some believers say they were “fully surrendered” in their Christian walk. What are we to believe? If any of these claims were true then the individuals making these claims could have false contentment seeing they had “arrived”, spiritually speaking. There would be no more mountains to climb.

The apostle Paul was a seasoned believer when he wrote today's verses to the saints at Philippi. Paul had already written much of the New Testament, had founded many churches, had disciplesd outstanding church leaders, and generally did more for his generation than any other Christian. Yet for all that, Paul speaks of his faith

journey in the following ways: he had more to grasp, was not perfect, was pressing on, striving to take hold of what he had not yet grasped, forgetting his past achievements, reaches ahead, presses on.

Paul's description is not that of a person who thinks they have arrived or were in the higher levels of Christian achievement. Indeed, he puts aside what he has already accomplished and confesses he is in very serious need of moving much farther ahead in his spiritual life. This confession by Paul is foreign to most of what we hear and read today about Christian living.

Sadly there is too much false contentment among believers today. We need a holy dissatisfaction with how far we have come. We need an insatiable appetite for improvement that consumes us. Do not measure yourself to anyone else. Compete only with yourself. Self-satisfaction is very dangerous, especially in the life of the Christian. Just as a husband seeks to be a better husband today than he was yesterday, so believers should strive for more conformity to their Father's will today than was achieved yesterday.

Dear reader do not be discouraged at your apparent lack of

progress in Christian living. Nor feel defeated because you have had a serious fall. There are many recorded falls by biblical people. Consider Abraham lying about his relationship with Sarah, David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah, Jonah's rebellion, Peter's denial of Jesus, and on the list goes. However, these people fell to rise again. So with you. As with giants of the faith, you may fall especially when falsely content. Determine to have a persistent and holy discontent with where you are each day and a firm resolve to experience a better day tomorrow.

Remember that the Good Shepherd will always have a greater desire for your spiritual prosperity and progress than you will have. So aim high today and higher tomorrow.

“I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.” - John Newton

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