



Do you covet the life you don't have ?

The secret to happiness, some have wisely said, is to want what you already have. How many of us can truly say, "You know, I don't want to be somewhere else anymore. I'm happy and satisfied with what I have here now." ?

But unhappiness finds us wanting a life we don't have. « If *this* and *this* happens, then I'll be content. » Our neighbor's grass grows greener as we keep staring at it. If our desires could remain on our own property, we would be happier. We would better love the life we have.

This secret to happiness is not a new one. We don't achieve happiness by adding more to life to satisfy its gaping desires, but instead by following the apostle Paul's reasoning, who gives us a window into his

own happiness, when he says, "*If we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.*" (1 Timothy 6:8) With just the basics of what we need for an adequate human existence, Paul found *contentment*, which is something many kings with lavish palaces cannot find!

You Shall Not Covet

The great Architect of man's happiness etched instructions for his creatures' gladness in stone tablets, saying, "*You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or anything that is your neighbor's.*" (Exodus 20:17) In other words, keep your desires at home, want what you have, not what your neighbor has.

Hebrews 13 :5-6 gives us this wise counsel, « *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have.* » Don't slave to make your bank account rise to match your desires, but be contented with what you have. The answer to happiness is not bigger and « better », but simpler and more grateful.

Be Content with Who You Have

But the verse does not stop there : « *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) You might need to read the verse again. Did you see the shift?

The writer changes the focus from *what* he has, to *Who* he has. We need to reconsider our circumstances based on the promise that we have a loving God who will never leave us nor forsake us.

When discontent suggests, « Your current job is okay, but you would be happier to have one that grants more recognition and brings more money. » God says, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*”

« Your car does fine, but imagine how you would look if you had that one. » or « Why don't I have a husband/wife or children like she/he has? » “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*”

Now, getting a new job, a new car, — or longing to be married and have children — is not the issue. The issue is the internal restlessness and misguided search that leads us to climb from hill to hill expecting happiness just atop the next one.

And while the world, the flesh and the devil tempt us to chase and chase relentlessly, God offers *Himself* as the end of our satisfaction. He does not merely say, “The secret to happiness is to want what you already have.” He says, “The secret to happiness is to want what you already have *in Me.*”

“*Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,*” Jesus promises, “*but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again*” (John 4:13-14).

We are spiritual beings, living in earthly bodies, and God Himself must be the Vine to withering branches, Living Water to parched places, Bread of Life to starving souls, the Way to lost wanderers, the Truth to deceived minds, our Light in this present darkness. The secret to happiness is to be in union with our God who promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Adapted from an article by Greg Morse