

# The Value of Contentment: Your Family Needs This!

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Why is the day after Thanksgiving known as Black Friday?

Black Monday refers to the day of the week when the American stock market crashed in 1929. Black holes are voids in space where matter gets sucked never to be seen again. The black market is where goods and services are illegally bought and sold. In these instances, the word “black” has a negative connotation.

When we talk about Black Friday, however, the term “black” is considered good.

Generally accepted accounting principals use the contrasting terms of “in the red” and “in the black.” Red means you or your business is operating at a deficit. This is bad. Black means you or your business is operating with a profit. This is good.

Many American businesses operate in the red most of the year. But once the Christmas holiday season moves into high gear, these businesses begin operating in the black. In many cases, a business begins to make its profit on the Friday after Thanksgiving because this is the official beginning of the holiday shopping season.

The problem is that, even though Black Friday is good for the business community, Black Friday is bad for families!

The basis for so many businesses’ success is discontentment. It is the job of marketing departments to convince you and your family that you are not content with what you have. A good marketing plan will persuade you that your life is not complete unless you purchase certain products. Television blitzes the airwaves with attempts to convince the viewer that his life will be so much better if he would immediately run to the closest store and buy a specific item.

Children’s programs are particularly prone to the promotion of buying frenzies. Saturday morning children’s shows have a minimum of fourteen commercials per half-hour of programming. Many cartoons are actually promos in themselves as they attempt to persuade kids to purchase action figures of characters such as Sponge Bob Square Pants, Spider Man, and Scooby Doo. Children’s programs are designed to encourage pre-teens to whine to their parents how they must have this toy or that sugar-coated cereal.

One of the methods that Satan uses to weaken families is to stir up discontent among its members. Christian families should be wary of falling sway to raw

consumerism. Does God's Word give us guidelines on how we should feel about lusting after more and more possessions? The answer is YES! The Bible nowhere teaches us a gospel of wealth. Instead, it teaches us to be content with what we have. Once we understand how to be content with what God has provided, our families will be stronger!

## **The Ten Commandments**

Very soon after the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt, God gave them His divine Law which we call the Ten Commandments. Many mistakenly teach that these laws were only for the ancient Israelites. But the fact of the matter is that the Commandments were in existence long before there was a nation of Israel. The Commandments were in effect long before Abraham and in effect during the Garden of Eden. The Commandments were never meant to be only for the Israelites. God's Law is for *all* mankind for *all* times. (For more information, please write for our free booklet, *The Ten Commandments*.)

The Tenth Commandment tells us:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's” (Exodus 20:17).

This Scripture seems to be just the beginning of the Israelites' constantly being admonished to be content with what they had. Here are a few examples of God's people being told to not concern themselves with acquiring possessions. The Hebrews' sacred texts instructed the people to not concern themselves whenever an evil person would have more possessions than a righteous person.

“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way...A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked” (Psalms 37:7, 16).

“Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me” (Proverbs 30:8).

“Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire” (Ecclesiastes 6:9).

## **David's Wrong Discontent**

But how well did the ancient Israelites do in their efforts to be content with what they had? History tells us they failed on many occasions. One of the most profound examples of wrong discontent and its having an adverse affect on a man's family was a sin committed by King David. Yes, David was a man after God's heart and he was

greatly favored of God due to his obedience and faith. However, we have to admit that David made some serious mistakes.

One of these unfortunate incidents took place when Israel was at war with the Ammonites. During a leave of absence from the field of battle, David was resting on the roof of his house in Jerusalem. He noticed a beautiful woman who lived nearby. After inquiring about her, he was told that her name was Bath-sheeba and that she was the wife of one of David's military captains, Uriah the Hittite.

Uriah was born of the Hittites, who at times were enemies to Israel. We don't know all the details of his life, but somewhere along the way Uriah became an Israelite and had risen to the officer corps of the national army. He married a beautiful Israelite woman and lived in a house not far from the king of Israel.

Many people mistakenly believe that immigration was not allowed in ancient Israel. This is not correct. Israel was not a closed nation. God instructed His people that they were to accept an outsider if the immigrant agreed to obey His laws. Once this person became part of Israel, he was no longer considered an outsider or even an adopted member of the country. Once the newcomer agreed to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites were to accept him unconditionally in the same way they would accept someone who was actually born an Israelite (Leviticus 19:33-34). Today, God's church emulates ancient Israel in this regard as we embrace anyone who accepts Jesus as Savior and vows to be obedient to His teachings.

While Uriah was away at war, David summoned Uriah's wife to his palace and had improper relations with her. He used his position as king to take advantage of a woman. Soon after, she learned she was pregnant. David attempted to manipulate events whereby Uriah would believe he was the father of his wife's unborn child. When the scheme failed, David arranged for Uriah to be put into the heat of battle alone so he would be killed by the enemy.

For a while, David thought his plan had gone well, but then his horrible sin was exposed by Nathan the prophet. In his confrontation with David, Nathan said:

“...Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto the such and such things” (II Samuel 12: 7-8).

Nathan reminded David that God had given him so much and would have given him even more if he had only asked. Instead of being content with God's many gifts, David coveted another man's wife and murdered the man so he could have the woman for himself. The prophet then revealed God's punishment for this horrible transgression.

“Wherefore has thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou has despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife” (verses 9-10).

David's unwillingness to be content with what he had caused him to suffer and it also caused great suffering to his own family! Bath-sheeba's child died soon after birth. Not long after, David's children argued and fought amongst themselves. David's son, Absalom, even murdered his own brother, Amnon.

### **Role of Christian Father**

Covetousness should not be part of our families today. Christian families should understand the benefits of obeying God in matters of contentment and coveting. God's Word instructs a man that, when he disobeys God, not only will he suffer but so can his family (Numbers 14:18). As head of the household, it is the man's responsibility to lead and teach his wife and children all the ways of God. A Christian man uses the Bible to teach his family how they should live.

A man's teachings are not done in an overbearing manner. Rather, he leads with love as He urges acceptance of Jesus as Savior and obedience to biblical teachings.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (Ephesians 5:25, 28).

The above Scripture talks about how a husband is to lead his wife. But notice that, as we read further, we receive instruction on how a man is to deal with his children.

“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The above is significant in that it relates how a father is to nurture his children. Normally, when we discuss nurturing in the family, we think of the mother's role. But this verse clearly tells us that the masculine parent also has a responsibility to nurture his children. All of this parental methodology is vital to the Christian man as he teaches his family important principals such as proper contentment.

Does being content with one's lot in life mean that we should compromise and accept mediocrity or sin? No. It is important that we overcome sin (Romans 12:21) and constantly grow in grace and in knowledge (II Peter 3:18).

Many families constantly bicker over possessions. The children either squabble over each others' possessions or they complain that the parents do not buy them enough possessions. Any family in this situation must ask this important question, “Do we really believe in and understand God's coming Kingdom?” If the answer is truly “yes,” then there should be no concern with present-day physical extras. Whatever prosperity we desire now is nothing compared to the bounty that the entire world will have when Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom on earth. At that time, there will be truly abundant prosperity (Amos 9:13; Jeremiah 31:12-14; Isaiah 35). If a family truly believes in and lives for Jesus' millennial Kingdom on earth, they realize that today's possessions are so unimportant.

## **Christian Families Must Act**

One way to promote contentment within the family is to understand the importance of *giving* versus the desire to *get*. A Christian family should take actionable steps toward promoting giving to the less fortunate.

This begins with everyone in a family making a commitment to spend time with each other on a regular basis. Each family member should willingly agree to regularly attend family meals—not arriving late and leaving early. Each should be willing to temporarily turn off distracting and interrupting devices such as TVs, phones, and iPods.

Once family time becomes part of a family's routine, discussion can begin on what can be done together in addition to Bible study, prayer, and songs of praise. The writer of the book of Hebrews gives this admonition to the church, but it also applies to the family, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works..." (Hebrews 10:24-25, RSV). Serving others also promotes a sense of caring and fellowship. Families should participate as a team in outreach programs. This type of joint cooperation strengthens family cohesion and demonstrates belief in Jesus' commandments to do good to others.

There are charitable groups in most cities that can use the volunteer services of your family. Spending just two hours every month at a soup kitchen or women's shelter can be helpful to the less fortunate. But it will also go a long way toward helping a family better appreciate what it has.

Strengthening a family's feeling of contentment does not happen automatically. It requires effort. Children must be taught these principals from an early age.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:6-8).

For more information, check us out at [DynamicChristianMinistries.org](http://DynamicChristianMinistries.org).

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