

Staff Work

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Abstract

"Discontentment is often blatantly displayed in the actions of young children; in fact, it is something we seem to never grow out of."

Posting about trusting in God's providence from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/more/>

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Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

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Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 1-5:1-6, 37-45](#)

[Exodus 16:2-15](#)

[Philippians 1:21-30](#)

[Matthew 20:1-16](#)

It's snack time in the nursery. The little toddlers totter over to the snack table with hands outstretched in eager expectation. As the Cheerios are sprinkled into a little pile in front of each child, their moist, sticky fingers clench the first handful, swiftly shoving the whole lot into a drooling mouth. As the snacking begins, an interesting interaction takes place. It starts with a little boy who completely ignores his own pile of cheerios, greedily grabbing some from his fellow playmate. His friend lets out a squeal of disgust and quickly sweeps his treasured snack closer in an effort to protect it. Meanwhile, a little girl with her mouth full begs for "More, more!" (despite the large pile of uneaten Cheerios in front of her).

More. There always seems to be something more, and we always seem to want it. Discontentment is often blatantly displayed in the actions of young children; in fact, it is something we seem to never grow out of. It has reigned in humanity since the beginning of time, from the moment that Adam and Eve's discontentment led them to eat of the forbidden fruit. The same is true in today's passage of Exodus 16:2-15, in which the Israelites grumble and complain against God to Moses and Aaron.

What causes our discontentment? For the Israelites, discontentment stemmed from unbelief in God Himself. They were blinded by their circumstances and lost sight of how God had provided for them in the past. Their mistrust of His providence and care led them to wishing they were back in Egypt. As an outsider, it is easy to scoff at the Israelites' incompetence. Do they even remember what horrible things they endured as slaves in Egypt? Why would they ever want to go back to the place from which God had just delivered them? They could only see the direness of their current situation, which magnified the few decent moments they had experienced while in Egypt.

Similar to the Israelites, we find it easy to fall into discontentment. Someone will always have a bigger house, better job, and happier family. Just take a look around; our world is full of people living a "better life" than you are... or so it seems. When we, like the Israelites, become blinded by our current situation, we lose sight of the blessings in our own lives.

Taking inventory of all the things with which we have been blessed is a wonderful way to combat the dissatisfaction that worms its way into our lives. Being thankful for even the little things is an excellent start. As you begin to look around and see what you have been given, thank God for His providence in your life.

But, what about when life is really hard? When a loved one passes away, a child rebels, a job is lost, or health fails. What about then? How can we not be discontent? Paul sets a powerful example for us in Philippians 1:21-30. Even as he endured persecution, Paul used the trial to spread the Gospel message. In everything he did, he endeavored to grow in his relationship with Christ. Philippians 1:21 says, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." In reading Scripture, Paul's hunger to serve the Lord was not satisfied. He wanted more.

Wait. Was Paul discontent? Yes! But, it was not a worldly discontentment, where he was dissatisfied with his worldly possessions—it was a righteous discontentment. He was so hungry in his relationship with Christ that he continually sought to serve Christ more and more, despite being persecuted.

You see, discontentment often has very negative connotations, and rightly so. It leads us to into sin by causing us to covet what others have. It also leads us to put ourselves before others as we seek to satisfy our wants and desires. However, a righteous discontentment—one that ignites a desire to grow in integrity, relationship, and faith—is something we should never lose. Like little children with eyes wide and hands eagerly outstretched towards a delicious snack, may we seek with a righteous discontentment to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ.