

# Dissatisfaction

It's the curse of our age! We have so much, but we want more. Even if we don't need it, and even if God has given no indication that He wants to give it to us, we still want it. When we are focussed on what we *don't* have, it is impossible to really appreciate and be grateful for what we *do* have! This leads us into dissatisfaction and we now have an entire advertising industry which thrives on and feeds off our dissatisfaction.

Dissatisfaction is a feeling of discontent and displeasure with circumstances in life and/or other people. So, pause for a minute now, and think about what you do have. You would like to have more money - but how much money do you have? There are some things you would like to own - but what do you already own? Perhaps your physical health is limited - but what can you still do? How are you blessed with abilities that enable you to create beauty, with friends who bring richness to life, or with good memories that warm your heart in moments of solitude?

The secret to banishing dissatisfaction is not really a secret. We just don't want to embrace the secret because our broken human nature seems to take pleasure in complaining! Gratitude is like a lens that helps us refocus our attention from our perceived lacks (which might not be good for us anyway) to our actual blessings from God. In this way, gratitude leads us to contentment and brings healing to our soul. When Christ fills your heart and mind, you can be at peace and content with the things, people, and circumstances our sovereign God has placed in your life and stop yearning for the things He has not given us or allowed us to have. The only thing that truly satisfies the human soul is knowing Jesus Christ. Striving, coveting, and spending our time wanting what is not available to us can leave us broken, bitter and always dissatisfied.

I want to really encourage you to read on and seriously wrestle with what I am about to share with you. This is not an inconsequential issue. Dissatisfaction is a cancerous disease in our society and in the church and it wreaks havoc every moment it is allowed to control our thoughts, our desires and our attitude.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT DISSATISFACTION:

- a. **The enemy causes dissatisfaction.** The Bible says in John 10:10 that it is the enemy that kills, steals, and destroys. If you are dissatisfied and unhappy, guess who stole your joy? Jesus came to destroy the work of the enemy and to give you abundant life. He wants you to be content and happy.
- b. **Disappointments cause dissatisfaction.** Sometimes other people or circumstances disappoint you. Sometimes you disappoint yourself by failures. These disappointments can very often lead us into dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction with your own performance or that of others around you leads to discouragement, and discouragement can lead to depression.
- c. **Materialism causes dissatisfaction.** In 1 Timothy 6:9-10, Paul warned Timothy: *"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."* All the things that you want that seem so important are usually only temporal. You really need to focus on what is eternal (1 John 2:15-17).

- d. **Dissatisfaction is sin.** When you are dissatisfied, grumbling, and complaining, you are actually blaming God for your circumstances, implying that He is not providing adequately for your needs. Israel was repeatedly dissatisfied with God's provision in the wilderness. They grumbled about the lack of water and food. Then they complained because the manna God provided was not as good as the leeks and garlic they had in Egypt. God said their grumbling was sin and judged it as such.
- e. **Dissatisfaction always leads to:** grumbling, complaining, unhappiness, an unthankful and even a critical spirit. There is nothing even remotely positive or helpful about dissatisfaction.

#### DEALING WITH DISSATISFACTION:

- a. **Recognize that dissatisfaction is sin.** As with all other sins, you must confess this sin and embrace God's forgiveness and healing.
- b. **Ask God to give you a spirit of contentment.** The Apostle Paul declared: *"...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11-13).* He told young Timothy to be content with the basics of food and clothing (1 Timothy 6:8). The Hebrews were admonished to be content with what they had.
- c. **Put your trust in God,** rather than in people or things that will fail (Psalm 20:7-8; 44:6; 146:3). That way you will never be disappointed or dissatisfied. Your trust should be in God, not in man and not even in yourself. Keep your focus on the Lord!
- d. **Make positive changes in your life.** What changes can you make that will eliminate negative circumstances in your life? What changes will bring joy back into your life?
- e. **Return to the basics of Christian life.** Be faithful in prayer, church attendance, and meditating on the Word of God. The Word of God is effective to facilitate change in any problem or circumstance of your life. Dissatisfaction is a state of mind, and your mind can be renewed through the Word (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10).
- f. **Cultivate friendships with positive people.** Avoid being a loner. Satan always wants to isolate you through dissatisfaction. You should deliberately spend time with believers who are positive and uplifting. Do not hang around with negative, critical, judgmental people - this will contribute to your own dissatisfaction. Christian friendships with positive people will help you when you feel discouraged (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).
- g. **Do something for other people.** This will take the focus off of things which may be causing your dissatisfaction. The joy you receive from doing acts of kindness towards others will help eliminate your dissatisfaction. When you see how tough some other people have it, you will be more satisfied with your own lot in life.
- h. **Start a gratitude journal.** Write down at least one thing each day for which you are thankful. This will help you remain focused on the positive instead of the negative. It is the will of God for you to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

- i. **Recognize the difference between happiness and true joy.** Happiness is based on outward circumstances. When things are going well, then you are happy. When circumstances are bad, you are unhappy. Joy, on the other hand, is a spiritual fruit from God. You can rejoice in every circumstance and the joy of the Lord gives you strength to face negative circumstances (Philippians 4:4, 1 Thess. 5:18). Jesus faced the most difficult circumstances of His life with joy. Although He knew the suffering that awaited Him in Jerusalem, He entered the city with a joyous procession. In view of this, *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross”* (Hebrews 12:2).
- j. **Pray this prayer every morning:** *“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me”* (Psalm 51:12).

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DISSATISFACTION:

You may be surprised to learn that the Bible has a lot to say about the insidious cancer of dissatisfaction. I have selected just 31 references for you to study, but there are hundreds more. Why would the Bible have so much to say about dissatisfaction? The answer is simple. God knows we are broken, self-consumed and prone to look inward and not upward or outward. Dissatisfaction reared its ugly head in the Garden of Eden and it has been a curse to us ever since. Therefore, God has a lot to say about dealing with this enemy of our souls.

I want to beg you, in Jesus’ name, to not skim over these readings. As you read them, I implore you to listen for the voice of God to you today – right now – in your personal circumstances, which He knows only too well. I could preach a whole sermon on each one of these passages – they are so important and so relevant today – especially for rich, affluent, blessed, but dissatisfied Christians in the modern world! Hear the Word of the Lord:

**Nehemiah 8:10** *“... for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

**Psalms 37:3-4** *“Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”*

**Psalms 42:2** *“My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”*

**Psalms 63:1** *“You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.”*

**Psalms 63:5** *“I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.”*

**Psalms 90:14** *“Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”*

**Psalms 91:16** *“With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*

**Psalms 103:1-5** *“Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”*

**Psalms 107:9** *“... for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”*

**Psalms 145:16** *“You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”*

**Isaiah 55:2-3** *“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.”*

**Isaiah 58:11** *“The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”*

**John 4:13-14** *Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

**Luke 6:21** *“Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied ...”*

**John 6:33** *“For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

**John 6:35** *Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

**John 7:38** *“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*

**John 10:10** *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”*

**John 15:11** *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

**Romans 14:17** *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit ...”*

**Galatians 5:22-23** *“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

**Philippians 4:4-9** *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

**Philippians 4:11-13** *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”*

**Philippians 4:19** *“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”*

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** *“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

**1 Timothy 6:8** *“But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”*

**1 Timothy 6:9-10** *“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

**Hebrews 13:5** *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

**1 Peter 1:8-9** *“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”*

**2 Peter 1:3** *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”*

**1 John 2:15-17** *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”*

## **THE SINS BEHIND THE SIN OF DISSATISFACTION:**

If you are not already squirming, then I must warn you: I am about to sharpen the point some more as I wrap up this important sermon. I have already established that dissatisfaction is a sin, however, there are three primary sins which hide in the background and fuel this debilitating condition in us. Those three sins are *pride, rebellion and unbelief*. These are the original sins of the devil and his angels. They are sins that come from hell itself.

### **Dissatisfaction is a manifestation of PRIDE**

**Jude 16** *“These [the ungodly] are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favouritism to gain advantage”*

Dissatisfaction is a manifestation of pride. It flows from a heart that says, *“I deserve better than God has given me.”* This was the original sin of Satan himself. In the letter of Jude, we have a reference to angels who, like Satan, were not content to be the servants of God, *“angels who did not stay within their own position of authority but left their proper dwelling.”* (Jude 6).

Pride led some angels to say, *“We deserve better than God has given to us!”* God gave them positions of authority, but they were not satisfied. They are certainly not satisfied now. They never will be. Thomas Boston says, *“The devil is the proudest creature and the most dissatisfied because pride and discontent always live under one roof.”*

*“I deserve better than God has given me!”* If I catch myself thinking like that, I have to look in the mirror and say firmly, *“That is the opposite of everything you believe!”* I believe God has given me abundantly more than I ever deserved. What I deserve is death and hell. But God has loved me. God has given His Son for me. God has blessed me with every spiritual blessing in Christ. He has given me all that I need for life and godliness. In all things His love surrounds me, and in all things, He pursues His great purpose, which is also my purpose, that a true likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ, be formed in me. Dissatisfaction is a hellish sin because it is a manifestation of pride.

### **Dissatisfaction is an expression of REBELLION**

In the Old Testament, we have the story of Job, a good and godly man who was greatly blessed by God. His family was blessed, his business was blessed. Job was living the dream, and then one day through a series of disasters, he lost absolutely everything, in human terms. Job said, *“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”* (Job 1:21).

The dissatisfied and discontent person says something different. They say, *“The Lord gave, but He should have given more,”* or, *“The Lord has taken away, and He should not have done that.”* Jude talks about *“harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against God.”* Dissatisfaction is a terrible sin because, at its heart, it is an expression of rebellion against God. The clay says to the potter, *“Why have you made me like this?”* (Romans 9:20). *“God, you should have done something different!”* That's rebellion, and the Scripture says, *“Who are you to speak like that to God?”* (Romans 9:20).

### **Dissatisfaction is a fruit of UNBELIEF**

You see this is Exodus 17. God's people had been greatly blessed. He brought them out of slavery in Egypt, and He provided manna to feed them in the wilderness. Why is it that those who are most blessed are often most dissatisfied? Then God's people came to a place where there was no water. Now that is a legitimate concern. And there are times in life when we may have legitimate concerns about how God will supply what we need. But their legitimate concern metastasized into unbelief. They tested the Lord by saying, *“Is the Lord among us or not?”* (17:7)

They were redeemed people, but they lost confidence that God was still with them. If you no longer believe that God is with you, you will no longer be confident that He will supply what you need. Then it will not be long before the grumbling begins and you find yourself sliding into dissatisfaction.

### **HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?**

I really hope you are in a place of saying, *“I didn't think too much about this before, but now I see that I need to deal with this sin wherever it rears its ugly head in my life. I need to get beyond the idea that moaning and complaining always wanting more than I have doesn't really matter. I need to get serious about moving from anger to peace, from frustration to satisfaction, and from anxiety to trust.”*

Thank God there is a Saviour to Whom you can turn. Ask Him to help you deal with this sin if you see it in your life today. Ask Him to cleanse you afresh and wash this from your heart. Then ask Him to help flood your mind and your heart with a spirit of Godly contentment.

True satisfaction and peace in life comes from knowing that everything that concerns you is in the hands of the Saviour Who loves you. Satisfaction lies in knowing that in Jesus Christ you have all you need. Trust begins when you know that He is faithful, and those who look to Him are never put to shame. Let me finish with a classic example from real life which you may recall seeing in the news a few years ago.

American actress Lori Loughlin was sentenced to two months in federal prison for her role in the college admissions scandal. Her husband, and co-defendant, received five months in prison and 250 hours of community service. During the hearings, US District Judge Nathaniel Gorton addressed Lori with these incredibly cutting, but insightful words:

*“Here you are an admired, successful, professional actor with a long-lasting marriage, two apparently healthy, resilient children, more money than you could possibly need, a beautiful home in sunny Southern California – a fairy tale life. Yet you stand before me a convicted felon. And for what? For the inexplicable desire to grasp even more.”*

Our whole society has been taken captive by this *inexplicable desire to grasp even more*. We are blessed beyond measure. We enjoy a lifestyle which is the envy of 80% of the world ... and yet we still want what we don't have ... we still are not satisfied. This is a tragic place for any person to live, but for a disciple of Christ to find themselves in this pit of dissatisfaction – is, quite frankly, completely incomprehensible. We should be the most satisfied people on the planet.

Just imagine, if you can, how magnetic and dynamic the Church would be if everyone who followed Jesus could be free from the sin of dissatisfaction today? We would shine like spotlights in the darkness and depression of a dissatisfied, self-absorbed world. That is our calling. That is our destiny. That is what the world desperately needs us to be!

Let those who have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church today.