contented, surely Paul means to say that no matter what circumstances we face, we can be contented before God, and happy in Him. Consider Job, even though Providence had dealt him a very bitter hand, yet he did not lose his faith and trust in God. In the midst of his terrible suffering he says,

Job 1:20-22 - 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." 22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God. NASB

In all of this, "Job did not sin nor did he blame God." Consider, if Job can face what he faced and still worship God and not blame God in a disrespectful way, but rather trusted in and praised God no matter what he faced, how much more can we, who have the knowledge of Christ and the indwelling Spirit to comfort? In fact, we “can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Barnes comments... “I can do all things. From the experience which Paul had in these various circumstances of life, he comes here to the general conclusion that he could "do all things." He could bear any trial, perform any duty, subdue any evil propensity of his nature, and meet all the temptations incident to any condition of prosperity or adversity. His own experience in the various changes of life had warranted him in arriving at this conclusion; and he now expresses the firm confidence that nothing would be required of him which he would not be able to perform. In Paul, this declaration was not a vain self-reliance, nor was it the mere result of his former experience. He knew well where the strength was to be obtained by which to do all things, and on that arm that was able to uphold him he confidently relied."

Dear Christian, shall you poison your blessed days with the sour water of discontent? Why not look beyond the “light and momentary affliction” (2 Cor 4:17) to Christ, your strong Savior, and there find all of the comfort and grace needed to endure. In fact, your trial is designed by God’s good Providence to drive you to the feet of Jesus, and in humble trust for you to cast your cares upon Him.

1 Peter 5:6-7 - 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. NASB

Let us therefore learn Paul’s secret here...it is Christ who strengthens us in this life. If you want to be happy, if you want to be settled and peaceful no matter what you face, if you desire to be content in “any and every circumstance,” you “can do all things through Him who gives you strength!” Surely the Lord cares for you and will uphold you in the day of trouble!

Remedies and exhortations to contentment

1) Learn to delight in God and be thankful (1 Thes 5:16-18). Count your blessings ever and always!

1 Thessalonians 5:18 – 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. NASB

2) Be careful not to get too attached to things in this world (1 John 2:15-17), for you do not know when they will be taken from you. You must be willing to part with anything, should the Lord require it of you.

1 John 2:15-17 - 15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. NASB

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3) Be sure that you are valuing Christ above all other things in your life. If you are not, your value system is broken and in desperate need of repair, because He is most valuable.

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." NASB

4) Always remember that God knows what is best for you and will never give you more than you can bear (1 Cor 10:13), but will always be a refuge for those who call upon Him for deliverance (Psalm 145:18-19). God has designed your suffering to work for your good, and will at the proper time give you relief. His will shall never lead you where His grace will not keep you.

1 Corinthians 10:13 - 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. NASB

Psalm 145:18-19 - 18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him. To all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. NASB

5) Let a Christian often think with himself, “who hath placed me here, whether I am in a high sphere, or in a lower. Not chance or fortune, as the purblind heathens imagined; no, it is the wise God (Lam 3:37-38) that hath by his providence fixed me in this orb.” Thomas Watson

Lament 3:37-38 - 37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth? NASB

6) When facing a bitter trial, remember that God has promised never to leave you or forsake you (Heb 13:5-6), but will be your strength and hope no matter what you face. You must come to Him personally for strength…. “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me!”

Hebrews 13:5-6 - 15 Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," 6 so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?” NASB

7) Prayer gives vent to your sufferings. Pour out your complaint to God, with humility and contrition ask Him what response He might be seeking from you. Then leave you care at His feet, as often as possible, expecting either His deliverance or His grace to endure. He is worthy of your trust and you can believe his promises to care for you.

Job 10:1-2 - 10 I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me; Let me know why Thou dost contend with me. NASB

1 Peter 5:6-7 - 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. NASB

8) Consider; “Your sufferings are not so great as your sins: put these two in the balance, and see which weighs heaviest; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins.” Thomas Watson

Faith

Another very important virtue in the Christian life is that of Faith. The word is used in various ways and has a few different meanings, but primarily faith is a belief in or confident attitude toward God, involving commitment to His will for one’s life. It is not often used in the Old Testament, however in the New Testament it is used to describe the life of faithful saints of the