

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long sentence! (202 words in Greek... 309 in the NLT)

If you want to really understand something in particular, ask an expert

- Not one who is an expert in theory (Someone who merely knows a lot about something)
- But an expert in reality (Someone who has actually experienced a lot of something)
  - You want to know about pain, ask someone who has truly suffered
  - You want to know about surfing, ask someone who actually surfs
  - You want to know about contentment & discontentment, ask someone who **had more than any one else**

John D. Rockefeller was the founder of the Standard Oil Company (d. 1937, 2 mos. before his 98<sup>th</sup>)

- He was the **first** American billionaire and (if you adjust for inflation) is often considered to be the **richest person** that ever lived
- **When John D. Rockefeller was asked how much money was enough, he replied: "Just a little bit more."**

Discontentment

- [A restless longing for better circumstances](#)
- That thing inside us that is never quite satisfied... always needs "just a little bit more"
- That thing that makes us cheat on **taxes**, cheat on our **spouses**, steal from our **employers**, refuse to **tithe**, neglect our **children** to work longer hours and **augment** our bodies with plastic

Proverbs 27:20 (NKJV)

... the eyes of man are never satisfied.

It's true isn't it?

- The smartest/most successful/highest grossing companies in the world count on it
- How often have you bought the latest **Apple** product only to find out that the next generation, the newer version comes out next month?
- Why does every car company have a 2012 model? What was wrong with the 2011 version?
  - Most likely nothing
    - But you can bet that the newer one will be better than the old, even though the old as fantastic!
      - Why?
      - Because "**the eyes of man are never satisfied**"
      - And they know that if they make a newer, better one, we'll buy it!

Why will we buy it? Why are we never satisfied?

- Yes, yes, we are sinners
- But what, in particular, causes "**the eyes of people to never be satisfied**"?
- The problem is not the product... we can actually be satisfied with the old one. (iPhones and Expeditions)
- The problem is not merely our circumstances... we hear of people in mud huts who are more content than some people we know in mansions
  - In fact, it could be argued and observed, that better circumstances often seem to actually yield greater discontent!
    - Why?
    - Because they serve to **highlight/accentuate** the actual problem...

In acquiring the latest version, or the better circumstance, the bigger home, the new promotion, the younger woman, the better appearance, we are shocked when we discover the same sort of **restless discontent** we had before we got them

- “Why didn’t this fix my problem? Why do I still feel restlessness and longing... dissatisfaction?”
- We find that the problem is: **What we are discontent with is ourselves!**
  - The accumulation of those things only made that problem more glaring
  - And the pain and confusion of restless living continues and deepens...

### The reason we are discontent is because we are discontent with ourselves

- And we cannot rescue/save ourselves out of this
  - And because we are discontent with ourselves we **cannot be content** with anything
  - Nothing is **good enough** because we do not see ourselves as good enough... and we aren’t
  - Our dissatisfaction with things is really just a **projection** of our dissatisfaction with ourselves

### Cf. This was Eve’s issue

- It wasn’t that the other trees in the garden were not good enough
- It wasn’t that God wasn’t good enough
- **It was that she didn’t see herself as good enough**
  - She was told by the serpent that if she ate the fruit, “Her eyes would be open, she would be like God” (Gen 3:5)
    - Could she not see before? Her eyes needed opening?
    - Was she not created in the image of God? She needed to be like God?
      - **It was the allure of more**
      - How much is enough? **Just a little more.**
      - Because we are not satisfied with who we are

The writer of Ecclesiastes felt the torture of this human condition

- Ecclesiastes 1:8  
Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.

So how do we climb our way out of the **wearisome** pit of discontentment? (That drives us)

Ephesians 1:3

Notice first of all that the passage starts by joining us in praise to God

- All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

There are many reasons to praise God (already seen in Ephesians 1)

- Even though we are **dirty**, we have a **new identity** as “God’s holy people” (v. 1)
- Even though we are **undeserving**, we have been given **grace** (v. 2)
- Even though we were **broken** and **enemies** of God, through Christ we have **wholeness** and **peace** (v. 2)

More than enough reason to praise the Father ... But now we are told

- All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.

Notice the past tense

- ... who **has** blessed us...

Notice the why

- ... because we are **united** with Christ...
- It's not anything **you are** or **have done**
- Because of who Christ is and what He has done for you
- What does **united** mean? (explain)

When we are **united with Christ**, then we are “**blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms**”

- Not normal blessings, which available to everyone (I.e. General grace)
  - But these are only for those who are **in** (or **united with**) **Christ** by faith
- Furthermore, these are **spiritual blessings**
  - Which means they are not material blessings
  - Though God will bless us that way too... (and that is great)
    - **It's just that no material thing can ever remedy our discontentment with ourselves**
  - But these **blessings** are of a different quality and nature and value (**in the heavenly realms**)
    - I.e. The stuff of eternity

They are given to us in the following verses (remember, this is 1 long sentence) (**Read vv. 4-8**)

- **God loves us** (v. 4)
- **God chose us**
- **We are holy and without fault in God's eyes (in Christ)**
- **God adopted us into His own family** (v. 5)
- **God delights in us (it gave Him great pleasure)**
- **God has poured glorious grace out on us** (v. 6)
- **We belong to God's Son**
- **God purchased our freedom (with Christ's blood)** (v. 7)
- **God forgave our sins**
- **God has showered kindness on us** (v. 8)

**By being united with Christ, we have gone from discontent to blessed!**

- From discontent to:
  - Loved
  - Chosen
  - Holy
  - Adopted
  - Delighted in
  - Grace poured out on
  - Christ owned
  - Blood bought
  - Free and forgiven
  - Recipients of Divine Kindness

You are those things! (Identity)

Remember, the source of our discontent is ourselves

- We feel unlovable
- We feel rejected
- We feel dirty
- We feel ashamed
- We feel abandoned
- We feel that we have disappointed
- We feel deserving of wrath
- We feel caught in sin
- We feel burdened with guilt

## No material thing can ever settle those issues

- Only the work of Christ according to the will of the Father **on our behalf!**
- These blessings make us content!!!

## The issues of discontentment:

- I want more
- I deserve better
  - **Are solved!**
  - **You deserved death and hell... you have been given all these things (because you are united with Christ)**
- Why can't I have that
- I've earned this

## So that now we can finally be content:

- In a state of peaceful happiness
- Satisfied with a certain level of achievement
- Not wishing for more

## Because we are united with Christ

- **We can only ever be satisfied and blessed in Christ**

In this life, we have more or less **material** blessings and possessions; in **spiritual** terms we have not merely some but all blessings in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

- So, there is no room for discontentment
- It is hard... we must listen to the **message of Christ** more than the **message of culture** (you have every blessing vs. you need more)

## Being blessed means that we are not cursed

- I know life sometimes feels this way
  - Second diagnosis for Daisy... (500 cases per year; 80 per year)
- As temporal circumstances change, these "**spiritual blessings in the heavenly realm**" do not change
- **The joy of the Lord is our strength**

For those who are **united with Christ**, we have to daily make a choice as to which is the greater truth

- That my temporal circumstances in this life are dissatisfying
- Or that my identity and blessings in Christ are overwhelming

That affects how we live (**heavenly** does not mean of no earthly good)

- **Identity = action**
- Knowing **who we are and what we have** in Christ allows us to enjoy **who we know and what we have** on earth much, much more
  - Because we don't **need** them anymore
    - We can actually love people more because we need them less
    - We can enjoy things more because we need them less
      - When we needed them, they could only ever disappoint (As Eve discovered)
      - **What we need is Christ!** Who gives us **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Him**

## All praise to God...

<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians, An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1997), 10.