

Conquering Life's Mountains Together!

Personal Life Coaching

December 2006

Greetings!

Barb and I have been working for the past couple of years to learn about marketing, website building and ebooks. I never expected to become a webmaster (I use the term very loosely) at this stage of my life! Little did we know that our lives would take a turn in a different direction than what we had been pursuing. It's been challenging and downright frustrating at times. Anyone who works with computer technology will understand what I mean.

No matter what stage of life we're in there are always new opportunities for growth. Despite the frustrations, it's been rewarding to learn new skills and to see the work we've accomplished. Our desire is to find ways to reach out to more people in the most effective way. The great thing about the Internet and our modern day communication is that we are not limited to any area. We are able to reach people around the world. We're always on the lookout for new ways to best get our information and services out to those who need them.

Barb is currently working on different ebooks, which will be for sale on the Internet. One she hopes to soon have completed is entitled *Christians and Depression*. This ebook is based on a survey she took earlier this year, as well as her years of experience and knowledge as a therapist.

As a Christian, have you ever been told you shouldn't be depressed? This is just one of the issues Barb will be addressing in this ebook. If you are interested in knowing more about this book when it is released, please email us at info@setapartmingb.org and we will forward the website address to you as soon as it is available.

Throughout the month of December and January, Marilyn is offering a referral special: For every person you refer for coaching that becomes a client, you will receive TWO coaching sessions in addition to a free introductory call. That's THREE coaching calls at no charge to you. I'd love to meet you and talk with you about the changes you'd like to make in your life! Call today at 920-336-7005 or 866-234-0291 or email at info@setapartmingb.org

Coaching is about reaching the goals and dreams we have set for ourselves, but when is enough enough? Where is the line between achieving our goals and being content with our circumstances. Contentment is the subject of today's article.

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Blessings and Peace,



Barbara Klika and Marilyn Guffey, Personal Life Coaches

The Double-sided Coin of Contentment



Some of my favorite scenes in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof* are the times when Tevye is faced with his daughters arranging their own marriages-- something unheard of in his Jewish culture. He goes back forth trying to decide what he should do, saying, "On the one hand...", "but, on the other hand..."

As I was thinking about writing this article on **contentment**, I expected it to be a one-sided teaching on *being content in all circumstances*. That is, until I looked up the definition: *the state, quality or fact of being happy enough with what one has or is, not desiring something more or different* (New World Dictionary of the American Language, Copyright 1984 by Simon & Schuster, Inc.). As I read that definition, it occurred to me that there in "On the one hand," a good side to contentment and "on the other hand," a side to contentment that can hold us back from growth. Today, we will look at the two sides of contentment.

We will first look at what it means to be content in all circumstances. These are the things we are **unable to change**. Next, we will discuss how discontentment allows us to grow in the the things we **can change**.

ON THE ONE HAND

Not that I speak concerning need, for I have learned to be content in whatever state I am. I know what it is to have in excess. In any and every situation, I have learned both to be filled, and to be hungry, both to have in excess, and to be in need. (Phil. 4:11 & 12. *The Scriptures*. Copyright 1998 by Institute for Scripture Research).

The Apostle Paul is a good example of being content in whatever circumstances he faced. Rev. Charles Spurgeon in his sermon on *Contentment* (<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0320.htm>) stated, "...(F)or this is surely the highest degree in humanities to which a man can possibly attain, to have learned in whatever state he is to be content" (public domain). Paul suffered shipwrecks, traveled throughout the world, was stoned and imprisoned. Yet, throughout the Epistle to the Philippians, the theme of **REJOICING** comes through loud and clear. (For Dr. C.R. Oliver's December Newsletter on Rejoicing, [click here](#)).

In our Set Apart Ministries Community, we've learned through *The Life Model** process that joy is an important part of our mental and emotional health. Joy grows through our relationships with God and with others. the brain actually grows in response to this type of joy. (For more on joy, [click here](#) for our S.A.M. newsletter archives). Contentment will result from the joy that has been built up within us from these relationships. *The Joy of the Lord is your strength!* (Nehemiah 8:10b).

Contentment comes from a deep abiding faith in Jesus the Messiah despite our circumstances. Our joy is not based on outside influences or whether or not we succeed from a worldly perspective. True contentment comes from knowing we are living our lives according to Scriptural standards--according to the Living Word--Jesus!

As you set your goals, what are your priorities? Do you always find yourself wanting more--more money, a bigger home, a newer car? We are bombarded daily with materialism and persuasion to buy the newest products.

At this time of year, I am always saddened by the behavior of some people at the special sales events. People are trampling one another, fighting over sales items and waiting outside all night to be first in line at a store. Somehow people think that getting the latest video game or newest toy is going to bring real joy. If we look to the world for our contentment, we will never find it.

Are you content? Ask yourself the following questions:

- How do I respond to the struggles and trials of my life?
- What do I think about my life, myself and who God created me to be?
- How do I perceive my current circumstances?
- David's discontent led him to fall into sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). Where does my discontent lead me?
- What is my driving force--money, worldly success or walking in God's paths of righteousness?

How do we learn to be content in all circumstances? How could Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego face the fiery furnace? As believers in Jesus of Nazareth, we know there is more than the present life. We know that this life is in preparation for the return of Jesus.

God is refining each of us in our own fiery furnace to become sparkling gold. Knowing that God is at work in whatever circumstances we endure (Rom. 8:28 & 29) and accepting that refinement can bring us into a place of deep inner joy and contentment.

ON THE OTHER HAND

Not that I have already received, or already been perfected, but I press on, to lay hold of that for which Messiah has also laid hold of me. Brothers, I do not count myself to have laid hold of it yet, but only this: forgetting what is behind and reaching out for what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Messiah (Phil. 3:12-14. The Scriptures. Copyright 1998 by Institute for Scripture Research)

Part of life is growing and maturing in our faith and our walk. I do not want to be content to stay where I am. God is at work to discipline, refine and prune me in my life. If I am not open to His leading and am content to stay where I am, I will stagnate. There are always new opportunities for growth, no matter how old we are!

Have you just decided to settle for whatever life has thrown you? What are you able to do to make changes in your life? Following are a few areas where we can make changes and set goals for ourselves. These are areas that we don't have to settle for whatever happens to us.

Maturity:

Do you find yourself reacting to situations in an ungodly or childlike way? Do you have many fears in your life? We can continue to mature throughout our lives. Maturity is growing from a child to an adult, not just physically but emotionally. According to *The Life Model**, there are specific tasks we need to accomplish in each stage of life in order to be successful as adults--to become parents and wise elders in our

communities and families. There are often gaps in our maturing process that cause us difficulties in life. For a chart on different maturity levels and the tasks to be accomplished at each level, [click here](#). This chart will help you to begin pinpointing weak areas in your maturity that you can work through with the help of trusted family and friends.

Education:

Are you bored? Do you feel left behind at work, Bible Studies or social situations? We do not stop learning once we have finished our schooling. There are many opportunities to increase in knowledge throughout our lives. Ongoing study of the Scriptures is important to understand God's will for our lives. Reading good literature, learning new hobbies, maybe learning a foreign language--these are ways to improve our thinking and performance, as well as our joy. I've recently begun studying biblical Hebrew. It's a daunting task, but it's been fun and rewarding. We've had lots of laughs in our class.

Physical Health:

Do you need to eat healthier and exercise so that you are performing at your peak? In our fast food, hectic lifestyles in America, many people are stressed out and out of shape. there are many ways to begin exercising with classes, gyms and DVD's. I've found that having a walking buddy is a good way for me to regularly exercise.

Spiritual Disciplines:

Do you read the Scriptures and pray daily? Do you take time to worship and sit in the Lord's presence? Here are a few ideas: you can memorize Scripture, learn how to apply God's laws to your life, or write in a prayer journal. There are many other disciplines that will enhance your spiritual walk. Our Messiah, our Bridegroom, is looking for a spotless, righteous Bride when He returns.

Relationships:

Are you content with the quality of your relationships? Are your relationships characterized by Love Bonds or Fears Bonds ([click here](#) to learn more)? We all need trust and intimacy in close relationships in order to thrive. As a community, we've found that it takes commitment to one another to grow in our relationships. It is not an easy process. Several of us have continued in a *Life Model** group to stand together. We want to grow in maturity and accountability to one another. One of our reminders to each other is, "Pray, stay and don't run away." When people come into conflict in relationships, often the desire is to run away or just not deal with the issues. Again, I stress, this is not easy, but we have seen the fruit of this process through the growth we see in one another.

What about your relationship with God. Throughout His word, He tells us to seek Him. Are you doing everything in your life to seek man's applause or to hear, "Well, done thou good and faithful servant," from your Heavenly Father. Do you do what you do out of love for Him or love for worldly pleasures? As we grow in our relationship with Him, we are changed. A growing relationship takes time and effort. Jesus is returning at a time we do not know. We do not know when our earthly lives will end. We need to be ready at any time.

I pray you are never content in your relationship with God, continue to seek His face and to grow in your spiritual walk and understanding. Last time, I encourage you to find a prayer partner and I want to encourage you again to find a trusted friend.

Call Barb or Marilyn today, to discuss these or any other areas where you may be less than satisfied and we will coach you in setting goals and in achieving them. Call us at

920-336-7005 or 866-234-0291 or email us at info@setapartmingb.org. (M.G.)

Keeping Your Joy Full!

There are times when joy may seem to be totally elusive. The gloomy weather, sickness, difficult circumstances seem to all be working against us to find any joy at all. Where has the joy gone; is it even possible to get it back?

Just last night, three of us from Set Apart Ministries were sitting together talking about difficult situations. After talking for a while, we all discovered we **were** feeling better.

The Apostle Paul tells the Galatians in Chapter 6 verse 2 to *bear one another's burdens*. If we keep isolated when we are struggling, our flesh and the enemy can work against us to keep us from finding any joy. Something happens when believers in Jesus come together and share their sorrows and struggles. It is not something I'm able to totally understand. I believe when we come together, the Holy (Set Apart) Spirit works in each of us to bring truth and peace. He is our Guide, Teacher, Counselor and intercedes on our behalf. Praise God for His goodness and mercy and for the people He puts in our lives.

Changes of a Woman's Life Survey

Marilyn Guffey is conducting a survey on the Life Changes of Women. Please take a moment to submit one important question that's on your mind. Marilyn plans to use the answers for future articles and eventually an e-book. Thank you for your input! [Click here to ask your question.](#)

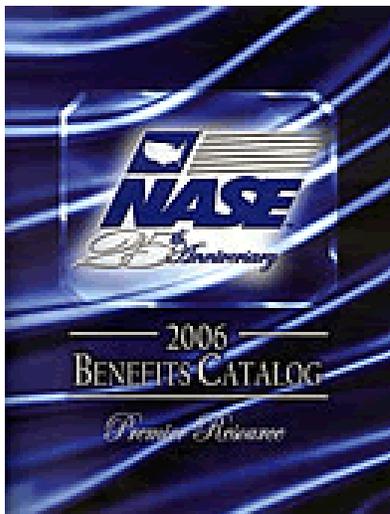
ABOUT US

Barbara L. Klika, MSW, LCSW, Personal Life Coach is a licensed mental health professional and founder of Set Apart Ministries, Inc., who is trained to help people learn new skills and make significant behavior changes. She is a trained Bible Study teacher and has been mentoring people in their spiritual growth for many years. She has completed Life Coaching training through Mentor Coach, Inc. She is here to offer her skills in the areas of faith development, communication, problem-solving, and behavior change.

Marilyn T. Guffey, lay counselor, Personal Life Coach, worked in a church setting for ten years before joining Set Apart Ministries, Inc. in January 2003. She has received instruction through a variety of Christian lay counseling courses as well as working alongside pastors and professional mental health therapists. She has also completed Life Coaching training through Mentor Coach Inc. Marilyn has worked extensively supporting women --spiritually, emotionally and practically--through encouragement and prayer.

In Coaching, you come for help to make decisions and then implement them, in order to achieve goals that you have chosen for yourself. May we come alongside and encourage you along the way?

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