

## Brother Steward

### Lay Reader Message

#### Seek Contentment

Many people spend years seeking contentment not realizing that contentment is a state of mind independent of external circumstances. True contentment comes from knowing that God is in control and that he will provide for you.

As a child of God, you are no doubt aware that our society is trying hard to make you discontented. Advertisements suggest you can't be content without an expensive house, a new car, an exotic vacation, big investments, and the latest in clothes. Society tries to make you believe that happiness and contentment are within your reach if you just acquire a few more things.

Contentment does not consist of the size of income or net worth. It has nothing to do with the size of your house or year of your car. Contentment can't be bought at a department store or travel agency. Real contentment is not related to circumstances or things.

For some, acquiring money can become a preoccupation and an obsession. It's possible to become a slave to wealth. Greed will not allow contentment, because it will always urge you to acquire more. No matter how you try, you cannot be satisfied by worldly things. The love of money can potentially possess a person's life like no other emotion can. Jesus spoke to the issue of greed in Matthew 16:26 when he asked, *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"* The things you possess will only contribute to fleeting happiness, not an enduring peace and contentment. *"But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish"* (Psalm 49:12).

With money as your security, pride, self-centeredness, and self-sufficiency take over and replace your trust in God to provide. You can be like the Rich Fool, who gave himself credit for his success and desired even more. You can push God out of your life.

When God is your security, you can be content. The Apostle Paul knew both the secret of contentment and how to receive it. *"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"* (Philippians 4:11-12). Without Christ, you will never achieve contentment, but a relationship with Christ will redirect your focus from transient earthly pleasures to things of eternal significance. Keeping your eyes on *"the prize"* (Philippians 3:14) will bring about gratitude in your heart for what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. May the words of the psalmist be an expression of your heart: *"Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever"* (Psalm 73:25-26).

# Brother Steward

## Stewardship and Higher Education

*“It helped me get into a good school,” a young student told me.*

*“Explain,” I said.*

*“Well, Brother, on the application it asked, ‘What activities or community service have you done?’ I remembered working in the food kitchen last year and taking turkeys to house-bound seniors last Thanksgiving. So I sent a selfie of me packing dinners and a You Tube Video with a narrative of my involvement in that ministry.”*



*“And that got you into Harvard?” I asked.*

*“Well not exactly, I also aced the SATs and was Summa Cum Laude in my high school. But it helped.”*

*I said, “Lesson learned. Using God’s gifts to us of time, talent, and treasure can have some earthly benefits, as well as some heavenly rewards.”*

*God Bless!*



# Brother Steward

## Plan Before the Rules Change

*In the time of Robin Hood, many monasteries were crumbling and in disrepair. Feeling a pang of conscience, a feudal King said upon his death that he would leave part of his wealth to rebuild the monasteries. When he died, Friar Tuck went to the castle to collect. Unfortunately, the King's tax collectors beat him to it. They said since there was nothing in writing, everything belonged to the King's heirs to squander on their pet projects. A crestfallen Friar returned to Sherwood Forest muttering, "So much for estate planning."*



*The moral of Brother Steward's story is that intentions are good, but get them in writing. And do it now before the IRS tax rules change. Whether it's a planned gift or an annual donation, the time to consider it is now!*

*God Bless!*



# Brother Steward

## *Back to School Guide!*

*We are all stewards of God's gifts to us. Even our children are responsible. So for our Mini-Stewards:*

- 1. Take **Time** to say a prayer for your family, your teachers, and yourself for guidance and thanks.*
- 2. Use your **Talent** to help others in school and in the community.*
- 3. Your **Treasure**? Set aside a small part of your allowance for a favorite charity. And lastly be kind, be tolerant, be respectful. Treat others as you would have them treat you.*



***Remember God is watching. And God gives the final grades!***

*God Bless.*

