



# TODD LEVIN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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A monthly teaching publication to our partners and friends

## DEALING WITH DISCONTENTMENT

Dear Partners and Friends,

Every one must learn to handle changes in life. Whether it's natural or spiritual in nature, change is inevitable. The one thing I've learned over the years is that, "change is not always welcomed, but it is necessary in order to move forward in God's plan for our lives." As sure as seasonal changes will come, so also in our own lives we too we have to deal with change. If we're not careful to discern the times and the seasons, we could end up staying overtime and dragging behind. Should this be the case, discontentment usually has a tendency to show up and following right behind comes complaining and murmuring.

Today we are going to look at a variety of scriptures from the Word of God and help you to determine and understand how to deal with discontentment. Discontentment can manifest for various reasons. For example, there is something you are supposed to be doing but you're not. What happens? You become dissatisfied on the inside with yourself. No matter what direction you reach out in you're still unfulfilled in life. Until you find the place where you belong, you will remain discontent and unhappy. You must learn to follow your heart and not your head and peace will come.

***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."***

**Proverbs 3:5,6 (NKJV)**

Another reason people find themselves discontented is because there is something they are doing and it's time for change. The new man on the inside will not sit back and be quiet. He will sound the alarm when change is necessary. One way it can show up is through uneasiness down on the inside; a dissatisfaction. What you were doing no longer brings you fulfillment and peace.

Take for example an individual who just started a new job. They're all excited about starting their new position and can hardly wait for Monday morning to come around. But examine their heart after a few years and now you discover they are no longer excited or enjoying life at the work place. They have become dissatisfied on the inside with where they are and what they've been doing. The reason could be that change is approaching. There's something else the Lord is

about to bring them into and now they're feeling signs of discontentment. The wind of the Spirit is beginning to blow them in another direction.

Here's a little advice: Ask yourself this question, "Can you see yourself in the picture say one year from now? What about five years from now? If not, then there's a good chance you're not going to be there. God has something else in mind for you to do. What you may be sensing in your heart is a transitional time approaching. In any case, don't get in a big hurry. God has a plan and his timing is of the essence. Just keep an open heart and mind and be willing to go where He is directing you to go and do not stay a minute longer than you should.

I've always noticed that before I entered a new season in my life, God first began to work in me. By this I mean my desires changed, my priorities changed and my focus began to shift. What brought me pleasure and satisfaction no longer captivated my heart. It's as though I had become unplugged. Don't think it strange when the Lord begins to rearrange some things down in your heart. Allow Him to form and shape your desires as He sees fit knowing that while this is going on in your life, it's all part of God's plan where you fit into the puzzle. He knows what He's doing so continue to trust Him. He has your best interest at heart.

Now here's where we need to begin. Ask yourself, "**Where is the discontentment coming from?** Is it coming from **within** or from **without**? Is it something initiated by God whose about to do a new thing in your life? Or is it the result of your choices, your actions or circumstances? You will know within your heart if God is not pleased by your conduct or behavior by your heart is eating at you. Keep in mind that disobedience will **always** produce discontentment. Attempting to do things our way without God is never wise.

In any case you'll need to discern and determine the cause of it in order to handle and deal with it properly. This means that if it's from God, then be prepared for some radical changes. If it's a result of your choices and actions, be willing to make the necessary adjustments. When we fail to address discontentment, the usual response will be to complain and that's a place you don't want to go! Complaining and expressing your discontentment will invite a critical spirit right on in. But purposing to keep a right attitude and a right heart even when things aren't going the way you've imagined is a vital key in resolving the feelings of discontentment.

In the Old Testament we have many role models that we can learn from. There are some to follow and others to avoid. I think that we can certainly learn from the children of Israel in regards to God's dealings with them and the mistakes they made through unwise decisions. If you carefully follow their journey from the time they were delivered from Egyptian bondage right up through their wilderness experience, you will quickly discover that murmuring, grumbling and complaining became almost a daily experience for the children of Israel. The reason for their unpleasant attitudes was due to their discontentment. And how far did their attitudes take them? Nowhere except round and round the wilderness for 40 years. What do you think? Should we repeat their same mistakes as well as share our displeasure and criticism with others as they did? Would God be pleased with this? Or let me ask you this, "How long do you want to continue to ride on the merry go-round? Aren't you tired of the same view? If so, then one way to resolve the situation can be by changing the direction you've been going in. This can be accomplished not only through actions but also through your words.

*“Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”*

Exodus 16:2,3 (NKJV)

*“And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.”*

Numbers 11:1 (KJV)

*“Nevertheless, God was not pleased with the great majority of them (Israelites), for they were over-thrown and knocked down along the ground in the wilderness. Now these things are examples (warnings and admonitions) for us not to desire or crave or covet or lust after evil and carnal things as they did.”*

I Corinthians 10:5,6 (AMP)

In Numbers chapter 13, we see the Lord instructing Moses to send in 12 spies to scout out the land of Canaan. If you recall only two (Joshua and Caleb) had a positive outlook and were ready to go in to conquer it. They knew the land had been promised to them by God. *“If God be for you, who can be against (or overcome) you.”* The other 10 spies sowed their fears and disappointments with the children of Israel.

*“Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.” <sup>31</sup> But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.” <sup>32</sup>And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. “There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”*

*“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. <sup>2</sup> And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! <sup>3</sup> “Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” <sup>4</sup> So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”*

Number 13:30-33; 14:1-4 (NKJV)

Here we have a prime example of those who were not willing to obey God. Because they had taken their eyes off of the promise of God, *“the land of Canaan, ...I am giving to the children of Israel,”* (Numbers 13:2), now their peace and joy was gone. Fear had entered in.

When our peace and joy have departed, people become discontent. But what we have to realize here is that they brought it on themselves. It wasn't God who initiated it, but rather the

children of Israel who decided not to obey God. They had let go of God's Word of promise and now were experiencing the immediate results of discontentment.

Have you ever been there? Have you ever taken your eyes off of God's Word of promise and decided to give in to the circumstances of life? Though it may appear that the giants you are facing are far greater than what you can handle, you must always remember this one truth: ***"Greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world."*** (I John 4:4)

Perhaps there were times when you thought you were smarter than God; "What do I need Him for? I can handle this one on my own, I don't need the Word of God." **The minute you think you can whip your giant without God you've already lost the battle.**

For 40 years, the children of Israel wandered aimlessly out in the desert, and to think this was never God's intent but rather the fruit of their disobedience. They kept repeating the same mistake over and over again: looking at the circumstances instead of looking at the promises of God and where He was leading them. It was not supposed to end this way, but for the majority of them it did. They never were able to enjoy what God had originally intended for them. You'll never enjoy peace when you live in disobedience. Discontentment is the fruit of disobedience.

When will Christians realize that the minute they take their eyes off of God's Word of promise, how easily it becomes to give in to the storms of life? Take for example the Apostle Peter. Here he was with the other disciples on the boat one night and Jesus came out walking on the water to join them. Peter's question to Jesus was, ***"Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water."*** You remember what happened next.

***"He (Jesus) said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; <sup>30</sup> but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." <sup>31</sup> Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased."***

**Matthew 14:29-32 (RSV)**

Notice the winds and the waves were rocking the boat before Peter ever stepped out onto the water. It was only because He had shifted his focus from Jesus to the surrounding circumstances that caused him to sink. He went from faith (looking at Jesus) to fear (looking at the wind and the waves.) One minute he was excited and filled with joy while coming to Jesus, the next minute He became very uneasy, fearful and disturbed with the current situation that he found himself in. Remember, his only mistake was this: taking his eyes off of the Word.

There's a scripture in the book of Isaiah chapter 26:3,4 which states, ***"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. <sup>4</sup> Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."*** Just to know that God's peace is available to us in the midst of a storm is very reassuring. Didn't Jesus promise to give us His peace? (**John 14:27**) And not only His peace, but His strength too. (**Phil 4:13**) With peace and strength working within us, think of the confident expectation we can live in every day just knowing that regardless of what comes our way, we can face every situation in life.

Let's take a closer look together at something the Apostle Paul stated in Philippians chapter four, verses 6,7.

***“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”***

There's that word "peace" again. He's telling us that there's no reason to carry the load or heavy burden around all day long because God has invited you to give it over to Him. The way we release the pressures of life, unhappiness and discontentment is by communion and fellowship with Him. Let your request be made known unto your God. The immediate result is **PEACE**. It's yours for the receiving! It could very well be that for some time now, you've been carrying the load; baring the burden and producing unnecessary sorrow and distress. Why travel down a preventable road. Why journey through life alone when He is ever ready to help in time of need.

***“So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive his mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need.”***

**Hebrews 4:16 (TLB)**

When our joy is gone we're no longer walking in the spirit. We've reverted back to the former way of thinking and living. It's become a pressure situation that we've allowed ourselves to fall into. We are now operating by our carnal and sensual attributes. The spirit of man has become a prisoner once again and the body and mind are now in control. Is it any wonder why some make so many foolish and unnecessary mistakes? Take for example the early church:

***“But with the believers multiplying rapidly, there were rumblings of discontent. Those who spoke only Greek complained that their widows were being discriminated against, that they were not being given as much food in the daily distribution as the widows who spoke Hebrew.”***

**Acts 6:1 (TLB)**

What sparked this discontentment? Answer: Taking notice at what others were receiving instead of being thankful for their portion. I think we have lot's of this type of living all around us. For some reason, the grass always appears greener on the other side. *“If only I made the kind of money that they made, my life would be so wonderful,”* so you may imagine. And if we're not careful, we may very well regret some of the things that come out of our mouths during challenging times. Let's take heed to the Word of God and be on guard against the wiles of the enemy. Always comparing and looking at others success is a sure way to invite on in discontent. An ungrateful heart only adds fuel to the fire of dissatisfaction. Be careful!

***“We must be careful not to stir up discontent; discontent destroyed them.”***

**1 Corinthians 10:10 (MSG)**

***“Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time.”***

**Hebrews 12:15 (MSG)**

Is there any place in the Word of God that gives us the secret of facing every situation in life? Is there something that I can do or change to make a difference? Maybe it's been a while since you've experienced the joy of the Lord and you feel as though your strength has failed you. Well then, keep on reading because I've got great news for you! The Apostle Paul stated,

*<sup>10</sup> I was made happy in the Lord that now you have revived your interest in my welfare after so long of time; you were indeed thinking of me, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am implying that I was in any personal want, for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want. <sup>13</sup> I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me (I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency.)*

**Philippians 4:10-13 (AMP)**

Wow! Do you realize what He just said? He learned how to be content, not disturbed or disquieted. He learned the secret of facing every situation in life. He found the strength that kept him balanced in times of indifference. He did not cave in nor go under. He was not stressed out, worried sick and frustrated. What was the key? It was Christ – the anointed one and His anointing that is already resident on the inside of every believer. He just described to us that it takes the anointing of God to live and face any kind of situation in life no matter if it's adversity or prosperity. It will require Jesus to steady the boat as He steers us through life. It will require the presence of the Lord to remove every burden and destroy every yoke of bondage that the enemy has had over us. **(Isaiah 10:27)**

Friend, if your peace and joy is just not there like it used to be, then seriously ask yourself, "Do adjustments need to be made; is there something I need to do differently? Have I taken my eyes off of God's promises and been focusing on the obvious – circumstances, feelings or just plain old human reasoning? Have I missed it somewhere? Is it time to move on? Have I stayed here longer than God intended me to stay? Have I been obedient to do all that He has lead me to do or have I been living in disobedience? Am I walking in the light of God's Word or have I let go and wandered away from the truth?"

People will disappoint you. Circumstances are unpredictable. But there is one who is always faithful and true to His Word. I would encourage you today to keep your eyes fixed and gazed upon Him. For He is the strength of your life. He is the Good Shepherd. He will never lead you astray. There is rest and peace and quiet assurance in His presence. Though the storms may pass you by, there is one who will never leave you nor forsake you. His name is Jesus – the Prince of Peace. Receive His peace today. Let go of all that has burdened you down. Cast the whole of your cares, worries, anxieties and concerns over to the Lord. He loves and cares for you affectionately and watchfully! **(I Peter 5:7)**

Your Friends and Partners in ministry,

*Todd & Eva*