

# - Contentment -

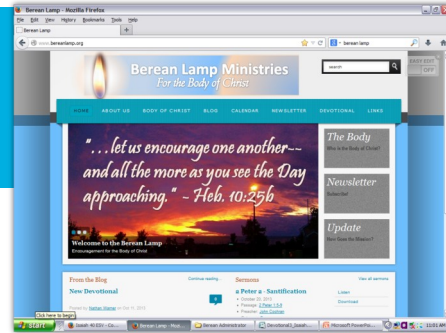
*"I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses,  
with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake;  
for when I am weak, then I am strong."  
(2 Corinthians 12:10)*



**Berean Lamp Ministries**  
*For the Body of Christ*

Vol. 22  
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## The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)



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The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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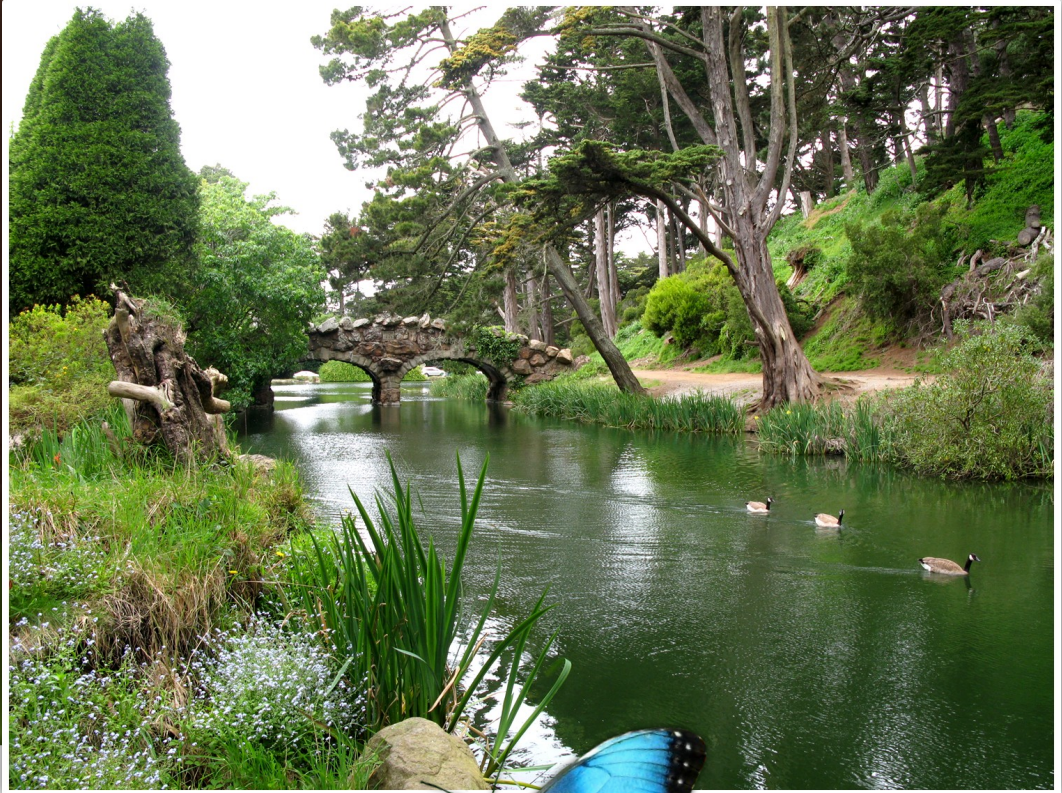


# Berean Lamp Ministries

*For the Body of Christ*

06-03-14

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By Nathan Warner

*"BLESSED are those  
who HUNGER  
and THIRST for  
RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
for they shall be  
SATISFIED."  
(Matthew 5:6)*





## Content On Battlefield Earth

By Nathan Warner

Are you content with your life? I think if we all looked deep inside and considered our lives honestly, we would answer “no.” Maybe the grass seems greener on your neighbor’s lawn, or maybe you feel restless with your spiritual maturity. Whether you believe in the sovereignty of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit or not, you are where God has stationed you in life for the time-being. You are where He intends you to be. Yet, we are unsatisfied. Maybe our difficulties outweigh our pleasures. Maybe we long for companionship and yet are alone. Maybe instead of blessings, we feel our faith has brought us suffering. Why is this?

It’s all about perspective, so let’s establish some context. Why are we here? What are we doing here? It is clear from Scripture that we are refugees on this planet. Men and women of faith have *“confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth”* (Hebrews 11:13b NASB); therefore, *“conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth”* (1 Peter 1:17b). Throughout Scripture, there’s a sense of accountability, because we will be judged for how we conducted ourselves during our visit here.

Secondly, seeing as we are exiles, we aren’t on holiday or on tour. Being an exile puts us at odds with the god of this world, because we do not acknowledge him as our king. We are strangers to him. Yet, we are not without a King, like earthly refugees often are. We have a King, even Jesus Christ, and our allegiance is to Him. **Thus, we are at war with the god of this world.** It is a very real war – one we face every day, inside and out. All the principles of war apply even though it is not a carnal war, fought over lands and assets with swords and nuclear weapons, *“for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations*

*and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

One thing to establish from the beginning, however, is that this war isn’t about us. The battle is for God’s glory and for His purposes, many of which we do not know. It is not advanced by us winning souls for Christ. We are to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations, because He commanded us to do so, not because this will achieve victory. We cannot and we will not win this war for God. Christ alone will conquer, whether He finds faith on the earth or not. So, we should be wary of entering crusades and missions that put the emphasis on our prowess or our abilities or that offer us spoils from the conflict. We are not pillaging mercenaries, paid to deliver a result at any cost – we are soldiers of the King of Righteousness with great accountability, called to serve in our station or at our post as He requires, whether it calls for action or not. We serve a sovereign God. That means that none of our missions on the battlefield are for our benefit, although the inevitable outcome is greatly to our benefit, for we will see our conquering King claim all for Himself, and we will share in the government that is His in righteousness and justice.

So, what was the point of this context? To remind us that life in a time of war is not pleasant. It costs us. It costs us blood, sweat, and tears in the trenches. It can cause us boredom, frustration, and vexation if we’re posted in the rear, guarding the mess hall, or if we’re too “young” to fight on the front lines. It can cause us fear, apprehension, and distress if we are creatures of comfort thrust into the visceral horrors of battle. The bottom line if we are not content is to remember that we do not assign ourselves roles in this contest; God does, and none are menial or undeserved. He needs us to be where He has put us.

This doesn’t mean we will be “stuck” doing “mess duty” all our lives, nor will we always be in the mud and distress of the trenches. The Holy Spirit may direct us to other tasks and give us other missions. We need to be content

with where we are posted but eager to do more or less, if the Spirit commands us thus. The Parable of the Talents offers context here. The Master assigned duties to His servants, and if they discharge those duties well, they were given greater responsibilities. One thing to clarify, we do not know what God considers “greater” – we like to think missionaries and preachers are doing “greater” work than those who do service or don’t seem like they’re doing much at all, but only God knows what is truly a “greater” responsibility.

Contentment is very important in the ranks, and there are two dangerous spiritual extremes I feel we should address. The first condition is certainly the more addressed. These are Believers who like being where they are at spiritually and are afraid of any challenge or change. They are often referred to as “Pew Warmers” – they come to church and do the minimum that they feel is required of them as a Believer, and they don’t want to hear anything that might make them feel uncomfortable. They close themselves off to any challenge to grow or mature. When we are here, we are content with not seeking spiritual growth – we are comfortable with where we are at in our walk with the Lord and do not desire anything deeper, even to the point of oppressing the Holy Spirit.

This condition is like a soldier who is never where he’s supposed to be, because he’s always trying to get out of duty and tries every way he can to “not hear” his commander’s call – maybe he really likes his desk job, or maybe he enjoys guarding the ammo dump. When a command goes forward, he won’t carry it out, because he’s intent on balking, falling behind, or retreating to safety. This type of Believer is always trying to get by with as little effort as possible – always dancing dangerously on the line of court-martial. And that’s the problem – they’re not serving God willingly – they’re just trying to get by doing the least they can possibly do. This is a form of insubordination. Many of the mega-churches and some “Christian” teachers today seek to accommodate this condition by endeavoring to make their congregations as comfortable as possible.

After all, challenge and growth can be painful! And pain causes large, tithing congregations of nominal Christians to scatter.

If you find yourself in this situation, chances are you know in your heart you’ve been ignoring the Holy Spirit and you need to seek the Lord. For Jesus Himself said, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be **satisfied**”* (Matthew 5:6). Ask Him to renew your hunger and your thirst for Him. Ask Him to convict you, challenge you, and grow you.

The second condition is on the opposite side of the spectrum. Over here, we find we are never content with where we are in our walk with the Lord. We are always seeking a new challenge or a new solution to growth. We’re always pushing to change where we are. Many teachers today teach that we should never be content with where we are in our spiritual walk with the Lord, that we must always be going from victory to victory, and that trials and difficulties are signs that God is not with you – that you have backslidden or fallen away. This is unbiblical as trials and tribulations are a necessary and expected part of being a Believer.

If we believe this teaching, trials and difficulties can cause us to be resentful, fearful, and uneasy when we find ourselves in the “desert.” We need to understand that sometimes a “desert” is a necessary part of our walk – sometimes it causes us to grow the most – think of Paul in the desert for 3 years, unlearning everything he had learned, or John the Baptist with nothing to be said for him because he was “in the wilderness” until the appointed time. What a waste of time, right? Paul could have been out preaching the Gospel all that time and growing followers and congregations! But he was led to the desert for a reason, and he went in obedience. He grew deeply out there in the trials and the solitude so that when he came back, he was prepared to deal with the challenges God gave him, leading him to say, *“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be **content** in whatever circumstances I am”* (Philippians 4:11).

The problem with this extreme – this discontentment with where we are in our relation-

*"These things I have SPOKEN to you, that in Me you may have PEACE. In the world you will have TRIBULATION; but be of good CHEER, I have OVERCOME the world."  
(John 16:33)*

By Patty Buswell

ship with God – is that oftentimes spiritual growth comes in times of difficulty and drought when WE feel we are not growing—when we feel like we are stagnant. This feeling of stagnation or languishing may come to our lives in the form of trials, personal difficulties, temptations, spiritual attacks, loss of friendships, isolation, betrayals, dwindling congregations, small returns on invested energy, slow results, and much more. The sense of stagnation can cause us to become worried about our spiritual condition, and we may push ourselves to do things that the Holy Spirit is not directing us to do.

Perhaps this is why some ministries fall into false teaching and apostasy after many years of teaching sound doctrine. They are not



By Lynn Warner



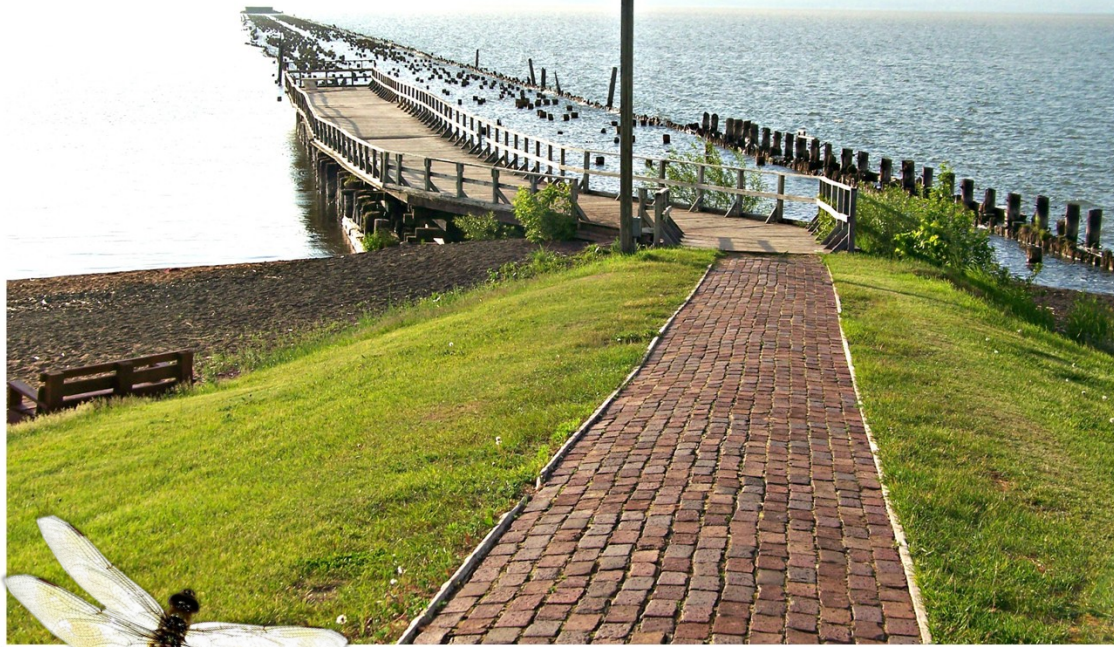
content with what the Lord has given them. They're not satisfied in the place Jesus has commanded that they be, and they begin to strive on their own, falling into snares and deceptions, envying, enmity, jealousy, strife, and dissensions (which are all works of the flesh – Galatians 5:20-21). This condition is best illustrated by a soldier who does not wait for his commander's order – instead, he's always jumping the gun and putting himself in harm's way. He is never where he's supposed to be, because he's always doing what HE thinks is best. He is unmanageable and untrustworthy because in times of anxiety he will not only act on his own, but he will also lead others who are following him into harm's way. This too is a form of insubordination.

If you find yourself in this position, you must understand that acting outside of the Holy Spirit's direction is as bad as not acting at all. Restrain your fleshly urges and learn to wait

upon the Lord's direction. See periods of frustration and difficulty as the trials and tests that they are, which can help you grow in maturity.

So what should we look like? Where should the Believer be in regard to contentment? We must be content with where God has placed us but with an eager ear and a keen eye to what the Spirit commands when the command comes. In this situation we are following His lead obediently without passively resisting and without pushing and pulling. This is like a soldier who is eager, yet obedient. He will stay where he has been assigned until a new command is given, but he waits eagerly for that command – content where he has been stationed but also willing to be reassigned. *"Therefore I am well **content** with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:10). Amen.

*"I KNOW how to be BROUGHT low,  
and I KNOW how to ABOUND."  
(Philippians 4:12a)*



By Ginny Larsen

## Peace and Contentment

By Ginny Larsen

Is it really possible? Can a Christian really have a “peace that passes all understanding” and a “contentment in whatever state I’m in”? It seems so beyond reality. We grasp for it but don’t see how in our own circumstances that could be possible. *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Philippians 4:11-13 NKJV).

How did Paul arrive at that state of contentment? We look at his life and see he was a man with much trial of his faith, turmoil, and persecution. He was persecuted by false brethren, he was imprisoned, he was beaten, he had to go hungry at times, and his life was threatened constantly. He also had the burden of the churches and false teachings threatening to come in and undo all the work that he had done in bringing the true Gospel to them. HOW COULD HE HAVE PEACE?? HOW COULD HE BE CONTENT??

You might say, “Paul was an apostle...a step above the rest of us. He had more of the Spirit than I could ever hope to attain.” But the same Spirit that Paul had is in you and every Believer in Christ. It is the same power *“which worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come”* (Ephesians 1:20-21). Paul had nothing that is not available to every Believer.

So let’s take a look at some of the things Paul did that brought him to that contentment and that peace that passes all understanding in the midst of his trials and sufferings. One big clue is in Philippians 4:13. Let me share it in the amplified. *“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].”*

That kind of contentment and peace comes from Christ alone, not from anything else or anyone else in this world. We can never attain it apart from Jesus Christ Himself in us. Paul could say that because he had learned to make Christ his life. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20).

If our peace is in our circumstances going well, that peace will crash as soon as our circumstances change. If we look for a change of circumstances before we can know peace and contentment, we will never find it. We are not content if we are always saying, “when I finally have my bills paid,” “if I only had a child of my own,” “when I finally raise my children and know they can take care of themselves well,” “when I finally find someone who loves me like I need to be loved,” “if I could only be free of this person, or this pain, or this trial,” or “when I finally...” whatever. Will you be content then? No, because then something else will rob your contentment, or you will always be worried of what will come to rob it.

Jesus said, *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). The same Jesus who overcame the world lived in Paul and that same Jesus who overcame the world lives in you, if you believe (rely on, cling to, trust in) Him to be your Savior. He is your Savior all the way. Not just to save you for eternity from your sins, but to save you here and now daily from sin, the devil, the world, and all that would invade our soul and destroy it. He is your daily Savior. He is your now Savior. He is your Savior to the uttermost.

Let’s look at the attitudes Paul taught and lived in his own life that brought him that contentment and that peace that passes under-



standing. It passes understanding because it is a peace that is regardless of the turmoil and adversities of our life – one that the natural man cannot possibly understand or attain. Here are a few hints of Paul's way of looking at his circumstances: *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28). *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31)

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who*

*loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:35-39).

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"* (Philippians 4:4) *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things*



*"NOT that I SPEAK from WANT, for I have learned to be CONTENT in whatever CIRCUMSTANCES I am."*  
(Philippians 4:11)



are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:6-8).

*"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal"* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

What is the common theme in all these verses? Keep your eyes on Jesus, your life, and trust Him completely with ALL of your circumstances. They are only temporary!

Ah...but we forget that when we are in the midst of the storm, don't we? Instead of looking at Jesus, we tend to see the storm, and fear takes over our hearts, and dread of what will happen to us overwhelms us, just like the disciples in the boat during the storm.

*"And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm"* (Matthew 8:24-26 KJV).

Oh to realize we never needed to be fearful in the first place! He is always right there with us in charge of every circumstance during the storm.

Paul, I believe, learned that. He learned that Jesus was in charge of every single storm in his life. There was not a one he needed to be afraid of. And in the end, even death itself he knew he needn't fear. For him, *"to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* (Philippians 1:21).

Where is your trust? Where is your life? Where is your joy and contentment? Sometimes the loss of those things that we have peace, joy, security, or contentment in only shows us that our trust needs to be in Him alone. If it is anywhere else, it will be shaken...not may be shaken but will be shaken in time. Nothing in this earth is guaranteed or permanent. If we find ourselves shaken and in

turmoil and unable to find peace when hard times hit us, let's use it to again turn our eyes to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and set our eyes on the eternal (away from the temporal). Let's use our difficulty to remind us that Jesus Christ alone is our life. Let's use it to conquer one more time something in our life that will no longer be able to have a hold on us, and something that we will no longer be dependent on for that contentment. Once it's gone, we have now only Christ to cling to, and He will not fail us.

Dear Lord Jesus, we ask You to be our life, peace, and contentment, and to show us the way, moment by moment, in all our circumstances, to trust You to be that life and peace. Enable us to practice it daily and not to give in to unbelief and fear when our circumstances overwhelm us. We know this grace comes from You alone, and we haven't the power for it ourselves. We seek this from You, our Savior, that the fullness of Your life may dwell in us and be glorified in and through us. May it be so, according to Your will and Your Word, our precious Savior. Amen.







By Natalie Warner



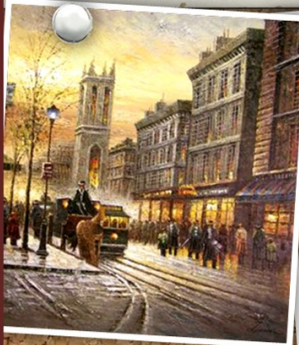


## Sing A New Song

Words by **Fanny Crosby**  
Music by **Phoebe Knapp**



*"Praising my Savior,  
all the day long."*



GRACE AND ASSURANCE

### 334 Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine

*We are more than conquerors through him who loved us — Romans 8:37 NIV*

1. Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of  
2. Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, Vi-sions of rap-ture now  
3. Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest, I in my Sav-ior am

glo-ry di-vine! Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God,  
burst on my sight: An-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove  
hap-py and blest: Watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove,

Born of His Spir-it, washed in His blood.  
Ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love. This is my sto-ry, this is my  
Filled with His good-ness, lost in His love.

song, Prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long; This is my sto-ry,  
this is my song, Prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915  
Phoebe Palmer Knapp, 1839-1908

ASSURANCE  
Irregular

## Blessed Assurance

By Maggie Moller

*"Let us draw near with a true heart in full as-surance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."*  
(Hebrews 10:22 NASB)

*"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*  
(Hebrews 12:2)

As I thought about what hymn to write on for this month's newsletter on "Contentment," my mom suggested "Blessed Assurance." I

think this hymn fits perfectly with the chosen theme. Knowing we have "blessed assurance" of our relationship in Christ, we can be content despite the trials life will contain (Hebrews 10:22). True contentment can be attained when we put our entire trust and hope in God's goodness and love. If we are seeking fulfillment and happiness from anything but God, we will never gain true contentment in this life. The two women who composed the lyrics and music for this hymn both faced many trials in this life. However, they were content despite the trials because they were not seeking happiness from this earth. Rather, they were looking beyond the life on this earth to the next, which contained all the glory of their Risen Lord! I hope their stories touch you as much as they have touched me as well as encourage you to look heavenward when the struggles of



this earth tempt you to take your eyes off Christ and His love (Hebrews 12:2).

Frances “Fanny” Jane Crosby – The Lyricist

Fanny Crosby was born on March 24, 1820, in a small village outside of New York City to John and Mercy Crosby. When Fanny was only 6 weeks old, she became very sick and developed inflammation in her eyes. Her parents summoned the aid of a doctor who concocted a salve to treat her eyes. However, much to her parents’ dismay, the doctor was a fraud, and the salve served only to permanently blind their young baby daughter. Later that same year, Fanny’s father died, leaving his young wife alone with their blinded baby daughter.

Mercy and her mother, Eunice, raised Fanny and taught her the importance of a life dedicated to the service of the Savior. With her grandmother, Fanny worked diligently to memorize five chapters of the Bible each week, so that by the time she was 10 years old, she could recite from memory the four gospels as well as the Pentateuch, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and many Psalms. Due to her blindness, her grandmother believed it was important for Fanny to know the Scriptures by heart so she could have the Word of God despite her inability to read the Bible.

When she was 15, Fanny enrolled in the New York Institute for the Blind (NYIB) where she received her first musical training. During the eight years she was a student at the Institute, she learned to play the organ, piano, harp, and guitar, and she became a soprano singer. After graduating from NYIB, Fanny joined the faculty and taught for two years before her marriage to fellow teacher Alexander Van Alstyne. Alexander, called “Van” by his friends, was also blind. Fanny took her husband’s last name for legal purposes but continued to use her maiden name on her hymns.

The Van Alstynes had one daughter, Frances, in 1859. Sadly, shortly after her birth, their little baby died in her sleep. After this, Fanny and Van’s marriage was never the same. Van’s attitude became very distant and left

Fanny feeling alone. She wrote the hymn “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” in an attempt to process the death of her daughter. Fanny never spoke publicly about being a mother or of her daughter; the topic just brought too much pain. Despite the growing distance in her married relationship, Fanny never spoke badly of Van and continued to reach out to him despite their often separate lives.

As Fanny continued to write hymns, publishers began to worry that the public might not approve of so many hymns by the same writer within their hymnals. To ease this concern, Fanny began writing under more than 200 pen names to disguise the fact that she was the author of most of the popular hymns in the hymnals.

“Blessed Assurance” was composed around 1873. One day, Fanny was visiting her dear friend Phoebe Knapp, who had just purchased a new organ. Mrs. Knapp was eager to show her friend the new instrument, so she began playing part of a new song she had just composed. When she had finished, she turned to Fanny, who said, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!” The two worked together until three verses and a chorus had been added to Mrs. Knapp’s composition.

The simple statement proclaimed by Fanny that became one of our most famous hymns is a true testament to the way she lived her life. She was wholly devoted to the service of her Lord and loved Jesus with her entire being. Most of her life, she lived in poverty simply because she gave every cent away to charities and the less fortunate. She knew her treasure was not to be found on this earth but awaited her in Heaven. When asked once how she felt about her blindness, she responded, “It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him for this dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered to me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me.”

Fanny died on February 12, 1915, at the age of 95. Her tombstone was inscribed with the words “Aunt Fanny – Blessed assurance, Jesus

is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine.” At her funeral, her friend and fellow hymn-writer, Eliza Hewitt, read a poem she wrote in honor of Fanny that contained phrases and titles from many of her hymns; a fitting farewell to the woman who influenced the music of our faith so deeply.

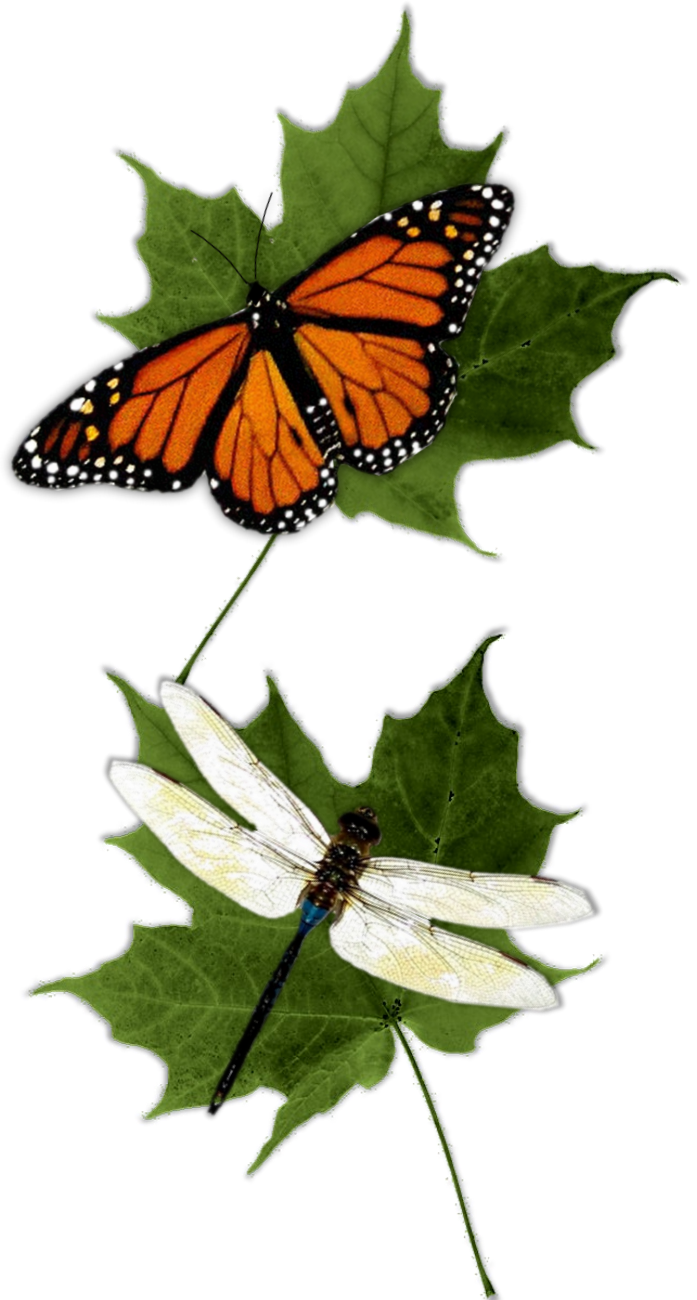
Fanny Crosby can justifiably be dubbed the most impactful hymn-writer of all time. In her lifetime, she can be credited with writing nearly 9,000 hymns, most of which have stood the test of time and remain popular today, 100 years after her death. A person would be hard-pressed to find a hymnal without at least one of her hymns within its pages. She has been titled the “Queen of Gospel Song Writers,” as well as the “mother of modern congregational singing in America.” I can hardly do justice to the wonderful testimony of the life story of Fanny Crosby in this short article. But I hope this short account has encouraged you and perhaps even peaked your curiosity to study Fanny Crosby’s life further.

#### Phoebe Palmer Knapp – The Composer

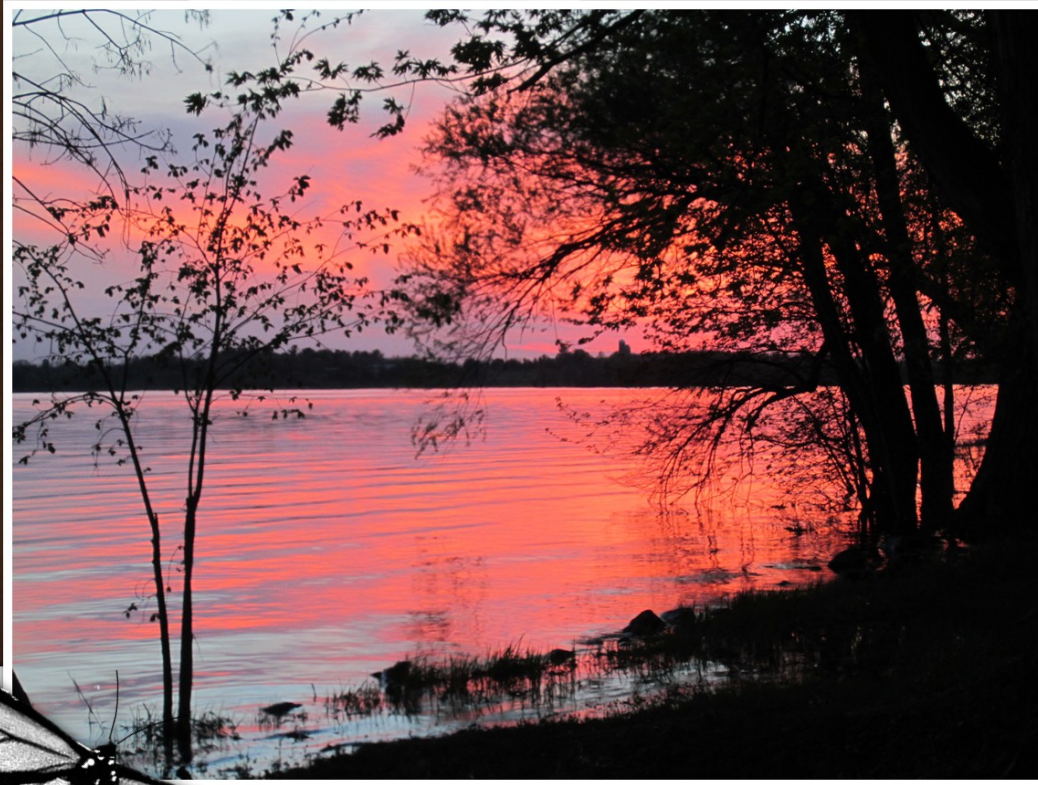
Phoebe Palmer Knapp was born on March 9, 1839, in New York City to Walter and Phoebe Palmer. Her parents were Methodist evangelists, so from a young age, Phoebe was taught the importance of living a Godly life. When she was just 16, she married Joseph Knapp, a wealthy businessman. Mr. and Mrs. Knapp attended the John Street Methodist Church in New York City, where Phoebe met and befriended Fanny Crosby. When her husband died, Phoebe was left with a large amount of money, most of which she gave to charities. Her one pleasure was her large pipe organ, which she used to compose the music for over 500 hymns. Mrs. Knapp died on July 10, 1908, at 69 years of age.

Much can be learned from the lives of these two women of faith. Each one faced many trials in their lifetime, but in their darkest hour they found contentment in the arms of their Savior. I am ashamed of how often I allow myself to dwell on my trials rather than trust Jesus to see me through. I am also often disap-

pointed when I reflect on my contentment in life. I have to daily pray for the Lord to grant me contentment in Him alone and not from my earthly circumstances. Little by little the Lord is showing me that He is enough for me. I do not need the things the world says are necessities of happiness. We can face the darkest hours of our lives and yet remain content if we rest in the love of our Lord and trust Him to see us through! He will never fail us, and He is always more satisfying than the earthly things we thought our happiness was dependent upon.







By Maria Madsen



## Content in Christ

By Betty Harstad

Do you ever wonder how we can be content when our lives are sometimes troubled even after becoming a Christian? How do we regain an eternal perspective during and after each upsetting circumstance when often negative emotions disturb our peace and patience?

Paul says this in Philippians 4:11-12 (ESV): *"Not that I am speaking of being in need for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need."*

So what does Paul mean when he says he has learned the "secret" to being content in all situations? I believe he answers this in the next verse: *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13). The "secret" is Jesus Christ, Who is the focus and theme of the whole Bible. The focus of this next verse is also Jesus Christ: *"Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; What can man do to me?'"* (Hebrews 13:5-6)

We are to keep our mind on Christ, the Son of God, Who is in heaven, interceding for us. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being*

*guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 1:3-7).

So yes, our contentment does lie in Jesus Christ, Whom God sent to fulfill His purpose in Believers. We do get grieved by various trials that come to us or to our loved ones, but we are being guarded through faith in Jesus Christ for a salvation ready to be fully revealed in the last time. While in the midst of a trial or a testing, we may react with fear, bitter tears, discouragement, and perhaps depression for a period of time until God gets ahold of us through His Word. A Believer has the light and glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as his great treasure, but it is in an earthen vessel that is weak and wasting away, so that is why God renews our inner-self through the Word and the Spirit day by day. *"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you"* (1 Peter 5:10).

*"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day, for this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal"* (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).





## Content in This Present Evil World

By Lynn Warner

We are born in sin, wandering off the track, not recognizing God's paths. Our hearts are hardened in the delusion of sin – our rebellion against God. Yet, God says, *"I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them"* (Hosea 14:4).

How did God love us? Through Jesus Christ, for in His death for all mankind, He demonstrated that *"greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13). And how does He teach us about our sin and His great love? – He teaches us through suffering. Jesus Himself learned obedience through things He suffered, for *"although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered"* (Hebrews 5:8). Obedience is yielding to direction. Only then do we find contentment. First, however, we must learn what sin and evil are because Jesus *"gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father"* (Galatians 1:4). Jesus testified about this world. He said to His disciples, *"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil"* (John 7:7). We must learn to hate our life in this world and thus preserve it for eternal life: *"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal"* (John 12:25). God teaches us through suffering. We are not greater than our God and Rescuer. And He Himself learned through suffering.

How can we be content, then? How can we be content when we cannot make ourselves content in this present evil world? How can we be content when we cannot recognize God's paths by ourselves, and we realize we are in the delusion of sin? Nor can we turn our hearts to God. We are not in control but utterly dependent, weak, and suffering! Don't our circumstances cause us to wrestle with

pride, anger, rage, and fear? How do we respond? We often try to find something in the world to soothe ourselves, to content us and release us from our physical and emotional pain. Sometimes, we seek a worldly solution that seems to bring us a form of "contentment." Worldly versions of contentment, however, don't last and can be stolen.

How can we learn contentment? There are many ways, but I have been reminded that God can teach us through His creation. I believe God gave us animals and nature as ways to instruct us. For example, I have learned that even horses and dogs will live for themselves, taking charge (or trying to take charge) of their circumstances. Even those who by nature are more submissive will try to take control. If they succeed, they are overly aggressive because of fear – fear they will lose control. Inwardly, they want a true leader they can trust – only then can they relax and be content in obedience – we seem to be quite similar.

Only God can rescue us through His Son, Jesus Christ, Who died for us, but He also lived for us, showing us how to be content in our dependent and weak nature and how to be content when we are not in control. We learn that we are most content when we accept that God loves us, is sovereign in our lives, teaches us, and works in us so we can live in a relationship with Him and others. He went before us as an example, and we are to follow.





*"And after YOU have SUFFERED a little while, the God of all GRACE, Who has CALLED you to His ETERNAL glory in CHRIST, will Himself RESTORE, confirm, strengthen, and ESTABLISH you."  
(1 Peter 5:10)*

By Natalie Warner



*"LET HIM  
WHO BOASTS,  
BOAST IN THE  
LORD."*

*(1 Corinthians 1:31b)*



By Nathan Warner



## July/August Newsletter Theme—RESURRECTION

Submission Deadline: July 27

Publish Date: August 5

### Resurrection...

- What is resurrection?
- Is there more than one resurrection?
- Has a resurrection happened before?
- How many people were resurrected in Scripture?
- What resurrection will you be part of?
- Is the resurrection important to be teaching today?
- What do the Rapture and the Resurrection share?
- What will be different about those resurrected from those who live today?

### Verses on Resurrection (from the NASB version)

Luke 20:35-36 – “But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the **resurrection** from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the **resurrection**.”

John 11:25 – “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the **resurrection** and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.’”

Romans 6:5 – “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His **resurrection**.”

Philippians 3:8-11 – “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His **resurrection** and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the **resurrection** from the dead.”

### Ideas for Submissions

- Jesus is the first-fruits of the resurrection. What does Jesus’ resurrection mean to us?
- How is our resurrection tied up in Christ’s resurrection?
- Mankind lives under the fear of death. Hebrews says this fear has made them slaves all their lives to the devil (Hebrews 2:14-15). How did the Gospel free us from this slavery?
- Write about the different resurrections in the Bible—for example, Lazarus was resurrected, there was a resurrection of Saints at the moment Jesus died and they appeared unto many, Jesus was resurrected, there will be a resurrection of Believers coinciding with the Rapture in the future, there will be a resurrection of Believers who have died for their faith at the end of the Tribulation, and there will be a final resurrection of all after the Millennial reign of Christ at the final Great White Throne Judgment. What is different about these resurrections?

Further Out—Sept/Oct 2014: WITNESS