

## Article 155: Would You Choose Contentment or Pleasure?

Contentment is not passive, inactive, complacent, or unemotional, ...contentment is actively being pleased and satisfied ...with a general peace of mind, ...which can never be lived or fulfilled while judging ...but is instantly available without judgments. Contentment is happiness. Are you content with your self and life? Most people are content with complaining while doing little or nothing to change. Does contentment, to you, mean the appeasement of needs and desires through relief or satisfaction? Is that really what you want out of life? True contentment is not complete gratification or satiation, or gorging yourself on life to a point of almost complete discomfort, true contentment is a willingness to accept things in reasonable amounts. Contentment is a state of mind, not a condition of physical satisfaction, possession, or gratification. You need not be pleased with or happy about matters and circumstances to be content, ...it is more a matter of not being displeased or unhappy, ...conditions which are based on judgments. If you expect to be contented by life ...or to reach a state of contentment, stop discontenting yourself through judgments, ...live contentedly without your judgments.

If you had to choose between judgments and contentment, and you do have to make this choice, which will you choose? You cannot even choose to be contented with your judgments, ...for all judgments discontent you, ...doesn't that give you a clue that your judgments are working against you?

Are you pleased with your self and life? Looking back on your life, do you smile with contentment? And as you look forward will that smile of contentment weaken and fade? Will it grow stronger and broader? This has little to do with personal gratification ...and a great deal to do with personal satisfaction, ...are you still smiling contentedly? ...pleasurably? Is there an impulse within you to laugh happily at all you see of the past ...and what you visualize of the future? Maybe you are content!

Being contented does not mean that you must be satisfied with matters as they are, you may freely change and expand as you desire, ...in fact, you will not change what you do not accept, for your unacceptance will keep you constantly and discontentedly struggling against what you do not like, ...which will leave you little or no attention, time, or energy to live what you do desire. Contentment inspires, supports, and encourages you to live as you truly desire while your dislikes and discontentments fall away due to lack of constant judgmental support.

Contentment is based on living your own standards ...and has nothing to do with meeting another's desires for you, not even God's desires ...as you presume them to be, ...for contentment is not a reward for righteous living ...it is the way you are living, and no one else, not even

God, is living your lifeseif, ...that is your privilege and pleasure, your contentment or discontentment.

Pleasure denotes feelings of satisfaction or happiness ...or both. Though pleasure is generally aroused through mental or physical stimulations, it may also indicate merely an absence of discomfort or discontent. Is pleasure aroused for you? What usually arouses a sense of pleasure in you? Or are you pleased that matters are not too bad? Is that pleasure enough for you? What is your strongest feeling of pleasure? Is that feeling long lasting or fleeting? Has your pleasure ever reached the heights and expansiveness of ecstasy or rapture? Wasn't that actually a state beyond pleasure? Pleasure is delightful ...but joy is enduring. Are you truly pleased with your own lifeseif? ...or pleased that it is not as bad as others' are living and struggling with. Is that pleasure by comparison or gloating? Are you pleasure-loving? Are you devoted to sensual pleasures? ...to luxurious and sensual living? Is that the pleasure that pleases you? ...that excites you? ...that you hope for? Are you addicted to pleasurable and intense emotions? Do they seem to control and dominate your life? ...the lives of those around you? Are you pleased by your own actions and achievements? Maybe you're not actually aware of what truly pleases you? Have you been seeking in all the wrong places for all the wrong pleasures? Would you prefer pleasure or contentment? Do you see that you cannot have both?

Though many people would declare that you live at God's pleasure, the fact is, you live at your own pleasure ...or displeasure, for though you may have been given life, that gift is for you to live fully pleased or content. If pleasure is freely available to everyone, only you can displease yourself, ...and if pleasure is not freely available to all, then you do not have free will, for with free will, pleasure cannot be withheld, ...and it never is withheld! Probably no emotion has so many ways of direct/indirect expression as does pleasure ...and no emotion is as difficult to arouse and hold onto. There is little common opinion as to how man's pleasure-nature came into being, ...did it evolve out of rudimentary, unformed beginnings ...or was it added, fully formed, from the outside? However pleasure began, it is truly personal and individual today. Pleasure is not a reward or personal gift for "right" living, pleasure is a reward for pleasurable living, ...which means that the reward is in the living.

Though you don't fully realize it, you have an innate concern for the welfare of others, ...that is the joy and pleasure of selfness. A part of you is self-concerned ...and an even greater part is "other concerned" ...and capable of forsaking your self-concerns for others, ...that is genuine pleasure, ...your greatest and finest pleasure.

The conflicts and displeasures you face today are founded on your own judgments, they are not the products of evolutionary history, for if that were true, conflicts and displeasures would have a common or similar root ...and would not be individual to every person, ...stop blaming others for your conflicts and discontentments ...and quit depending upon others for your pleasure. Seeking pleasure is a cry against the conflicts you are creating, living, and struggling against, ...it is the cry of a self and life in distress, for if you were living as you truly desire, you would be fully pleased.

You can best understand your conflicts and pleasures today by what your past reveals about your conflicts and pleasures. The conflicts you confront and those you avoid ...and the pleasures you seek and those you abstain from clearly reveal a great deal about your lifestself. Pleasures and conflicts indicate what you are doing about your desires and self-created impulses. You may either follow your desires and impulses ...as revealed in your conflicts and pleasures or hold them back; you may deny their existence; or you may use them to express a meaningful purpose that is harmonious with and a pleasurable part of the lifestself you truly desire. Is your life founded on lessons and conflicts? ...or upon pleasurable meaning and usefulness?

Man has been described as instinctively and incurably religious or spiritual, but it seems that even these are a search for pleasure to overcome doubts and fears; ...and just as religion appears to be the source of moral guidance, how might it be that true pleasure is, as well, a source of moral guidance? Until you can see and understand this, you will seek to be guided by mental or sensual pleasure and excitement. Don't fool or mislead yourself so!

*Have we left you discontent?*