

From the Shepherd's Heart

“Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

A rare emotion expressed in our world is contentment. Rarely do we hear of someone satisfied. Usually, there is a demand for more and a frustration that we can't seem to be satisfied with life. Our goal is to have “enough to retire.” The only debate is how much that might be. The common agreement is that it is more than we have now.

When contentment is missing, frustration with life is ever present. The endless search for happiness and fulfillment always seems a paycheck or promotion away. We are suckers for “get-rich-quick” schemes. We spend endless hours trying to be the sweepstakes winner of some phenomenal sum that will allow us to finally relax. But, the fact remains that those who seek more fortune rarely find a treasure trove large enough.

The state of Mississippi has been on a search for contentment for years. In 1990, casino gambling was legalized to help us with education, transportation, and economic development. This year sports betting has been approved and now the lottery. It seems the appetite for more continues to cry for more.

The first attempt of Mississippi to solve economic woes with gambling was in 1867 when they wished to address economic problems after the Civil War. It met with little success then and, and now we continue to seek economic solutions through activities that make a profit at the expense of the citizen seeking economic contentment.

Projections on the lottery generating help for bridges is \$40 million the first year and \$80 million every year after. While this sounds like a treasure trove, the same amount could be generated in a cheaper way. The 2015 census indicated the population of Mississippi is 2,992,333. Of that number 55%, or approximately 1,645,783 citizens paid taxes last year. The amount to be generated for transportation could be realized by asking each paying citizen to pay \$24.30 the first year, and \$48.60 every year after that. With that slight increase the millions projected from lottery would be realized without the tremendous expense of a lottery.

Freedom in life is not found in how much you have, but how much you trust God for what you need. The lottery will not fulfill the dreams of our citizenry. If greed is our motivator, there will always be someone promising the moon for a fee.

God has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us. Let us not forsake him for a mirage that never satisfies our need. To be content is to be free to enjoy life. Celebrate how blessed we are in God's hands and stay there.

Bro. John