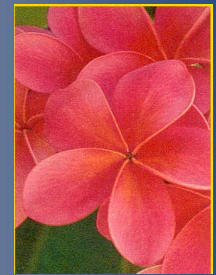




Island Sun

By Welby O'Brien Bayer



“I would love to be lying on a tropical beach right now! I *deserve* to be lying on a tropical beach right now. Oh that’s just great. It’s raining!”

Sound familiar?? Most of us struggle every day with discontentment in spite of the fact that the Lord tells us to be content. So just what is at the heart of our frustrations (other than the basic fact that we should be lying on an island beach soaking up the sun, sipping pina colada, eating fries and chocolate chip cookies to our heart’s content... all without sunburn, indigestion or the need to join Weight Watchers). Or perhaps more realistically we long for a Godly soul mate, or a fulfilling job (or a job at all), or a nice home, or relief from a difficult health condition. These seem like reasonable desires. At what point do my natural longings become unhealthy discontentment?

I came up with three questions to ask myself when I start to complain:

1. ***Am I worshipping a sovereign God or one of my own false making?*** Do I truly embrace the fact that my God can do anything and He has a loving wise plan for me? Or do I cling to the Santa Claus in the sky fantasy who should give me every thing I want?
2. ***Am I living for present temporary pleasure or true lasting eternal treasure?*** Is what I desire something that will hold its value over time and forever, or am I seeking to always feel good right now regardless of the future?
3. ***Am I demanding entitlements or am I cherishing gifts?*** We were born demanding everything and some of us have never outgrown it. Since most of us have grown up with plenty, it is hard to accept that we do not deserve a decent car, hot showers, unlimited food, or a pain free body. Continuous comfort is too often our goal. We like these things, but they are blessings to thank God for, not entitlements to demand.

Hebrews 13:5 encourages us along these same lines:

***Be content with such things as you have; for He has said,
“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”***

It is easier to be content when I remember that my God is sovereign and is with me, that He has an endless plan in action for my good, and therefore I choose to give thanks for all He is and all His blessings. And as I do, the day already seems a little warmer and brighter!