

In Christ – contentment, out of Christ – bemoaning or bragging

Jo 10:27 (Jesus) **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

When a Christian is currently living “In Christ” he or she hears God’s voice in their heart, he or she is led by God’s Spirit communicating with their spirit, he or she always does what God says and always follows His leading – and he or she is a very contented Christian. But the Christian who is currently living “Out of Christ” meaning their will or soul is not currently in submission to God who dwells in their hearts but rather their will is in submission to their human nature or flesh – they are not content, instead they will almost always be in one of two states, either bemoaning their circumstances or bragging about themselves because of their circumstances.

The “Not in Christ” Christian who moans about circumstances complains against God

- When, as a Christian, I complain directly about my circumstances I am indirectly lodging a complaint against God:

Phil 2:14 **Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining against God and questioning and doubting among yourselves,** AMP

- Murmuring and grumbling (against God) was one of the few things that led to the destruction of many of the people of Israel in the wilderness:

1 Cor 10:10 **Nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.** ESV

- Self-pity – is always of the flesh, for the flesh by another name is “Self” – the old natural human self. The “pity” part is often born of pride because the person believes that they actually merit something better from God, and, if it wasn’t for the negative circumstance they feel that they could and should return to self-boasting, and will.
- Envy of others who are not in the same adverse circumstance, whether the envied are godly people or not, is always of the flesh, and opens the door to yet more evil:

James 3:16 **For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.**

The “Not in Christ” Christian who takes credit for favorable circumstances dishonors God

Whenever the words or mannerisms of a Christian say, look at me, look at what I did, see how I handled this, aren’t I just the _____ you can be sure they are not currently “In Christ”. This boasting is of course often disguised with the clothing of religious sounding words such as “Look what the Lord did for ME” but it is still pride which God resists:

1 Cor 1:29 **So that no mortal man should have pretense for glorying and boast in the presence of God.** (I can boast but I won’t stay in God’s presence) AMP

The Christian who bemoans or brags about his circumstances is not “In Christ” and not hearing His voice, which neither moans nor boasts, but they are in the flesh which listens to the voices (thoughts) of strange spirits and is incapable of not moaning or boasting:

John 10:5 (Those in Christ) **Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.**

The “Not in Christ” Christian (just like the unsaved person) can switch quickly from self-pity (WHY ME?) to self-boasting (WHY, this is why, ME) – because it’s always about ME.

The “In Christ” Christian also faces changing circumstances, but through Christ is content

(1) When circumstances are unfavorable:

- Things may look and sound grim but the “In Christ” Christian is decreasingly moved by what he or she sees or hears but increasingly moved by what he or she believes:

Isa 11:3 **And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;**

- An adverse turn of events may be perplexing for a little while but the heart of an “In Christ” Christian is fixed and established and continues to trust in the Lord:

1 Peter 3:13 **And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?**

- Thoughts that are designed to tempt the “In Christ” Christian to doubt God will come at him thick and fast but he always goes straight to God who strengthens his heart:

Heb 6:18 (Because) **it is impossible for God ever to prove false or deceive us, (so that) we who have fled to Him for refuge might have mighty indwelling strength and strong encouragement to grasp and hold fast the hope appointed for us and set before us.** AMP

- The “In Christ” Christian may appear to be in a jam but whenever he goes to God he hears scriptures from God that speak of the future as though it now existed, and will:

Rom 4:17 **God, who...calls those things which do not exist as though they did.**
Rom 4:17 **God ...calls into existence the things that do not exist.** ESV

(2) When circumstances are favorable:

- The flesh of the “In Christ” Christian wants to rise up and take the credit but by the power of the word of God and the Holy Spirit he takes these thoughts captive:

2 Cor 10:5 **...Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,**

- The “In Christ” Christian discovers that increasingly his joy is not in a circumstance, even a favorable one, (because even then if he slips back into his flesh he can get

upset over the silliest little thing) but his joy is both from, and, in God:
John 15:11 (Jesus) **These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.**

- Even though his flesh wants to take it easy and coast for a while the “In Christ” Christian refuses to be lulled into a false sense of security by favorable events:

1 Peter 5:8 **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.** (the devil often using)

Matt 13:22 **...The deceitfulness of riches (which) choke the word (of God)...**

Ps 52:7 **Here is the man who did not make God his strength, But trusted in the abundance of his riches, And strengthened himself in his wickedness.**

Out of Christ, circumstance driven – In Christ, circumstance neutral and content

The “In Christ” Christian begins to see the futility of a Yo (miserable - due to adversity) Yo (elated - due to prosperity) a Yo-Yo existence. This is a circumstance driven life which, if life were a jigsaw puzzle, is spent always desperately trying to put the missing good circumstance pieces back in place – it’s the “If only I had ----- I’d be happy” illusion. Instead this Christian sees that God wants to bring him to the liberating place of being circumstance neutral, first in his own life and then increasingly as an intercessor in prayer with respect to the lives of others. Such a place is the secret place of the most high.

Col 3:3 **For you died (to self), and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

The “In Christ” Christian lets God teach him how to fly spiritually and by taking God’s words over circumstances rise above all that would try to bind him to the natural.

Isa 40:31 **But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles...**

This Christian thinks long about God’s words that tell him God will never leave him, never stop doing him good and cause him to never depart from God: He understands that real joy is in the presence of God and that real pleasure is growing in the knowledge of Him

Jer 32:40 **And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear (a reverential devotion to me by imparting Jesus, the Word of God) in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.**

Ps 16:11 **You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand (Jesus, the Word of God) are pleasures forevermore.**

And so, whatever the circumstances the “In Christ” Christian has begun to learn the secret that as long as he remains “In Christ” and stays out of his flesh God will keep him content:

Phil 4:11 **Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:** (And godliness with contentment is great gain - and a contented Christian is free to do God's work and is a good witness for Christ).