**Spiritual Virtues**

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Study Seven, Week Eight

The Spiritual Virtues represented by the Maltese Cross,

The Emblem of the SAR.

First Spiritual Virtue.

To **have Spiritual Contentment**

This study looks back to the very first study on the SAR Maltese Cross and the upright beam. Everything hangs on and is supported by the main beam of the cross. That main beam teaches us that God is in charge and reminds us that we must be *committed* to and *content with* His being “in charge” of everything, including us. Everything else hangs on that trust.

You will notice that we have also mentioned being “sold out to God” in several places. We know this will make some uncomfortable. With a careless glance, some might think a kind of religion seems suggested. That could not be farther from the truth.

This Spiritual Virtue, *Spiritual Contentment*, has to do with *personal* and *spiritual integrity.* We may call it Allegiance. There was a time when as a nation, we recited the Pledge of Allegiance to our national Flag in schools and at nearly every public event. That public affirmation represented spiritual integrity as well as solidarity with each another. We knew what each other stood for and what we stood for as a nation. We had just been trough a terrible war. Allegiance, integrity, and solidarity were very important.

In the early days of television, Cowboy and Indian programs were popular. Sometimes viewers observed Native Americans saying that the settlers “spoke with forked tongue,” that is, speaking from both sides of their mouth or being untruthful. When it was convenient, one would forget the promise and change the rules.

James 1:8 speaks of a “Double minded man being unstable in all of his ways.” Matthew 12:25, Mark 3:5, and Luke 11:17 all say that a kingdom or house “divided against itself cannot stand”. Those Biblical passages illustrate the problem with lack of commitment or *contentment*. The “double minded” man is not settled in his thinking, not content. Oh, yes, he has questions, but the very basic issues are not settled. The result is no integrity, no solidarity, no allegiance to anything or anyone. He is not content.

This spiritual virtue of spiritual *contentment* speaks directly about our commitment to God, about solidarity with God, about complete satisfaction with God, about unity with God, about *contentment* with God. These words describe the SAR Gentleman who has the very basic issues settled. This is the SAR Gentleman who is committed to the truth as we get it from God. This describes the SAR Gentleman who recognizes that God is God alone. This describes a man who is *content* to be an obedient, loving, creature/servant.

To have spiritual *contentment* is being convinced beyond the shadow of any doubt that God is God alone and will do what He has said and promised. It means that we do not go searching around here and there for some other meanings in life through entertainment, sports, or material possessions because we have found the fountain of meaning and truth in God alone. We are *content* with that. It does NOT mean that we cannot enjoy sports, entertainment, and material possessions. We just do not worship them, and they do not define the meaning of our lives.

The way we express that meaning may differ from others. Our worship *styles* may differ somewhat, but we have discovered deep meaning, solidarity, and union with the *author* and *finisher* of life itself. We are very satisfied and *content* at the center of our being.

Spiritual *Contentment* means that we have settled the important deep issues of life and we are committed without reservation to God’s way of seeing and doing things. We are settled, we are convinced to the point that we do not go from philosophy to philosophy, from religion to religion, searching out what ever may seem to give us a sense of deed satisfaction.

This is the person on whom we may count for integrity and consistency. This is a SAR Gentleman, a person who will not lead us around to get what he wants. This settled person has our back because he knows that you have his back. He is committed to the same deep issues that concern us. This settled SAR Gentleman desires us to succeed, do our best, and look good before others as much as he wants the same for his life.

The *content* and settled SAR Gentleman is one whose qualities drive the SAR in carrying out its mission and programs. He does not quibble about the basics or the projects and principles of Freedom. He is committed to them just as you and I are. He is willing to discuss any ideas about how best to carry out the programs for the good of the SAR. He strives to keep his focus on the overall picture and the overall mission to fulfill that picture.

The SAR Gentleman who has *spiritual contentment* is one who is leadership material. We see this spiritual quality in General George Washington when as a young man copied the “Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior…” and sought to implement them in every part of his life. This was a lifelong project of continual improvement for him. It should be the same for us.

Washington kept a Chaplain nearby to help him keep his mind focused on truth and on the main purpose rather than on the tempting and discouraging things of this life. We also see this spiritual quality as he chose Officers and sought to encourage them in the development of their character. We saw spiritual *contentment* while he addressed his men and urged them to refrain from degrading and sinful behavior so they could be good followers of their senior officers. And we saw his *contentment* and settled spirit as he urged his men and officers to avoid using cursing and foul language that further degraded them by this behavior.

General George Washington is an example of living for a higher purpose than simply getting by, a higher purpose than riding out the circumstances, a higher purpose than getting his own way, even a higher purpose than defeating and “sticking it” to the enemy.

Rather, we see someone who sought to promote helping others, having their backs, obeying authority, sharing goals in solidarity, allegiance, and unity.

This is the SAR Gentleman who has *SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT*.

Have you settled the very basic issues of life?

Have you settled them to the point where you are *content* with who you are at the core of your being even though you know that you could use some adjustments and improvements here and there?

Are you satisfied with your example of showing Solidarity with Gods truth, and with unity with the Society and its mission?

Are you the SAR Gentleman who Leads others quietly by a strong example as General Washington did as he urged his men and followers so that they are on the same side and urged them to reach for and act for a similar higher purpose and goal?

Are you the SAR Gentleman who urges others to be so committed to the goals of the Society that each one knows that the other has his back?

Are you the SAR Gentleman who knows that all the details have yet to be worked out and that there is plenty of room for discussion and planning?

Are you the SAR Gentleman who is so committed to the purpose and goals of the SAR that you are willing to try your best to work with all kinds of people in achieving those goals?

Are you the SAR Gentleman who does not take defeat as the end of the road, but rather sees the beginning of a new road, still moving toward the same purpose and goal with plenty of room for discussion and planning?

Take some time for quiet reflection on your life and look at how your life shows others that you are *spiritually content,* at unity with our great Creator God who sustains us in all kinds of circumstances?

The first spiritual virtue represented by the SAR Maltese Cross is

“Spiritual Contentment.”

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