

The Vine Committee

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KamPong Spirit #1
visiting various homes
around JCC



Brother Martin Writes

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - Philippians

4:6-7. Right at the start of 2018, I faced a challenging situation where I had to cling to this verse.

The computer system showed an item that was expiring and was not issued in FIFO (First In, First Out). The Planning department was questioning me on whether other later expiry batches had been issued instead. I was very worried since the later expiry batches had already been issued and the near expiry batch was still in the system.

I prayed but the nagging worry still remained with me. I realized that sometimes we tell people not to be anxious but we ourselves find it hard to do so. Anyway I committed it to God and had a reasonably good night's sleep. I needed a miracle. The next day in office, I checked through my emails and realized that I had actually requested the item nearing expiry to be issued first and it was physically released but the computer system had automatically put it on "HOLD" and reflected the item still in the system. It was such a relief, thanks to God, to find that it could be settled by just correcting the computer's status on the item because it would be much harder to get the customer to accept older stocks. It may not be the "walking on water" type of miracle, but it is a miracle nonetheless.

I had the opportunity to share this testimony with Henry when he was warded in NTFGH last month to allay his fears. Sometimes, God put us through trying times so that we have a testimony of God's goodness to share with others. Do you have any testimonies to share with our readers in The Vine?

Contentment

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. – Philippians 4:11

Then some soldiers asked Jesus, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay." - Luke 3:14

This world and probably more so Singaporeans seek to get the “5-C”s in life but they expect their children to get 5 “A”s in the exams. However, one of the “C”s that most overlook is Contentment. It is one of the most important “C”s to have in life. You can have Cash, Car, Condo, Certificates and Career but without Contentment, you will not be satisfied. A close colleague’s daughter scored 249 for her PSLE recently. The poor kid got a scolding from her mother because she did not get 252 points. Would you do that?

What about your Car, do you want to keep changing to a newer model like I do for Cameras? Do you keep changing neighbourhoods to upgrade your Condos? Do you keep fighting to climb to the top of your Career? When you reach the top do you realize that the only other way to go is down?

As Paul claimed, he had learnt to be content in whatever circumstances. I am not saying that young people should be so contented that they do not strive to achieve more. But in your striving, do not regret that when you reach the top and look back at the trail of destruction, broken families, enemies instead of colleagues, burnt bridges and maybe even lost faith. Being content does not mean that you stop working hard and smart. The Bible tells us in Colosians 3:23, *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.* Your promotion will come as God arranges it. Don’t be like the man in Ecclesiastes 2:11, *Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.*

Christlikeness

Another “C” to strive for is to be Christlike. Dr Robert Solomon in chapter 26 of his book “Boundless Love” states: “The fruit of the Spirit described by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 is in fact the character of Jesus.... We find each of them (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) displayed fully in the life of Christ.”

He further adds, “The problem arises when the list is dissected to leave us with an impersonal list of virtues, when we are led to think in a fragmented way that one can pick and choose one or more of the virtues.... at the expense of the others.”

Finally he says, “If we are serious about growing into Christlikeness, we must expect suffering and setbacks allowed by God not to punish us but to shape and strengthen us, ... the Spirit of Jesus strengthens and enables us to remain along the way of the cross so that we will become transformed into Christlikeness even as we faithfully walk on it.”

Martin Cheah