WOW: Word Of the Week

Complacent

July 29, 2026

Complacent. A definition will be helpful. What are we talking about? If you already know this word, I need to be specific; if you don't know the word, I need to make clear what we are talking about.

Our word **complacent** traces back to the Latin *complacere* (meaning "to please greatly" or "be very pleasing"). It combines the intensive prefix *com-* ("completely") and the verb *placere* (meaning "to please"). In the mid-1600s, the word entered English as an adjective meaning "pleasing" or "agreeable to others." Positive. One hundred years later, the meaning shifted from "pleasing others" to describe someone overly "pleased with self," thus self-satisfied. Today, it also describes someone who is unconcerned or smug about their current situation to the point of neglecting potential risks.

The word does not appear in older Bible translations, but it shows up in a few passages in the Old Testament prophets in some contemporary versions.

Despite its infrequent use, complacency is threat, danger, problem.

How many Christians are complacent, satisfied, status quo, not seeking change, not wanting growth? How many are relatively happy with their faith, how things are going?

How many churches are complacent? My own personal thought: churches do not grow because churches do not want to grow! Some-one or some-ones must desire evangelism. Someone has to be spark, impetus, beginning point. Seeing the lost, praying for the lost, seeking the lost – being like Jesus!

Sorry, but I will likely die dissatisfied. Unhappy with how and where things are—dreaming of the future, God's great vision and sacrifice for the world. Pushing evangelism forward, missions, outreach.

Complacent. A challenge. A menace. Complacent explains a lot in today's world, in today's churches. Evangelistic efforts. Prayer life. Bible reading habits. Mission commitment. Priorities. How we use our time, talents, treasures.

Other words help focus the point – satisfied, dissatisfied. Concerned, unconcerned. Smug!

May we never become self-satisfied in our faith journey.
I study continually – these days for me as much as for others.
Prayer is more precious than ever.
Jan and I pray daily for mission work around the world.
We are constantly aware of the opportunity to be his glory-bearers into the world where God places us.

A first step – pray for renewal, pray to get rid of any hint of complacency. Kingdom people!