

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE.®

Advanced Bible Study

TEACHER GUIDE | FALL 2019 | CSB

STUDY 1:

*Simplicity:
Finding Contentment
in a Busy Life*

STUDY 2:

*How to Know
God's Will*



LifeWay | Adults

SESSION 1

A Centered Life

THE POINT

When your life is centered in Christ, you find all you need.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

A lot of things press for our attention each week. Good things. Important things. As a result, we can often feel pulled in multiple directions, because everything is crying to be the priority and focus of our lives. Wouldn't it be great if we had only one thing to focus on? Jesus said there is—His kingdom and righteousness—and when this is our focus, everything else falls into place.

MATTHEW 6:25-34

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? ²⁷ Can any of you add one moment to his life-span by worrying? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. ³⁰ If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith? ³¹ So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴ Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Teaching Plan

GET INTO THE STUDY

OPENING QUESTION: *What are some things that cause our lives to get out of balance?*

- ▶ The world offers many conveniences to make our lives simpler, but it doesn't take much to throw us off balance.
- ▶ We get so focused on one area that we ultimately have a meltdown in another area, and all of a sudden our lives are totally out of balance.
- ▶ When Jesus and our relationship with Him is our focus, our lives remain balanced.
- ▶ Direct attention to **Pack Item 2: Simplicity** poster and provide a brief overview of session titles. Explain that these sessions are designed to help us make life simpler and keep our focus on Christ.

STUDY THE BIBLE

MATTHEW 6:35-30

Don't Worry

Jesus said don't worry about your life.

- ▶ Use The Setting (pp. 3-4 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to provide the setting and background for this lesson.
- ▶ Direct attention to the **Pack Item 1: Worry** poster. Ask students to record on the poster the kinds of things they worry about. Discuss their responses.
- ▶ What does it mean to you when you hear someone say *don't worry*?
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin "Jesus started ..." and "Jesus used ..." (p. 5 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to share what Jesus meant when he said don't worry.
- ▶ What would you say are the basic necessities of life? Why?
- ▶ Help students understand what Jesus confirmed were the basic necessities, using the paragraph

that begins "The initial focus ..." (pp. 5-6 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

- ▶ When we worry about the basic elements of life, we miss out on the higher or greater matters that are essential for real life. Only Christians can experience this.

See **OPTIONAL IDEA** on page 10 for a creative way to discuss how worry keeps us unbalanced.

Jesus gave examples of His provision.

- ▶ Review pages 7-8 in *Advanced Bible Study* to discuss examples of Jesus' care.
- ▶ Discuss Jesus' reference to His listeners as people of little faith. (See p. 9 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ What role does faith have in trusting God to meet our needs each day?

MATTHEW 6:31-32

Trust God to do what is best for you.

Once again Jesus said don't worry.

- ▶ Contrast Jesus' use of "don't worry" in verses 25 and 31, using the paragraph that begins "In contrast to ..." (pp. 9-10 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins "Jesus gave ..." (p. 10 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to point out the example Jesus lived out in His own life.
- ▶ How has God taken care of you through the years?

Jesus contrasted the lives of the Gentiles with lives of God's children.

- ▶ Discuss what non-believers do to seek fulfillment of their basic needs, using the paragraph that begins "Jesus had ..." (p. 10 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ What causes us to not trust God to care for us even after He has provided for us in the past?

- ▶ We have no reason to live like non-believers who anxiously believe they must care for themselves.

MATTHEW 6:33-34

Seek the things of God above all else.

Jesus said believers should place God first.

- ▶ Why is it so important for us to seek the things of God above everything else in our lives?
- ▶ Use paragraph that begins “Whereas Jesus previously ...” (p. 11 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to help students understand what it means to seek.
- ▶ Reinforce Jesus’ command to seek first God’s kingdom, using the paragraph that begins “Jesus commanded ...” (p. 11 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ What is meant by “God’s kingdom” and “God’s righteousness” (v. 33)? (See p. 12 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ Point out what Jesus meant when He said don’t worry in verse 34, using the paragraph that begins “In verse 34 ...” (p. 12 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “It’s possible ...” (p. 13 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to discuss Jesus’ close to these verses.

LIVE IT OUT

How can we center our lives on Christ so we don’t worry?

- ▶ Identify the things you tend to worry about and turn them over to God.
- ▶ Remember how God has cared for you in the past, so you can trust Him for today.
- ▶ Let God control your life, and live according to His standards.

Share the story from DIG DEEPER on the next page.

My Teaching Notes

Pack Item 2

SIMPLICITY: Finding Contentment in a Busy Life

- ▶ **A CENTERED LIFE**
Matthew 6:25-34
- ▶ **A DAILY PURSUIT**
Philippians 4:4-9
- ▶ **THE KEY TO CONTENTMENT**
Philippians 4:10-20
- ▶ **GODLY CONTENTMENT**
1 Timothy 6:6-11, 17-19
- ▶ **A SLOWER PACE**
Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17
- ▶ **UNCOMPLICATED RELATIONSHIPS**
1 Thessalonians 4:3-12

Pack Item 4

WHAT DO WE TEND TO WORRY ABOUT?

Optional Idea

IN ADVANCE, obtain masking tape. Before the students arrive, lay a straight line of masking tape down the center of the room, leaving room on both sides of the tape for students to stand.

Direct attention to the **Pack Item 1: Worry** poster and ask students to determine what are the top three things they worry about. Allow a brief discussion and then share that it seems in our world today it doesn't take much for us to lose our balance.

Direct students to pair up and stand facing each other with the masking tape in between them. Direct them to extend their arms and place their open hands against their partner's open hands on the other side of the line.

On your word, tell students to try make their partner step out of place. When this happens, tell them to sit down. Instruct the remaining students to regroup with another person and repeat until only one person is standing. That person will be the winner.

Say: This activity demonstrated how easy it is for us to become unbalanced. In the same way, we lose our balance and Christ is no longer the center of lives, when we allow ourselves to worry. Worry knocks Christ out of the center, and we lose our balance. The only way we can hope to have a balanced life each day is to make sure our lives are centered on Jesus.



Dig Deeper

Virtually no one desires a chaotic life. In fact, we spend a great deal of time while growing up taking proper precautions to ensure our lives are on the right trajectory. But even the best decisions do not mean our lives will never be in disarray. To keep things balanced, our clear, consistent choice has to be a life focused on Christ.

The Bible reveals that our heavenly Father is a God of order. In the creation account in Genesis 1:27, humanity, the crown of God's creation, was created last. But last only because God wanted to prepare the world for us.

God's orderliness is also revealed in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 14:40, while discussing

worship services, Paul stated, "But everything is to be done decently and in order" (CSB). The God who created us did so in order and it is no surprise that He desires us to live and worship the same way.

Many verses in the Bible help us to live orderly lives. For example in Philippians 4:19, Paul said, "And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." This is the orderly plan of God to meet our needs. However, the plan God has for us often unravels when we entertain thoughts of worry and anxiety.

Jesus reminded us to make the kingdom of God first (v. 33), so that the orderly plan of God to meet our needs can be fulfilled in our lives.

SESSION 2

A Daily Pursuit

THE POINT

Deepen your relationship with God by spending time with Him every day.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Where does a life of simplicity start? It starts when we begin our day. It's often tempting to jump into our tasks, knowing we have a lot to accomplish. Starting each day with God gives us the singular focus we need that brings greater contentment. As we focus on God in praise and pray, dwelling on Him becomes an ongoing practice throughout the day.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. ⁹ Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Teaching Plan

GET INTO THE STUDY

OPENING QUESTION: *What are some things that require you to pay attention to them every day?*

- ▶ Caring for things on an ongoing basis will help to preserve their value.
- ▶ Failing to properly care for things can cause them to not function properly.
- ▶ The same is true with our relationship with God. We should not expect to experience abundant life if we neglect our relationship with God.

STUDY THE BIBLE

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5

Begin your day with praise.

Paul exhorted Christians to rejoice in the Lord.

- ▶ Distribute **Pack Item 3: Philippians** handout and use it with The Setting (pp. 16-17 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to set the context for this lesson.
- ▶ What was the last thing you truly rejoiced over?
- ▶ Share the reason Paul emphasized “Rejoice in the Lord,” using the paragraph that begins “In this section ...” (p. 17 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? (See pp. 17-18 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “The verb ...” (p. 18 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to discuss the time frame for rejoicing in the Lord.
- ▶ Review pages 18-19 in *Advanced Bible Study* to discuss the reason rejoicing was not just a passing thought for Paul.

Paul exhorted Christians to let their attitude be known to others.

- ▶ When we rejoice in the Lord, regardless of the situation or circumstance, others around us

are able to see the difference that Christ has made in us.

- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “This type of positive ...” (p. 18 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to explain what “graciousness” (v. 5) means and describe the way it should be applied to your lives.
- ▶ Discuss Paul’s intention when he said the Lord is near” (v. 5). (See p. 20 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ What difference would it make if we were mindful of the closeness of God in our lives?

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Pray and leave your concerns in the hands of God.

Paul commanded believers to not worry.

- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin “Paul issued ...” and “Rather than ...” (p. 21 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to gain a deeper understanding of what Paul meant when he commanded us not to worry and take everything to God in prayer.
- ▶ What are the benefits of praying instead of worrying?
- ▶ Explain how Paul wanted believers to pray, using the paragraph that begins “Prayer is the ...” (pp. 21-22 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Of all the tools that God has given us, why is prayer the most powerful?
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins Paul emphasized that ...” (p. 22 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to discuss an essential element to our prayers.

Paul revealed the results of praying with thanksgiving.

- ▶ Discuss the “peace of God” (v. 7). (See pp. 22-23 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ In what ways have you experienced the peace of God in your life as a result of praying?
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin “Paul noted ...” and “Believers, however ...” (p. 23 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

Study) to share what Paul meant when he said “surpasses all understanding” (v. 7).

My Teaching Notes

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

Fill your mind with the things of God.

Paul said believers should think a certain way.

- ▶ As you think through your day, what are all the things you put into your mind?
- ▶ Rather than worry, believers should dwell on certain things.
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “The virtues ...” (pp. 24-25 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of thinking on the things Paul listed.
- ▶ Discuss “moral excellence” and “praiseworthy” (v. 8). (See p. 25 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)

See **OPTIONAL IDEA** on page 14 for a creative way to learn how to think as we should.

Paul set an example with his life.

- ▶ How have someone impacted the way you live?
- ▶ Discuss how Paul’s life made a impact on the believers, using the paragraph that begins “Paul had already ...” (pp. 25-26 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

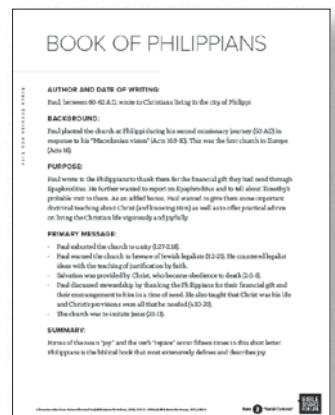
LIVE IT OUT

What steps can we take to deepen our relationship with God?

- ▶ Make rejoicing in God important in our lives.
- ▶ Pray with thanksgiving.
- ▶ Focus our minds on godly virtues.

Share the story from **DIG DEEPER** on the next page.

Pack Item 3



Optional Idea

Bring an old Trivial Pursuit® game to class. Create a card with seven passages of Scripture on it for each student in the class. Identify it as a “Daily Pursuit Card.”

Ask students if they recall the old board game Trivial Pursuit. Explain the rules of the game for those who are not familiar with it.

Ask several questions from Trivial Pursuit and give students the opportunity to respond. After several rounds ask: Why do we remember so many trivial things in life?

Explain that we have access to a lot of trivial facts and have become a nation consumed with really useless information. What difference would it make if we began to fill our minds with information and facts that really mattered each day?

Distribute a “Daily Pursuit Card” to each person. Ask: How can the information on this card make a difference in our lives? Encourage students to use the card to deepen their relationship with God. Explain

that the card provides a Scripture for each day of the week. Suggest that they read and reflect on the verse each day.

Share that this will not only deepen their relationship with God but will be a way to pursue God rather than pursuing useless trivial information. The result will be a mind that thinks on the things of God.



Dig Deeper

Life is busy. Most people keep a packed daily schedule and can barely fit anything else in. In such a climate our relationship with the Lord is vulnerable and sometimes even gets sidelined. Though we intend to get back on track, this is easier said than done. To avoid this we have to be intentional about continually deepening our relationship with God.

This requires work in at least two ways. The first is we need to slow down enough to spend time with God. In Ecclesiastes 3:1 the Bible states, “There is an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity under heaven.” This includes a time to be alone with the Lord. Our quiet, alone times with Him are when our relationship grows the most. Hebrews 3:15 notes,

“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” Hearing His voice of instruction is almost impossible in an overly busy life. Hearing from God is a key component to a better relationship with Him.

The second way to deepen our relationship with God is that we must be faithful and obedient. We can hear from Him through Bible study and prayer. But despite that it is still possible to harden our hearts and go our own way. Daily we must put into practice what God teaches us. James said, “But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (1:22).

Slowing down is tough. Being faithful is challenging. But a daily pursuit of each will lead to a deeper relationship with God.

SESSION 3

The Key to Contentment

THE POINT

True contentment comes through Christ alone.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Life would be simpler if we didn't have to think about paying bills or taxes, right? Or at least if we had more money, we wouldn't worry or feel stressed. That seems logical, but such contentment does not come from our bank balance; it begins in our hearts. The apostle Paul knew this from experience, and he gave us the "secret" to being content regardless of our finances.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. ¹² I know both how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³ I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship. ¹⁵ And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Teaching Plan

GET INTO THE STUDY

OPENING QUESTION: *When have you made a purchase that became more of a problem than a pleasure?*

- ▶ It is so easy to buy into the consumerism mindset that says we need “stuff” to make us happy.
- ▶ This indicates a thinking that we must have something bigger, something better, and when we don’t get it, we become discontent.
- ▶ We must recognize that true contentment can only come through the Person of Jesus Christ.

STUDY THE BIBLE

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14

Acknowledge the strength and provision of God.

Paul rejoiced because the Philippian believers cared for him.

- ▶ Use The Setting (pp. 29-30 in *Advanced Bible Study*) as well as **Pack Item 3: Philippians** handout to set the scene for this letter from Paul.
- ▶ What role did the Christians in the Philippian church play in Paul’s contentment?
- ▶ Review pages 30-31 in *Advanced Bible Study* to discuss Paul’s relationship with the Philippian believers and their support of him.

Paul expressed his contentment in all things.

- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “Ultimately, Paul ...” (pp. 31-32 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to discuss Paul’s trust in God.
- ▶ Point out different understandings about contentment, using the paragraphs that begin “The Greeks ...” and “Modern readers ...” (p. 32 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “Through the power ...” (p. 32 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to explain how Paul thrived despite difficulties.
- ▶ What are some reasons we seem to struggle so much with being content?
- ▶ Express Paul’s confidence in Christ for his contentment and his appreciation for the Philippian believers. (See p. 33 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

See **OPTIONAL IDEA** on page 18 for a creative way to discuss being content.

PHILIPPIANS 4:15-18

Give generously from God’s provision.

Paul thanked the Philippians for past gifts.

- ▶ Why is it so difficult for people to give away their money?
- ▶ Discuss the Philippians’ history of giving to Paul’s ministry, using the paragraph that begins with “Generosity is a ...” and subsequent paragraphs (pp. 34-35 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins “Instead of focusing ...” (pp. 35-36 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to discuss the blessings that comes because of giving.
- ▶ Why does God allow us to have a part in helping to supply the needs of others?
- ▶ Clarify that Paul was not promoting a “prosperity gospel,” using the paragraph that begins “To be clear ...” (p. 36 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

Paul received all he needed.

- ▶ Discuss Paul’s confession about his needs, using the paragraph that begins “Returning to the ...” (p. 36 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Explain the three qualities of the gifts from the Philippians. (See pp. 36-37 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ How does sacrificial giving differ from our regular giving?

- ▶ Financial generosity is a sign of devotion to God and discipleship.

My Teaching Notes

PHILIPPIANS 4:19-20

Trust God to supply your need.

Paul attributed the provisions he received to God.

- ▶ What does God's provision for us include?
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin "God's provision ..." and "The second mark ..." (p. 38 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to discuss the two main characteristics of God's provision.
- ▶ Why is it important to respond to God's provision with praise?
- ▶ Discuss Paul's response to God's provision, using the paragraphs that begin with "As Paul thought ..." and "More important ..." (pp. 38-39 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Paul understood that as God's people responded properly to His generous provisions, He would be glorified, which would be a little taste of heaven on earth.

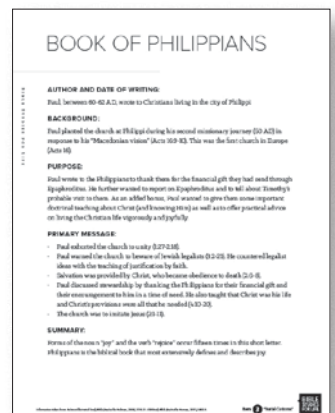
LIVE IT OUT

How can our contentment rest on God rather than material possessions?

- ▶ Accept that God is the ultimate Provider for every need in our lives.
- ▶ Generously give to support the work of God, and trust that God will reward our obedience.
- ▶ Remember to praise God for every thing He has given us.

Share the story from **DIG DEEPER** on the next page.

Pack Item 3



Optional Idea

Bring play money of several different denominations and several keys or copies of keys to class.

Ask: If you had money to spend in any way your heart desired, how would you use it? Distribute a large sum of play money to each student and tell them they can spend it on whatever they want. Invite them to share what they would do with it and how much it would cost to do what they are wanting to do. As they spend the money, ask them to hand it back to you.

Share that many people believe that buying whatever they desire will make them content. However, many times it has the opposite effect. Invite students to share times in their lives when they bought into the idea that material objects caused them to be content and the consequences of that thinking. Allow time for volunteers to share their responses.

Share that even when Paul experienced adverse living conditions, he learned his contentment was because of Christ. Therefore, only one thing will bring

true contentment, and that is allowing Christ to have full control over every aspect of our lives,

Provide a key or a copy of a key to each student. Instruct them to carry the key in their wallets throughout the coming week as a reminder that the key to contentment is not found in what we purchase. True contentment comes through Christ alone.



Dig Deeper

Today, many are trying to attain the picture-perfect life like some of their friends on Facebook seem to have. Nothing is wrong with doing better; however, when such pursuits become a person's main focus, problems occur. It is there, at the love affair with attaining what others have, that true contentment is lost.

We gain contentment through two steps that very much rely on one another. The first is giving up control. Our desire to control situations and make our future certain is the quickest way to be frustrated in life. Proverbs 16:9 says, "A person's heart plans his way, but the Lord determines his steps." We are not in control. A burden is lifted, and we are liberated when we embrace the truth that we are not the ones who

have to achieve plans and make everything just right in our lives. To give up control and lean on the One with all power is the way toward contentment.

The second step to contentment, which must support our giving up control of our lives, is an acknowledgment and trust in God's sovereignty. Paul stated in Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Again, in Proverbs 16:9 Solomon wrote, "The Lord determines his steps."

Along with giving control of our lives to God, these verses invite contentment. We must trust that the God of creation has a plan for us that He is working out.

SESSION 4

Godly Contentment

THE POINT

Godliness with contentment is great gain.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Possessions can give us a feeling of security. That sentiment, if left unchecked, can lead to hoarding. If possessions give me security, then more possessions will give me more security. This is not just a problem with hoarders. Most of us feel better off with more possessions, or at least better possessions. But the contentment we seek from such things eludes us. God offers us a simpler approach to contentment: it grows out of our relationship with Him.

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-11,17-19

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. ⁸ If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. ⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. [...] ¹⁷ Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life.

Teaching Plan

GET INTO THE STUDY

OPENING QUESTION: *What kind of character quality do you see in those who are never satisfied with anything?*

- ▶ We all have different character qualities that we like and dislike in ourselves as well as others.
- ▶ The character qualities that should take top positions in our lives must include the qualities of God's character.
- ▶ Share the story about John D. Rockefeller in *The Bible Meets Life* (pp. 41-42 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Godly contentment can make a difference in our lives as well as the lives of others.
- ▶ Direct attention to **Pack Item 4: Godly Contentment** poster and review the three subpoints for this lesson.

STUDY THE BIBLE

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-8

Godly contentment does not depend on possessions.

Paul taught that true gain was contentment.

- ▶ Use *The Setting* (pp. 42-43 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to set the context for this lesson.
- ▶ Paul wrote this teaching about contentment to warn false teachers who had grown wealthy because of the fear they created in others.
- ▶ Would you say that more people in our society today are generous or more are greedy? Why?
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin "By contrast ..." and "When Paul ..." (pp. 43-44 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to dig deeper into what made Paul stand out when contrasted to the false teachers.

- ▶ Discuss the partnership of godliness and genuine contentment, using the paragraph that begins "Paul told his ..." (p. 44 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ How can we be godly and content at the same time?

Paul said we brought nothing into this world.

- ▶ Why did Paul say that we shouldn't put our trust in material things?
- ▶ Review pages 44-45 in *Advanced Bible Study* to discuss the importance of placing our complete trust in God because we brought nothing into this world.
- ▶ Compare Paul's teachings with the experiences of Job and Solomon, using the paragraph that begins "Paul's teaching ..." (p. 44 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ We can rest when God meets our basic needs.

1 TIMOTHY 6:9-11

Craving more possessions only leads to ruin.

Paul taught wealth can lead to destruction.

- ▶ Address what Paul was not demanding, using the paragraph that begins "It should be ..." (p. 46 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ What three pitfalls should we avoid concerning money? (See pp. 46-47 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ Use the paragraph that begins "Such destruction ..." (p. 47 in *Advanced Bible Study*) and subsequent paragraphs to discuss the negative impact the pursuit for money can have.
- ▶ Correct the often misquoted verse 10, using the paragraph that begins "When viewing Paul's ..." (p. 47 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ How can we be properly balanced with our desire to make money and have money?
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin "The key ..." and "In contrast ..." (p. 48 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to sum up what Paul conveyed about money.

Paul told Timothy to pursue righteousness.

- ▶ Discuss Paul's advice to Timothy related to wealth, using the paragraphs that begin "Science tells ..." and "Paul reminded ..." (pp. 48-49 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)

See **OPTIONAL IDEA** on page 22 for a creative way to discuss obtaining contentment.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

Set your hope on God and store up riches in heaven.

Paul told Timothy to instruct others.

- ▶ Discuss the two truths Paul indicated with the phrase "present age" (v. 17). (See p. 50 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin "Unfortunately ..." and "To make ..." (pp. 50-51 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to share the dangers wealth can bring about in a church and a solution to that danger.
- ▶ We may not be wealthy, but when we use what we have to bless others, we are storing up treasure in heaven (v. 19).

LIVE IT OUT

How can we be sure that our godliness with contentment leads to gain?

- ▶ Don't put our trust in stuff; trust only God to meet our needs.
- ▶ Remember that the love of money is the root of evil.
- ▶ If we are wealthy, we should set our hope in God and serve others with our resources.

Share the story from **DIG DEEPER** on the next page.

My Teaching Notes**Pack Item 4**

Optional Idea

Bring two large sheets of paper and markers to class. Download the words to the song “I’d Rather Have Jesus” and make copies for each student.

Ask: What one thing would change your life if given to you? Why did you choose that one thing?

It is hard to be content in life today. People always want something more, whether it’s more money, a bigger TV, a better car, or even more friends. The problem is when we get those things it doesn’t solve our biggest issue. It does not solve our discontent with what we have.

Divide the class into two subgroups. Give paper and a marker to each group. Ask one group to sketch a map of a path that leads to wealth and ask the other group to sketch a map of a path that leads to God. After each group sketches out their respective maps, invite volunteers to share what they illustrated.

Ask: Which map are you using when it comes to finding godly contentment?

We are the ones who choose the path we will take when it comes to finding contentment in this life. The path that is certain is the one that leads to God.

Distribute copies of the song “I’d Rather Have Jesus.” As you read it aloud, invite students to evaluate where their hearts are. Would they truly rather have riches or would they rather have Jesus?



Dig Deeper

The difficulty for the Christian is to live day-in-and-day-out in a spiritual state of mind. It is easy to slip into the rut of temporal thinking, because the temporal world with its pleasures and problems distract us daily. But if we can manage to stay spiritually focused, we will experience godly contentment.

The problem is that things of this world consume us, devouring our attention and pulling our focus off of God. In 1 John 2:17 we read, “And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God’s will remains forever.” This verse reminds us the physical does not last, while the spiritual lives on forever.

For the Christian, to be too physically focused presents two problems. The first involves indulging.

One of the threads of truth throughout the Bible is that of moderation. Whether dealing with food, Christian freedom, or money, our participation in virtually everything is only to go so far. Addiction can happen on many fronts. Therefore, we cannot allow ourselves to be consumed by anything other than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The second is idolatry. What we indulge in today becomes our god tomorrow. When we cling too much to money, for example, we end up worshiping the created or what is passing away instead of the Creator. As Jesus stated in Matthew 6:24, “You cannot serve both God and money.” The only thing that truly satisfies is that which lasts forever.