



The Key to Contentment

?

**WHEN
HAVE YOU
WANTED
SOMETHING
SOMEONE
ELSE HAD?**

The
POINT ➤

**True contentment comes
through Christ alone.**

➤ 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.



FOR LEADERS (15 minutes)

THE POINT // TRUE CONTENTMENT COMES THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CHURCH

The church is a community of believers who are called to meet together regularly to study Scripture, pray, worship, serve and encourage one another, and proclaim the gospel to the world.

Message to Leaders

Many people see church as the place they go to have their needs met—spiritual, emotional, relational, physical, and otherwise. However, it's much better to see the church as a family bound together in love, and among whom we're blessed to use our spiritual gifts in serving others. Contentment comes not in the receiving, but in using what God gives for His purposes, particularly among our brothers and sisters in the church.

> Engage Option 1

Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to list their dream job, favorite car, best place to live, and the reason they selected those choices. Say, **"The world says we can find happiness through our successes in life. But no matter what we experience in this world, we will only find true contentment through Christ."**

> Engage Option 2

Play a slideshow with pictures of churches and people gathered in different countries or places of poverty. Say, **"It's easy to think we have to be rich or successful to be happy, but our joy should come from a relationship with God."**

> Engage Option 3

Search the Internet for "Satisfaction in God - Sermon Jam (John Piper)." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"If we pursue the world, we'll only find ourselves longing for more out of life. We can only find true contentment in life when we pursue God instead."**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure it is appropriate for your church and ministry.



For **free online training** on how to lead a group visit **MinistryGrid.com/web/BibleStudiesForLife**

For **free Midweek Options** for your group, visit **lifeway.com/BSFLsimplicityFall19**

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

ITEM 3: Introduce the Scripture for this week by displaying the Session 3 poster.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT // TRUE CONTENTMENT COMES THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.



THE SETTING

Paul established the church at Philippi on his second missionary journey. Because there weren't enough Jews in Philippi to constitute a synagogue, some devout women met outside the city at a place of prayer (Acts 16:13). Opposition to the young church arose immediately. Paul and Silas were illegally beaten and imprisoned, but God miraculously delivered them. Paul wrote to thank the Philippian church for supporting Him. He also wanted them to know about the difficulties he faced in Rome, specifically his imprisonment, and to encourage them to be content in Christ no matter the hardships they faced.

FACT:

If you ever struggle with a “season” of life, be thankful change is coming. In the Arctic Circle, there are only two seasons—summer and winter—and the sun only rises and sets once per year.¹

In high school, there are a handful of people who have it all:

- They're the star athletes.
- They're the most handsome or beautiful.
- They date the cutest guys or gals.
- They have great clothes and drive nice cars.

It may appear as if some people have the perfect life—everybody has their own problems and what we see on Instagram is not real life—and we sometimes dream of experiencing what these select few live out every day. If we're not careful, our longings can turn into a heart of discontentment, and this is a big problem when it comes to our relationship with God.

It's okay to have goals, to desire growth, and to pursue bigger and better possibilities. But ultimately, we're called to trust God and to be content with what He provides. The apostle Paul knew what it was to live a life of highs and lows—to have a lot and to be in need. As situations in his life changed, his contentment did not. In Philippians 4, Paul gave us the “secret” to being content no matter the situation.



IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // TRUE CONTENTMENT COMES THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14

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. I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. 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. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me. Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship. **PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14**

At times, living by faith involves facing situations that are a little uncomfortable—maybe even downright frightening. However, when we find ourselves outside of our normal safe and secure spaces, it's an opportunity to either fall into worrying or trusting God to take care of us. When we experience God's provision in ways that can't be explained otherwise, these are the times our faith is increased in powerful ways.

Paul knew very well what it meant to live by faith and see God provide. In this particular instance, when the opportunity arose to help, the Philippians stepped in. Paul wrote to express his appreciation for the financial support he received from them. However, Paul knew very well that, ultimately, it was God who provided for him. Paul rejoiced in the Lord, and his thanks was to the One behind the gift and who had moved the church to care and provide for his needs.

Even as Paul thanked them for their concern, he let them know he would be fine with or without a gift. He was no stranger to the trials of life (2 Cor. 11:24-27). Here are a few things Paul experienced:

- Being thrown in prison
- Whipped five times with thirty-nine lashes
- Beaten with rods three times
- Faced death and multiple dangers
- Lack of food
- Slept in the cold

Though he may have been tempted to complain, Paul responded with contentment in every circumstance. He wasn't exempt from pain and the trials of this life just because he was a faithful servant.

The secret to Paul's contentment was a wholehearted dependence on God. Whether he was well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need, Paul found his strength and contentment in Christ. Many people quote verse 13 as if "all things" refers to throwing the winning pass or crushing the SAT. While we should certainly depend on God in all circumstances, the point of this verse is that no matter our circumstances, we can be content because of Christ.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 22)

- 1 What keeps us from experiencing contentment?
- 2 Why is God's strength a necessary ingredient for contentment?



IMPART

THE POINT // TRUE CONTENTMENT COMES THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.

PHILIPPIANS 4:15-18

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. For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account. 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. **PHILIPPIANS 4:15-18**

I started playing baseball (tee-ball, really) when I was four years old. Soon after, I started collecting baseball cards. Every week, I'd spend my allowance almost exclusively on cards, and by the time I was in high school, I had quite the collection. I had grand visions of how much it would be worth one day, but here's the thing: I've never done anything with it. My collection has sat in boxes, and I've moved a couple of times over the years and lost some. All that collecting and accumulating, gathering and compiling, and ultimately, it's not really worth anything.

Leader: Ask students what they tend to hold on to (maybe even too much).

Paul expressed gratitude for the way the Philippian church supported him. Paul had some difficult days as he served the region of Macedonia. He suffered physically in Philippi, and as he preached in Thessalonica, he met opposition that eventually forced him to leave. No wonder he was so grateful for a church who stood by him during these times. If not for the generosity of the church in Philippi, he could have been discouraged. Though Paul had helped start many churches, Philippi was the only church in the region who supported him when he needed it. Paul mentioned this fact without a hint of complaint. He refused to complain about what was not done and focused instead on thanksgiving for what was done.

The Philippian church was a great encouragement to Paul, and we should be known for the same thing. We should be generous and seeking opportunities to encourage and bless others, especially when it comes to the spreading of the gospel. We are blessed that we would bless others. God certainly gives us good things to meet our own needs. However, He often gives over and above, and we are called to use these things to serve others. In our culture, we value getting more, bigger, and better for ourselves. The gospel compels us not only to receive with humility and gratitude, but also to share.

We should all live as missionaries with a desire to spread the message of Christ. For some, this means taking the gospel to the corners of the globe. For others, it means supporting those who go with prayer and provision and the understanding that all we have is for Him and the advancement of His gospel.

To save is wise. To be a good steward is biblical. But we must be careful so we don't get caught up in accumulating and forget to support the cause of the Great Commission. Be thankful for what God gives and continually look for opportunities to share what you have.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 23)

- 3** What's the connection between contentment and generosity?
- 4** Describe a time when someone's generosity overwhelmed you.
- 5** How do you decide when, where, and how to give?



PHILIPPIANS 4:19-20

And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. **PHILIPPIANS 4:19-20**

I grew up in a rural area with a lot of woods and open spaces. When I was in middle school, my dad bought me a dirt bike. I loved it and rode almost every opportunity I had. Then one day, when I came home from school, it was gone! My dad had given it away to a boy in my class whose family didn't have nearly as much as we did. I was crushed, and I struggled to understand.

The Philippians helped Paul in his time of need. They supported him and sacrificed a lot. They gave from a heart of generosity and a love for the gospel. And even though they weren't rich, they could give freely because they knew God would take care of them.

That wonderful promise gets even better when we see God supplies what we need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Sometimes we go to God, but we forget who we are approaching—the Creator of the universe. He's the One who owns it all. The One who lacks absolutely nothing. His resources are unlimited, so we can rest in the truth that, when God promises to bless us, He's in the position to follow through.

This is not the false promise often proclaimed in the prosperity gospel. We can't just name whatever we want and claim it. God is not a genie here to answer all our commands, flood our accounts with money, and fill our lives with every possession we desire. God could certainly do that, but it wouldn't be good for us. Contentment doesn't come through having all we want. It comes through trusting in God and being satisfied with what He provides.

On a certain level, we know this is true; however, we sometimes fail to be content because our sinful human nature always wants more. Even our prayers reflect this—we often don't just pray for our daily needs, but we seek after a long list of wants. And although our sin nature works to convince us otherwise, having all our material desires will never bring true contentment.

True contentment comes only from loving and trusting God and living a life of obedience in pursuit of His purposes. This doesn't involve pursuing material things and selfishly accumulating. Instead, it means being satisfied with God's provision and generously sharing (even if it means giving away a beloved recreational vehicle to show the love of Christ) from the abundance God gives.

The secret to Paul's contentment was a wholehearted dependence on God. #BSFLsimplicity



DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 23)

- 6** How do you demonstrate trust that God will meet your needs?
- 7** What's the relationship between giving and God's glory?
- 8** What truths about God encourage you to be generous?



LIVE IT OUT (10 minutes)

THE POINT // TRUE CONTENTMENT COMES THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.



GOD
JESUS
HOLY SPIRIT
BIBLE
SALVATION
CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE
FAMILY
COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CHURCH

The church is a community of believers who are called to meet together regularly to study Scripture, pray, worship, serve and encourage one another, and proclaim the gospel to the world.

Many people see church as the place they go to have their needs met—spiritual, emotional, relational, physical, and otherwise. However, it's much better to see the church as a family bound together in love, and among whom we're blessed to use our spiritual gifts in serving others. Contentment comes not in the receiving, but in using what God gives for His purposes, particularly among our brothers and sisters in the church.

>CHRIST

Contentment is an expression of our faith. Without faith, we'll lack contentment—no matter how much we have. But with real faith, we'll be content no matter how little we have.

9 Evaluate your heart for signs of discontentment. Ask yourself:

Am I trusting in money more than in Jesus?

Do money and possessions bring me more joy than Jesus?

Can I really say, "Christ is all I need"?

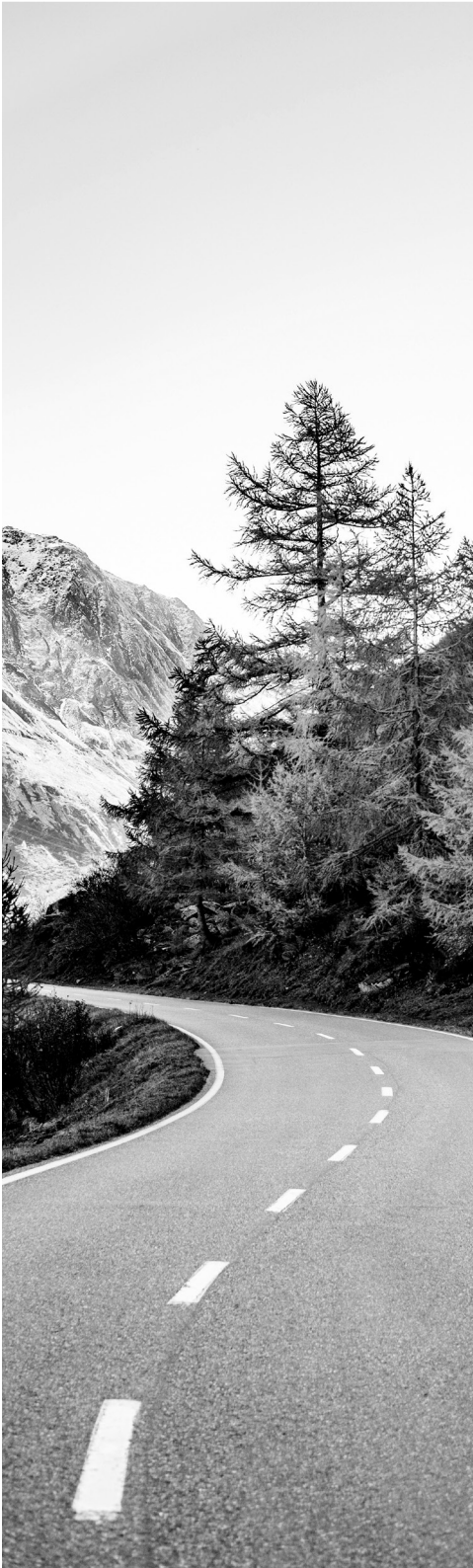
10 What did you discover?

11 How does the way you live support your answer?



LIVE IT OUT

THE POINT // TRUE CONTENTMENT COMES THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.



› COMMUNITY

We are called to do good to all people, especially fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (Gal. 6:10). When we're constantly looking to fill our lives with more and more stuff, others miss out on what God would have us pass on, because we're keeping it for ourselves.

12 When has God used you to practically bless someone through your contentment in Christ?

13 How will you generously bless someone this week?

› CULTURE

The world tempts us to continually seek more and more to fill our lives. However, this is an empty pursuit. When we are content in Jesus, our lives stand out against the world's norm.

14 In terms of where you find satisfaction, how does your life look different from the world?

15 How will you use this difference to point someone to Jesus?