



3

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.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

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



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.

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.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14

1 What keeps us from experiencing contentment?

2 Why is God's strength a necessary ingredient for contentment?

PHILIPPIANS 4:15-18

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

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?



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





LIVE IT OUT



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?



› 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.

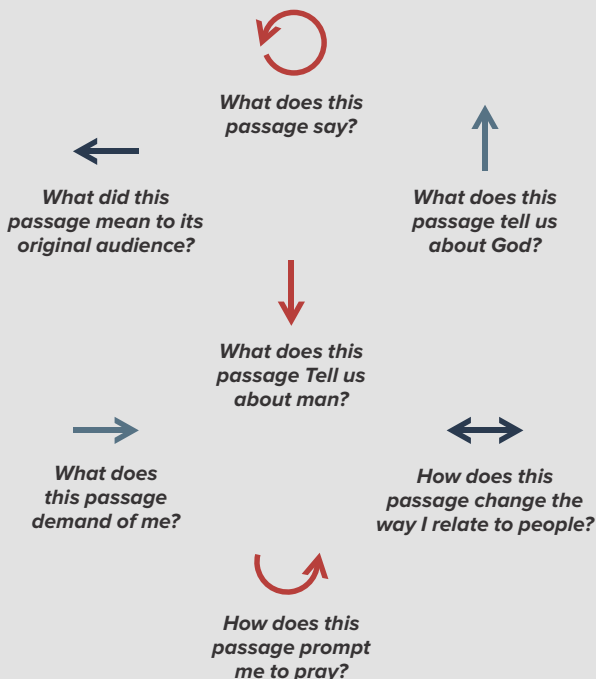
14 In terms of where you find satisfaction, how does your life look different from the world?

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

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One

2 CORINTHIANS 12:6

People can often be prideful, and teens can sometimes be the worst. We think we know everything, and at times, we refuse to listen to anyone. But life has a way of humbling us, and years down the road, most of us will realize mom and dad knew what they were talking about. Paul, several years before writing this letter, had an incredible experience in which he received a vision from the Lord. Whereas we often boast with no real reason to back it up, Paul's experience was a reason to boast, if anyone ever had one. However, Paul refused to flaunt these experiences. He knew this may tempt him toward pride. Further, he didn't want the Corinthian church to judge him based on his visions. Instead, Paul wanted them to observe Christ in him through the ways he lived. When we boast for no reason, we act as fools. But when we live in humility and obedience to Christ, others—through what they see and hear from us—have the opportunity to see and hear Jesus.

➤ Describe a time you were tempted to boast.

➤ Why is it better to live well before others than to brag about yourself?

Day Two

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7



Throughout his life and ministry, Paul had some incredible experiences, including these revelations and visions. Because he may have been tempted to exalt himself, God gave Paul a thorn to protect him from pride. Sometimes, we see protection only as God's keeping us from physical harm. However, ultimately God desires to keep us from spiritual harm. Pride is very harmful and keeps us from living a life that pleases God. Therefore, even a difficult situation was a gift that helped Paul remain humble. When we experience difficulties in life, instead of becoming angry or bitter, it's important that we ask what it is God may desire to teach us through hardships?

- **Describe a difficulty you recently experienced. How did you respond?**
- **When has God used hardship in your life to help you mature spiritually?**

Day Three

2 CORINTHIANS 12:8

When Jesus modeled for us how we're to pray, He taught us to praise God, to seek after kingdom realities, and to ask for forgiveness (Matt. 6:9-13). He also taught us to express our dependence upon God for provision and protection, so when Paul asked God to be delivered from this thorn, He was following exactly what Jesus had modeled. When we pray and get what we've asked for, we often think God has answered. However, when we don't receive what we've requested, we may be tempted to think God isn't listening or that our prayers are meaningless. However, this simply isn't the case. When Paul asked for his suffering to end, though it was well within God's power to provide exactly what Paul asked for, God knew it wasn't in Paul's best interest. God has promised good things for His children, and even though it may not be exactly what we want in the moment, His purposes are always best.

- **When have you felt like God wasn't listening to your prayers?**
- **How can we know that God is working everything for our good?**

Day Four

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

God's response to Paul's request may have been difficult to hear. However, because Paul was committed to God's purposes above all else, He gladly accepted God's answer. If Paul had received what he wanted, he may have been able to live by his own power. Then, Paul would have received the glory. But if Paul was weak and afflicted and powerful things happened through him anyway, no one would mistakenly attribute the differences made to Paul. This gave him the perfect opportunity to point people to Jesus. As Paul came to understand this, he wasn't disappointed or upset, angry or bitter. Instead, though it cost him a certain amount of peace and comfort (at least, in an earthly sense), he gladly paid this price that God would be glorified through him. Following Christ means surrendering our lives to Him to be used for His purposes, and it's an honor to be used by Him, even when we face difficult things.

- **When has God used a weakness in your life to bring glory to Himself?**
- **How will you point someone to the strength of Jesus this week?**

Day Five

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10



We don't naturally associate suffering with boasting or pleasure. However, this is exactly Paul's reaction to the weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties he experienced. Because he understood clearly that God would use these experiences to bring honor to Christ, Paul was perfectly content to go through these things. In our culture, we want to have the best and be the best. We often desire a life of comfort. However, following Christ means loving God and valuing His purposes above all else. When we do, we'll find we're fully content, no matter our circumstances.

- **In all honesty, what does it take to make you happy?**
- **How will you choose to cultivate contentment in your life, no matter the circumstances?**