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 Minneapolis Campus: 2727 Central Ave. NE Minneapolis, MN 55418 (612-217-4637) September/October 2012; Vol. 10, Issue 5

MONTHLY
THEME:

*The focus of this year's LIFEline issues will coincide with our recent sermon series:
 Breaking Through the Roadblocks of Life ~
 This issue will center on breaking through from longing to contentment.*

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MONTHLY
SCRIPTURE:

*The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble.
 Proverbs 19:23*

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pastor'sPAGE

The Broader Scope of Contentment

Kingdom culture says:

*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be **content** with what you have, because God has said,*

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." --Hebrews 13:5

Have you ever thought of the whole context of this scripture? God's promise to never leave us or forsake us is in direct connection to us being content with what we have. Our culture today tells us to never be content. We've always got to get more. We've got to "climb the ladder." We live in a world that tells us what we have is never enough. Yet, Philippians 4:11 says, "...for I have learned to be **content** whatever the circumstances."

Many times we link contentment with possessions and wealth. I'd like to take a different angle and talk about the broader scope of the word. Contentment can be simply defined as "A state of happiness or satisfaction" The Bible dictionary says that it is opposed to envy and selfish ambition (James 3:16) and anxiety (Matthew 6:25, 34) So what does it look like when someone is truly content in every area of his or her life? What does it look like when we truly walk in freedom?

Luke 24:13-35 tells a story of two of Jesus' followers who were on their way to a town called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. They were walking along and talking about all the things they had just seen and heard the last three days. They had just witnessed Jesus' trial, crucifixion, and burial. They had heard firsthand stories from Mary Magdalene and other women, who said that angels had appeared to them at the tomb where Jesus had been buried. They had heard firsthand accounts from the apostles that the tomb was empty.

As they are walking and talking, Jesus appeared to them and began to walk with them. God kept them from recognizing Jesus, who asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. Then Cleopas, one of the two men, replied, "You must be the only person around who has not seen or heard all the things going on around here."

"What things?" Jesus asked.

They went on to describe everything they had seen and heard in the last days to Jesus. He finally broke in and said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to

suffer these things and then enter his glory?" Then Jesus began to explain what was spoken in the Scripture and what the prophets had spoken in the past concerning Him.

The two men begged Jesus to stay with them. He did, and as He was breaking bread with them, suddenly their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Then He disappeared.

Why on earth, after hearing such amazing news of Jesus' Resurrection, would these, His followers, be in a place where their faces were downcast? Why, when we hear the amazing news of the price Jesus paid for our freedom, do we continue to live in bondage? Why are we not content with what Jesus did for us? We have the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom! Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

The guys on the road to Emmaus had their eyes on the small picture, not the big picture. We tend to get our eyes on what is going on in our world right now, and we don't see or hear the Jesus who is walking and talking right alongside us. True contentment goes beyond situations and circumstances. Paul said in Philippians 4:12-13:

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

How can we honestly live out Kingdom culture if we are not content? How would we ever be like the early church of Acts 2:42-47? David Platt says, "We are settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves."

Once they recognized that their fellow traveler had been Jesus, these two followers of Jesus asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road...?" I want my heart to be burning within me!

And these two followers of Jesus weren't content keeping their good news to themselves. They made the seven-mile hike back to Jerusalem to share it with others.

I wonder how the trip back to Jerusalem was different than the earlier trip to Emmaus!

--Pastor Ben Clark

Moving from Longing to Contentment

(Editor's note: Alan Ross, of Glasgow, Scotland, serves the body of Christ internationally in a prophetic ministry. He has been providing prophetic oversight for our congregation since his first visit with us in December 2005. We believe that you will be richly blessed by his article below.)

Moving from longing to contentment. The theme is somewhat stimulating. It suggests going on a journey and doing real life. As a very young Christian, I believed that my problems were now behind me, and I could look forward to a light and joyful pilgrimage upon the earth. I refer to that period of my life as "Pink-Cloud Christianity."

Everything looked so rosy from that very warm and secure place. However something called "reality" broke into my emotional trip, and I discovered that there is a very real enemy seeking to undermine and destroy at every opportunity. I also discovered that my Lord is an awesome God! On that basis, my journey began.

As a young man twenty-three years old, with my old life firmly behind me, lots of fresh longings came to the surface. Some were embryonic in nature and quite difficult to articulate. I often think of my life in that season as "Mr. Bean meets Jesus." Talk about being spiritually clueless!

The deepest liberation in my Christian life has come from this truth: it's not all about me! The reality of this has brought me to a lifestyle of perpetual surrender. This being so, wisdom reveals that it's all about the plans of God being fulfilled in and around my life. So many saints, both in the Scriptures and in the annals of church history, experienced severe trauma at the end of their days; yet the Lord fulfilled His destiny through their lives, and glory awaited.

Trust in God evolves and deepens over many years. I recall the words of George Stormont, a saint from old, who, in his dying days, shared with Pastor Dave Ogren Sr. that "God is enough." He is! We can trust Him absolutely, and we are free from a performance-oriented Christianity. In the words of the song Amy Grant made famous in the 1980s, "When it all comes down, if there is anything good that happens in life, it's from Jesus."

The journey from longing to contentment is both revelatory and developmental in nature. The Word of the Lord needs to govern our longings and separate that which is carnal from that which is of the Spirit. We can allow the longings in our heart to be proven in our lives by the working of the Holy Spirit. We can allow "a language" to develop within us, a language that enables us to bring before the Lord prayers that the Holy Spirit constructs in our hearts. We are then on a pathway to fulfillment.

When God wants to make a mushroom, He takes twenty-four hours. When he wants to make an oak tree, he takes eighty years. The Lord is not in a hurry. When we give Him time, He gives us patience. In this context, longings are fulfilled.

As many of us are learning to meditate and reflect on our journey at a number of levels and time sequences, we can see and rejoice with the eternal truth that the Lord is with us. This means that we confront our disappointments and regrets in life, both of which are anointing blockers and destiny robbers. A truth that has deeply liberated me is that simply everything in my life is putty in God's hands. This allows me to be relationally honest before God, even when I am disappointed with Him.

I am now fifty-two years old and almost thirty years a Christian. A great deal of water has gone under the bridge, including seasons of severe pain and suffering. Many of the initial longings in my life have been fulfilled, including marrying a godly woman, becoming a father, getting an education, and traveling widely. I give the Lord heartfelt thanks for this and yet can share of the deep contentment that has come into my life through simple reflection on the grace of God. I see the grace of God upon my extended family and many friends who as yet do not know Jesus. Contentment! I see the grace of God on my marriage. Contentment!

As I lift myself up to where the Lord reigns, I see my life in the context of a time line, beginning in 1959 and ending when the Lord says, "Done." I have no aspirations of being the best Christian or minister who has walked the planet. All I want to do is discharge that which the Lord has placed within me and be part of the contemporary move of the Spirit taking place in the global body of Christ. Contentment! Living the knowledge that the best is yet to be. Contentment!

Of course, we all have the privilege and responsibility of sharing our lives together on this journey called "life." This means relationship. I am so grateful for the many friendships I have all over the world. I see many faces before me now, and I can testify that God is faithful. The Lord is good!

There is so much more to kingdom relationships than simply sharing together. In that place of depth in our lives, our hearts intertwine, and there is an exchange of life that reflects initial struggles and, when the Lord has moved, a place of overcoming. This means that as well as we know God, we also know each other. In our fellowship, we have times and places where God's workmanship has become very real. In our friendships with one another, we are fruit bearers and speak words of hope that are ongoing catalysts for change within.

In summary, moving from longing to contentment is yet another demonstration of the cross in our lives. It is a journey of learning to be content with who God is, resting in His character, and rejoicing as His plan unfolds before us. Thank you, dear friends, for allowing me to share with you. I am looking forward to an extended time with you all in November, and I believe that the Lord has something special for us all.

--Alan Ross



MARGOT, SARAH, AND ALAN ROSS

A Woman Devoted to Serving Christ

(Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of BCF Hall of Faith articles intended to help us recall godly characteristics of those who have walked before us at BCF and also to challenge us to walk in surrender to Christ as they did.)

When Helen Jepsen came to serve as the second pastor of Bethel Christian Fellowship (then known as Bethel Temple) in 1951, she didn't come alone. Her co-worker, Edith Willander, was at her side.

Edith and many of her family members came to faith in Christ under Sister Jepsen's pastoral ministry at Clarkfield, Minnesota. About a year after Sister Jepsen began her ministry at Clarkfield, Edith, who was then a young woman, became her co-worker. Her service was loyal, dedicated, devoted, and an invaluable part of her pastor's ministry.



HELEN JEPSEN (L) AND
EDITH WILLANDER

Nothing escaped Edith's eagle eyes, and when she saw something that needed to be done, she put her hands to doing it. When BCF moved from its train-coach building at Snelling and Juno to 1982 Iglehart in 1955, Edith led the charge in making it a suitable meeting place. She had two truckloads of junk removed before any other cleaning and remodeling work was begun.

In September 1982, in BCF's final meeting at the Iglehart building, she recalled this work that had been accomplished nearly three decades earlier and said, "We all worked and tithed and gave."

What Edith didn't explain in her above statement was that she and Sister Jepsen double-tithed to help pay for the Iglehart building and its renovation. God blessed them, in the words of Ephesians 3:20, "exceeding abundantly" (King James Version) with the houses they were able to live in. And God also blessed their prayer meetings, in which some received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Edith served as church secretary and on the church board for many years. With the help of others, she kept the church spotlessly clean. During the growing season, she faithfully brought a gorgeous bouquet of flowers from her own garden and placed it at the front of the church sanctuary for the Sunday morning service. She was known for her culinary expertise, and everyone who ate at her table always remembered the experience.

In the later years of Sister Jepsen's ministry, Edith purchased her own home, worked for a secular employer, and took renters into her home for supplemental income. The ultimate expression of her love for her pastor came during the year Sister Jepsen had five major cancer surgeries and was finally discharged to come home.

Edith took an early retirement to faithfully care for her until she drew her last breath.

BCF is privileged to have some who remember Edith and the impact she made on their lives. Lynda Larson recalls:



Edith Willander would often testify when an opportunity arose in an evening service at Bethel Temple (now BCF). Her testimonies spoke of her ongoing communication with her Lord, always of life experiences, and often told of specific answers to prayer. One testimony I remember was her account of taking a walk in the early morning and noting a bird that, in her estimation, seemed to be giving exuberant praise to the Lord. She said that it caused praise to rise up within her. I was blessed by that testimony and blessed to have known Edith just a little bit.

Gene VanVeldhuizen has the following memories of Edith:

One thing you didn't have to guess about with those early Bethel women was where they stood concerning their doctrine or beliefs, and Edith was no exception. She could and would state emphatically what she believed. I can still picture her shaking her head and arms to give emphasis to what she was saying. I remember a time when that brought a great deal of comfort to my wife, Alvina, and me.

We were struggling with the idea of placing our oldest son, Michael, in a group home. He was six years old and profoundly mentally challenged. It had become dangerous for him to stay at home because of his lack of a sense of danger, such as breaking loose from whoever was caring for him and running out on a busy street. We made the decision to try a group home, and the following Sunday Edith came to us and said that we had made the right choice. She said that we didn't need to worry about what others might say because we had done the right thing. That was a real comfort to us, especially coming from Edith.

One time we were recipients of Edith's compassion and generosity. There was a special event at the church, and Alvina had used a set of chinaware we had received from her grandparents as a wedding gift. After the event, Alvina had the chinaware boxed up and was taking it back home on a cold, icy night. She slipped on the ice and fell, breaking almost every piece in the set. Edith had an extra set she had

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It's To Die For

Insidious rift that rips to the core!
Utter destruction to all things and more.
Pray tell why such ruin?
Pray tell what's the source?
Inner rebellion polluting life's course.
And the solution for such great demise?
The Lamb on a tree in innocence dies.
Relief and escape from this wretched Curse:
Pursue the Yeshua,

Life's Ultimate Nurse!!!

— Bruce Beyer



A Desire of My Heart

I used to think it would be unfair
If Jesus returned, caught me up in the air,
Took me straight through the clouds
To the throne of my Father,
And said, "God, this is Liz,
She is one of your daughters."
Then showed me the way to the home He's prepared –
If He did all these things **before I got married!**
I reasoned that Jesus would know that my life
Would not be complete until I was a wife.
But He changed me, He opened my blind eyes to see
That my spirit was bound – then He set me free!
I may yet get married while still on this earth.
But if not, there are things of far greater worth:
A walk day by day with my Lord that's complete,
And contentment in Him 'till the day that we meet.

—Liz Kimmel

(This poem was written in March, 1978, about six months before I met my future husband. As of this September, Cary and I have been married 33 years!)

A Word Lesson for the Heart

The word "content," with emphasis on the first half of the word, Means "what is held inside," – it may be seen, it may be heard. The root comes from *contain*, which means "accommodate; control; To have capacity; to harness, to embrace the whole."

The same word, when its stress is at the end, as in "content," Means "satisfied; unworried; calm; great peace is evident." This is the state of spirit, soul, and body we desire. This is the place of rest our hearts should eagerly acquire.

How odd that three small letters, when added to this word, Completely change its meaning – the thought is quite absurd. To add the suffix *-ion* creates the noun *contention*, A word of strife and struggle, filled with violence and tension.

Another suffix adding four small letters to the end Makes it read *contentious*, which surely can offend. This word describes a heart that is both quarrelsome and cross; Attitudes leading to actions that will likely cause you loss.

There's a suffix that won't alter the word's basic atmosphere – "Contentment" means "well-being; ease; tranquility; and cheer." The *content* of your heart is known by all who see your face. Seek God in everything, and be *content* in His great grace.

—Liz Kimmel

A Woman Devoted to Serving Christ continued from page 4

received from Helen Jepsen's estate, and she gave it to us. What a blessing!

Edith was the church custodian for a time. Nobody was concerned whether she would do the job. Her build and muscles made it obvious that she was well able to do anything and everything that the job required. You could be sure that the church would be spotless on Sunday morning. She was no slacker.

Edith Willander was a strong support to Sister Helen Jepsen, a very integral part of the ministry God accomplished through BCF's second pastor. Like Persis, a woman honored by the apostle Paul in Romans 16:12, she "worked very hard in the Lord." She was a woman who knew God in a very personal relationship and was devoted to serving Him.

--Ken Holmgren

Lessons Learned from Summer Mission Trip

Pastor Ben Clark and a group of Radiate students and leaders went to Chicago August 10-17 and ministered there with an organization called Jesus People USA. Two of the participants have written about their experiences on the summer mission trip.

“An Open and Happy Heart...Ready to Serve”

Hey guys! For those of you who don't know me, I am Dosa. I was one of the kids that got a chance to go to Chicago and help out with JPUSA and serve for nine days. My trip wasn't so good in the beginning. I guess before I came on the trip, I was asking God to do so many things throughout my week, and it just wasn't happening. After talking to God, I realized all He wanted me to do was to go with an open and happy heart and be ready to serve. So things got better!



I helped out in the kitchen. I loved walking in the kitchen and hearing the people say how thankful they were having us there. It made me feel loved and made me want to help more! I also helped clean the basement. I loved how we, as a youth group, all connected and had fun. What I learned from this trip is how lucky I am to have the things that I have in my life. Moving here from North Carolina wasn't easy, but God still continues to provide for my family!

A verse that really stood out to me was Jeremiah 29:11:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

This stood out to me because God has a plan for these people, and all we have to do is continue to pray for them. Chicago was a blessing. I would love to go on more mission trips and serve!

--Dosa Byakweli

2012 RADIATE CHICAGO MISSION TEAM

BACK ROW (L TO R): RONY ARISTIL, PASTOR BEN CLARK, TYLER HANNA, TANKA UPRETI, TOM OESTREICH, PEACE SINYIGAYA, GRACE GAITAN, CLARE OLSON, ALICIA BEYER, KATYA UNDERWOOD, CALI MELLIN, JOYCE RITNORAKAN

FRONT ROW: POH LAY, ZEKE, SARA, AND LEIF HOWARD, DOSA BYAKWELI, KATIE WATSON



“Whatever Need I See... I Can Do Something to Fill It”

The mission trip to Chicago was not what I expected. My thoughts were that we would be doing a lot of street ministry; seeing people get healed, people getting saved, and a whole lot of miracles. That didn't really happen. We mostly worked on leftover chores that nobody else would do. We also spent way too many hours in close quarters with the rest of the team.



I learned a lot about myself and about how to respect other people. I learned that even though I love to be around the rest of the youth group, I need alone time. That's when I get to connect with God the most. God really showed me on this trip that if I don't take time out of my day to be with Him, I'm really missing out on what He has for me.

During this trip, I had many of my ideas of homeless people totally turned around. I thought (as foolish as this may be, its true) that homeless people were homeless because they were lazy and not so bright. I was proved very, VERY wrong. I met so many brilliant and hardworking homeless people that were there because of misfortune. I learned that some of the people were in that situation because they were never taught how to take care of themselves or their children. It has become a vicious cycle that people are unwilling to see and address.

I was inspired by the people at JPUSA and their dedication to this need. They saw the need and filled it. That's what Jesus has called us to do, no *ifs*, *ands*, or *buts* about it. I learned that whatever need I see, whether it be the homeless or the house needing to be cleaned, I can do something to fill it.

--Alicia Beyer

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Do You Have What You Really Want?

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

James 4:1-2

The King James Version of the above verses renders the word *desires* as "lusts." It's a word that, according to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, speaks of "intense longing: CRAVING." In my sixty-plus years of life, I have experienced countless temptations to lust after—to crave—the temporary, destructive satisfaction that comes from serving the many false gods that are so prevalent in our society.

One very strong, memorable temptation, an overwhelming desire to correctly answer a test question, beset me in the latter part of my fourth-grade year. As the sun brightly shone through the south windows of my classroom one day, a battle violently raged within my heart.

We students were taking a test on our most recent social studies unit. About one-third of the way down the first page, I came to a fill-in-the-blank question that asked for the name of the corn that was grown by the Native Americans. I earnestly probed my memory, trying in vain to recall this bit of information that I had studied.

When the answer just wouldn't come to my remembrance, I was surprised by the introduction of what seemed to be an easy way to solve my problem. Apparently out of nowhere, an insidious thought suddenly suggested: *Look at Craig's paper.*

Craig sat directly to my right in the next row. He was among the top academic students in the class, and I was certain that he would have the right answer to my problem question. Desperately wanting the right answer, I listened to the voice of temptation and stole a glance at Craig's desk. His hand was covering his answer. I looked again a few moments later, but his hand still protected his answer from my searching eyes.

Not wanting to be caught in the act of cheating, I gave up my brief, fruitless quest for a stolen answer to the question about corn. I left the blank empty, and when my test was returned, I learned that the answer was *maize*. I am so thankful that God, in His goodness, set up a hedge to hinder me from successfully completing a dishonest act motivated by lust for the right answer.

In Matthew 13:44, Jesus told a parable that likened the kingdom of heaven to a man who found a treasure hidden in a field. The man so greatly desired to obtain the treasure that he sold everything he had to buy the field and thereby gain possession of the treasure it held. In this simple, yet profound, story, Jesus showed how the infinite value of a relationship with Him causes everything we have in this life to pale in significance.

One significant facet of the invaluable treasure we have in Jesus Christ is genuine contentment. It greatly differs from the contentment we experience because of comfortable living conditions here on earth, a contentment that is certain to flee from us countless times in a day, a week, a month. Our temporary, earthly contentment is based on the satisfaction of our desires that battle within us, our desires to have what we want.

If we are to experience the true contentment that can be found only in God's kingdom, we must stop lusting after all the things that are offered by the kingdoms of this world. We must turn from the grievous lusts and sins that destroy our relationship with God. We must replace lust for temporary, selfish desires with a deep heart desire for Jesus Christ and a growing relationship with Him.

God, in His loving care, hindered me from following through on my lustful efforts to steal the right answer to my test question that day in fourth grade. However, sometimes He has allowed me to follow through on lustful desires and to then experience the destructive consequences of my sin. The good news is that God has provided forgiveness for my sinful thoughts and deeds. Each time I fall, He draws me to Himself, to restore me to the contentment that comes only through a growing relationship with Him.

Do you have the contentment that only Jesus Christ can give? If you have fights and quarrels, either within or without, you can bring all your desires to Jesus and surrender them to Him today. Turn from your sins, and trust God to forgive you. He will come to live in you and, by His presence, enable you to break through the roadblock of lust to what you really want—a life of genuine contentment in Him.

--Ken Holmgren

