

“Like a Weaned Child”:
Cultivating Contentment in Our Conversation with God
Sermon Notes

➤ **God produces incalculable degrees of good in our souls through our prayer-filled pursuit of him**

**Through prayer...you can...by God’s grace...*

1. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God (v.1)

2. Wean yourself off the breast of sin (v.2)

3. Position yourself as an ambassador of hope (v.3)

Next Sunday: 1 Kings 18:20-40 - “That This People May Know”:
Elijah, Prayer, & the Battle Royal With Baal

Community Group Study Questions

For the Week of May 30th - June 6th

Getting Started

1. How would you define contentment? What does it look like when you spot it in your life, or you see it in the lives of others?

Digging Deeper

2. In 1648, the Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs sought to unfold the truth of Philippians 4:11 in a book that he titled: *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. He's got at least two truths right in that title alone: *rare* and *jewel*. 1. Why is contentment such a *rare* condition among people - even among professing believers? 2. What makes contentment such a *jewel*, such a character quality of great value in our lives?

Open Your Bible to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10...

3. Read carefully through Paul's account of the thorn in the flesh. There's undoubtedly a lot to notice here, but exercising herculean restraint...let's skip to the end. According to verse 10, what's Paul's final assessment of his situation? In particular, he notes that he is "content" with five rather objectionable conditions. What are they? Read through and ponder them slowly. What might it be like to experience life content in the midst of each one of these experiences? Following Paul's example, how might we develop this sort of contentment? Discuss together as a group.
4. Turn to Philippians 4:10-13. In context, Paul appears to be expressing gratitude for a gift sent from the church at Phillipi to Paul in prison by the hand of Epaphroditus (see 2:25-30; 4:15-20). In verses 10-13, he speaks of the importance of developing contentment in two very different conditions. What are they? Why is contentment so elusive in each case (and discontentment so common)? According to verse 13, what does Paul say is the key to knowing true contentment? What does that look like practically?
5. In 1 Timothy 6:2b-10, we find Paul addressing Timothy about false teachers among God's people who use their platform as a means of becoming wealthy. Is this an issue in the evangelical world today? Where do you see it in particular? Why do you think so many people support such 'ministries'? According to verses 6-8, what is the corrective he offers that Timothy must bear in mind as he leads the church in Ephesus? Are verses 6-8 in any way an indictment on our comparatively wealthy lifestyles? Verses 9-10 are a sound warning in any age, but why are they uniquely fitting in a culture such as ours?
6. Hebrews 13:5 is yet another call to resist the temptation to make an idol out of money and possessions. What's different about this warning, though, is the specific reason that the author gives for it. According to Hebrews 13:5, why (specifically) should you "keep your life free from the love of money"?

7. Let's dwell on this truth a bit longer. Hebrews 13:5 contains a stunning practical, theological proposition. If you think about it, there's nothing in this life that will not eventually 'leave' you: your money, your possessions, your family and friends, your health, even your very body (if you die prior to the return of Christ). One day, we will be divested of everything - with one exception: Jesus. What practical impact should this make in the way we relate to all we will one day lose in view of the One we will never lose?¹ How does the writer to the Hebrews respond to this reality (see verse 6)?
8. Close your time together as a group in prayer, especially stirring in some of the truths we've learned and sought to apply from these passages about contentment. Pray for yourselves and for one another in ways that help to personalize what you've discussed. Perhaps even consider using Psalm 131 (or your sermon outline) as a template for your prayer time.

¹ As the 20th century missionary martyr Jim Elliot famously wrote in his private prayer journal: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."