

Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 20, 2013

QUICK REVIEW: Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you on the attitude of contentment?

MY STORY

1. This week we heard four reasons why contentment is so elusive. What order would you put them in (from most to least) in terms of impacting your search for contentment?

2. There are many areas where discontentment can show up (i.e. job success, housing, self-image, education, relationships, clothing, health, money, possessions, and much more). Which area, if any, would you most likely be challenged when it comes to becoming or remaining content?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The book of Ecclesiastes records King Solomon's search for contentment in a world where he had everything at his fingertips. Take a look at what he learned by reading the following passages, and then write down 2 to 3 insights about the pursuit of contentment.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Pleasures Are Meaningless

2 1 I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. 2 "Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?" 3 I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my labor,
and this was the reward for all my toil.

11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun. [NIV]

Ecclesiastes 4:5-6

- 5 Fools fold their hands
and ruin themselves.
6 Better one handful with tranquillity
than two handfuls with toil
and chasing after the wind. [NIV]

Ecclesiastes 5:10-12

- 10 Whoever loves money never has enough;
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.
This too is meaningless.

11 As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owners
except to feast their eyes on them?

12 The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance
permits them no sleep. [NIV]

How is what Solomon said about contentment different than what we typically think will give you contentment?

Which of his statements catches your attention the most?

2. This week's message pointed out that biblical contentment does not mean checking our drive or desire to succeed at the door. In the prayer of Jabez (1 Chronicles 4:9-10), God gives us the freedom to ask for blessings, protection and provision. How do you balance Solomon's prayer in Proverbs 30:7-9 with our freedom to ask for blessings beyond our needs?

How can Deuteronomy 8:10-18 help us further understand this balance?

Deuteronomy 8:10-18

10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine

houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 15 He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today. [NIV]

3. When life is good, being content with our assignment isn't all that difficult. But when our circumstances are tough, it's another story. What resources do you find in the following passages that can help you cope with or accept your circumstances?

John 14:25-27

25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Proverbs 12:1, 15

1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but whoever hates correction is stupid.
15 The way of fools seems right to them,
but the wise listen to advice. [NIV]

Proverbs 15:22

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed. [NIV]

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

9 Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
10 If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
12 Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. [NIV]

Can you think of any examples of how the resources listed above have helped you in your life in the past? If so, explain.

TAKING IT HOME

Which one of the three ways on “How To Get It and Keep It” from this week’s teaching are most important for you to keep in mind?

Prayer Requests:

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