



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

### 7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

July 18, 2021 Lesson 1

Through your salvation and relationship with God, do you feel as if you are “Fully Blessed” with God’s Peace, Joy and Contentment? How many times do we as Christians feel torn, pushed and pulled in our daily lives to the point where we start to question whether we truly have what the Bible so frequently talks about? This series is all about helping each of us **Free our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

To get us thinking along these lines and get started, do you or have you ever had problems or see yourself in any of these circumstances:

- Comparing yourself to ours and continually feeling inadequate or insufficient?
- Being hyper competitive in everything you do and not being able to bring yourself to be happy or at peace for others who are “succeeding”, “beating you” or “being better at something than you”?
- Does your Type A behavior or feelings for control start to drive everything whereby you have to have it only your way to “be right and correct”? You simply cannot be comfortable with someone else’s correct?
- Do you tend to gravitate to seeking out the faults or negative aspects in people, projects, work or in relationships as opposed to focusing and celebrating what was done right, good or the positives?
- Do you seem to be stressed out, anxious or “on edge” a lot of the time?
- Do you seem to be consumed by your inner feelings or drive to impress or meet someone else’s Standard of Measurement that affects your choices and actions?
- Does it seem that you try to find Peace and Joy in all the wrong things and places that ultimately do not deliver?

If you see any or all of these circumstances in yourself, then this lesson is for you! We will be exploring the **“7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment”**.

To examine our series, we will first look at the terms “Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment”. What does each really mean? What does God say about them in scriptures and what is his expectations for us and our behavior?

After we have a solid and agreed understanding of these, I want to share with you the Seven Deadly Characteristics that we will be studying. Any one of these are enough by themselves to totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God’s ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life. The characteristics are:

1. ***Perfectionism***
2. ***Comparisons***
3. ***Pride***
4. ***Selfishness (Your relationship with God and what serves as its basis)***
5. ***Competiveness With Wrongly Placed Motives***
6. ***Not Recognizing and Using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts***
7. ***Control***

Too many times we operate outside of God’s direction and put self-imposed pressure, stress and pain on ourselves. We can truly free ourselves and live through God’s joy and happiness to live a peaceful and relatively stress free life! Sound good? Sound Impossible? No, we can truly rid ourselves of this self-inflicted mental torture. We can start by fully living in the present and not solely focusing on the future.

## A. Introduction of Terms

### What is Godly Contentment?

*Definition of Contentment:*

- Mental state of satisfaction drawn from being at ease in one's situation, body and mind
- Form of happiness, inner peace
- Sufficiency

By contrasting these Notable non-scriptural quotes concerning Contentment, clear differences stand out when compared to Godly Contentment and Scriptures. Do not be fooled into the World's definition of Contentment:

- "I have learned to seek my happiness by limiting my desires, rather than in attempting to satisfy them."
- Contentment is a state ideally reached through being happy with what a person has, as opposed to achieving one's larger ambitions
- [Socrates](#) described by saying "He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have."

### 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

**6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.**

- Notice to be content, we are directed to "give"; this is exactly opposite of the world which says you must receive or consume to be happy or satisfied
- Contentment is required to put your mind in a positive place to be able to contribute to God's plan
- God provides all that is required for contentment; we must look to Him for fulfillment

### Philippians 4:4-14

**4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. 10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 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. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength. 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.**

- Look at the key things mentioned to have Godly Peace, Satisfaction, Joy and Contentment:
  - Rejoice in the Lord
  - Gentleness be evident
  - Do not be anxious
  - Prayer and Thanksgiving

- Guard your hearts; Think about purity
- Share in each other's troubles

### **1 Timothy 6:6-10**

**6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

- Contentment is not derived from material possessions or gaining more and more
- Possessions and love of money are very dangerous and we should not treat these lightly
- God promises great gain from those who trust Him for all

### **James 3:13-17**

**13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere**

- Contentment and humility are derived from God's wisdom, not generated by ourselves
- Bitter Envy and selfish ambition are the opposite of contentment
- Disorder will follow you and be your life on earth if you are chasing contentment through things and what other possess
- Contentment is given from God and is pure, loving and submissive

### **Mathew 6:25-34**

**25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

- Chasing possessions and things will lead to stress and pain
- Trust the Lord to provide; why do we always think we know best?
- Think how many hours we worry and stress over things we "think" we need or to control?
- Pagans or non-Christians plan their whole life around things to find contentment, it is a constant rat race to find something that will satisfy their soul! Nothing will be found outside of Jesus.
- Our life would be so much less stressful, worry free and joyous if we would only use God's wisdom to learn contentment

### **Hebrews 13:5-6**

**5 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." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"**

- Do not allow your life to be controlled by money; Debt will control and suffocate your spiritual life
- Love of money is essentially greed and replacement of God with material possessions
- God is always with you and provides all you need, both material and spiritual

Practical Steps to help us when we are tempted and having trouble with Contentment:

**1. To be content, we need to swap lies for truth**

He wants us to walk in step with his Spirit. Satan's lies may have some truth woven in making them harder to recognize. The world is forever pointing out things that should be ours, creating in us a sense of entitlement and pushing us farther down the road of discontentment.

**2. To be content, we need to praise God in all circumstances**

God is more concerned about transforming us into the image of his Son than he is about how it will temporarily affect us. Paul wrote to the church that he was [content no matter his circumstances](#). He tells us to **be content in our circumstances, not thankful for our circumstances**. Offering God praise has nothing to do with our feelings. Instead, when we are going through a difficult time, our praise becomes a [sacrifice to him](#). Charles Swindoll says that life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to what happens to you. We act as if it's the other way around.

Contentment is finding joy in what God has given to you. From this spiritual position, comes great Joy and Peace in whatever the condition and situation. The opposite of contentment is greed which destroys your capacity to enjoy what God has given. Contentment is a Christian grace that grows over time. It does not come quickly, easily or naturally. Paul says "I have learned to be content" (Philippians 4:12). It grows, not through the pursuit of a process, but through the presence of a person, Jesus Christ who *is* the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16).

God will use experiences of **loss or pain** to produce the good fruit of contentment in **Your Life**. Jeremiah Burroughs described contentment as "a rare jewel." *A Christian comes to contentment, not so much by way of addition as by way of subtraction... Contentment does not come by adding to what you have, but by subtracting from what you desire. The world says that you will find contentment when your possessions rise to meet the level of your desires... The Christian has another way to contentment, that is, he can bring his desires down to his possessions.*

While many verses use money or possessions as a way of discussing Godly contentment, contentment actually stretches across all aspects of our lives. Your looks, your skills, your knowledge, your family, your spouse, your abilities, the events of your life; **IT IS SO MUCH MORE THAN MONEY AND TRULLY INVOLVES EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE!!**

**B. Questions for Small Group Discussion:**

1. Do our circumstances affect our praise for God? Contrast "Being Content in our circumstance and Thankful for our Circumstance"?
2. Why does giving and focusing on others drive away selfish gain and ambition?
3. What does Paul mean when he says contentment is "required" to get you spiritually in the right place?
4. What is meant by selfish ambition? Why is this the opposite of contentment?
5. Discuss the relationship between worry and your contentment?
6. Do you believe a lack of contentment causes us stress and pain?