



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

September 19, 2021 Lesson 10

As we finalize our series today for **"7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment"**, we will be reviewing key aspects of the previous lessons along with focusing on application to strengthen our relationship with God.

Each of these characteristics can and will totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God's ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life:

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

As we have previously stepped through each of the deadly characteristics above, we need to remind ourselves that this was all about each of us **Freeing our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

A. Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment Defined

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

Contentment is finding joy in what God has provided. 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).

What is Godly Peace?

- Biblical Peace rests heavily on the Hebrew root "Salom", which means "to be complete" or "to be sound." The verb conveys both a dynamic and a static meaning "to be complete or whole" or "to live well." It can be grouped into multiple categories:
 - Wholeness of life or body (i.e., health)
 - Right relationship between people, often established by a covenant related to God
 - Prosperity, success, or fulfillment
 - Victory over one's enemies or absence of war, usually meant as a blessing
- God alone is the sole source of Peace. He established a covenant of peace. Participants were given perfect peace so long as they maintained a right relationship with the Lord.
- Peace could be disturbed if one did not live before the Lord and others in righteousness; in fact, peace is one of the fruits of righteousness.

- Peace cannot occur until man has a right relationship with God, who is the "Prince of Peace"

Godly Peace is an inner spiritual state of being, affecting both physical and mental, with knowledge and understanding that He will provide all that is needed in the face of any pressure, stress, worry or situation that may arise in your life. Godly peace is the exact opposite of being stressed, anxious or extreme worrying.

What is Godly Joy?

Merriam Definitions of Joy:

- Emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune, prospect of possessing what one desires
- Delight - the expression or exhibition of such emotion
- State of happiness or bliss, cause of delight
- State of mind and an orientation of the heart. It is a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope.

Joy comes from the Lord and through our focus on Him, not something generated from possessions, outcomes or only from things we perceive as "Good in our Lives". This is not to say that Joy cannot be derived from many different sources, but we are focusing on the one true eternal definition God has listed in His Word. The **Joy** of the Lord is eternal and **God's joy** is provided despite our circumstances, trials or tribulations.

B. Review of the 7 Deadly Characteristics

Perfectionism

- *A disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable, especially the setting of unrealistically demanding goals accompanied by a disposition to regard failure to achieve them as unacceptable and a sign of personal worthlessness.*
 - The true nature of perfectionism is a trap and a lie that we earn and set out self-worth based on our actions, behaviors and outcomes. While it is always good to strive for excellence and to grow to your potential, we should *be careful in viewing our goals as a way to prove your worth.* Perfectionism is striving for worthiness or to earn love by accomplishing goals or avoiding failure.

When we seek to set self-worth of ourselves or others through their actions or results, we will fail and suffer the consequences of Perfectionism. There is only One who defines worth and that worth is found only in Him and not any action or result from others. God writes the definition of who we are – and why we are.

Comparisons

Constant and unhealthy comparisons can create lingering feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and literally torment yourself with questions about yourself.

Jealousy and envy are emotions we all feel from time to time and if allowed to become dominant in our lives, they change our perspectives, keep us from realizing God's purpose in our lives and possibly lead us into destructive behavior. Jealousy and envy impede or destroy our growth to spiritual maturity.

God on the other hand tells us that I should concentrate only on *doing my personal best*--in whatever work I do, or whatever role I'm in--and I can feel secure and satisfied knowing that God is pleased with me, and I don't need to compare myself with anyone else.

Pride

Pride means "**to show oneself above.**"

- It does not imply or mean that others look up to, but one who stands on **his own self-created pedestal**.
- Pride has its roots in a feeling of greatness, wealth of something, being special or accomplishment.
 - Pride is actually a mark of inner inferiority and uncertainty
 - Such people compensate by over-emphasizing and flaunting the qualities they think they possess that will cause others to think well of them
- Each person can set his own standard of comparison, regardless of his real accomplishments. Sad reality of pride: In many cases, the person is actually somewhat delusional in comparing their own perceived accomplishment, skill or position.
- Pride corrupts your wisdom and blinds you
- Do not allow your very gifts and strengths to deceive you into misjudging your value
- Remember that all things are made and provided from God and not done by yourself (stewardship).

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. While the world might define humility as a lowering of oneself in relation to others, a freedom of pride and arrogance, and having a modest opinion or estimate of one's own worth.

Selfishness

Definition of Selfishness:

- concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself : seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others
- arising from concern with one's own welfare or advantage in disregard of others

Selfishness is the opposite of humility. Selfishness is worshipping self rather than God. While it is a sign of someone who can be unregenerate, throughout Scripture, selfishness is indicative of someone who is living apart from God's law.

The core of selfishness is self-idolatry. When someone behaves in a selfish manner, they are typically unaware of the pain they cause others. It is extremely easy to behave in a selfish manner. Since being selfish is focusing on you, we are not glorifying God with all our heart, soul and mind.

- 1) For a selfish person, it is always only about them. They don't usually ask themselves if the problem is them, but always blame someone else. Many times we see the selfish persons relationship with themselves mirrored in their relationship with others.
- 2) Can be uncaring and neglectful other people's needs.
- 3) Can be manipulative and they're looking to get something out of you for their own benefit.
- 4) Conceited and self-centered, however, they are not satisfied with being the priority.
- 5) Selfishness finds sharing and giving very difficult
- 6) Put their own goals and desires always above others
- 7) Selfish people do not like to show weakness or vulnerability. They fail to recognize that weaknesses are what make us human and this adversely affects their Perfectionism of self
- 8) Does not accept constructive criticism very well and may not accept that they can be wrong
- 9) Believe they deserve anything they want
- 10) Do not listen well to those who disagree with them

Competiveness with Wrongly Placed Motives

With that said, it is very easy to begin to allow extreme competitiveness to seep into every aspect of your life. Over time it can begin driving who you are, how you act and what you focus all your energies on.

Do you find it hard to find real joy and contentment if someone else is “succeeding”, “beating you” or “being better at something” when you feel as if you deserve that prize, position or recognition? These are real danger signals and red flags for your life!! We must critically examine ourselves and our heart! What is truly driving us from the inside?

It is often said that **“Envy is the sister of competition”**. Let’s think deeply about that for a second. If we are honest, we have to admit that jealousy, envy, pride and selfishness in a toxic mix begin to surface and convince you that you “earned” that recognition or place and it should be yours!

When we allow selfish ambition and envy to take hold of our heart and actions, we begin to move away from what God had intended for us. Good healthy and fun competition begins to resemble a dog eat dog war that is supposed to be won at all costs. We will also find many times that Comparisons are at the core of our wrongly placed motives.

Not Using Your Spiritual Gifts and Skills

Who Am I in Christ and what power or gifts do I really have anyway? The Bible says that we are chosen by God and given a purpose. According to 1 Peter 2:9 it says, *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness in to his wonderful light”*. This is God's purpose for us. Often times we forget who we are and what God has done for us. Don't compare yourself to others and don't allow feelings of insecurity to rob you of your identity in Christ. It is important that we see ourselves the way God sees us and then live in obedience to Him. God knows who we really are. He loves us and created us.

There are no mistakes here, let’s start living and acting like that is the truth!

Control

Listen to this very carefully and see if this sounds like you or in your talk with God:

I know I am an admitted control freak. It is very unnerving for me to admit to anyone or my God that I cannot control or have answers for seemingly everything in my life. I simply can't stand uncertainty or probability, it make me very nervous or anxious! I need to have a plan, I need each step defined, I need to be checking the boxes as I go, I need to be in control all along the way! I just cannot deal with ambiguity, it creates a lot of stress that I have trouble dealing with. My life has to be under my control and in no way seeming to be spiraling without direction, even as I am trying hard to pursue the path of my God for my life. Sometimes I find myself like Jacob, arguing and wrestling with the Lord. I just want and need to know the master plan! I want to understand why certain stages of life hurt so much, or why I didn't get a "yes" on what I really wanted, I just need to know! How am I supposed to control this if I do not know?

As control freaks, hopefully we have spent a lot of time in prayer and scripture about God's will for our life. The Lord's faithfulness in His promises for the goodness He desires for my future and my life will astound you if we only listen and follow instead of trying to always lead our self-trying to be in control.

C. **How do we Apply all of this to be FREE!**

- Through the events of our life you can be completely content, full of peace and joy, no matter the circumstances
- We have to claim God's promise for peace and joy, we can be totally free and content
- God's ultimate purpose for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development
- You are unique, it is about transforming character, not your personality
- God wants us to develop the character of the beatitudes, the fruit of the spirit
- Every time you forget that character development is God's purposes for our life, we will become frustrated, selfish and prideful concerning our circumstances

Becoming Christ like is a long and slow process, it is not instant or automatic, it is gradual progressive development, and you are a unique being constantly maturing. We are a work in progress, but it will take the rest of our lives. We need to be specifically careful with the 7 Deadly Characteristics and how we address our behavior. These characteristics have the capacity to destroy or deeply damage your relationship with God, thus severely impairing your Peace, Joy and Contentment.

It is our choice; no one is preventing us from this complete freedom and relationship with God, but ourselves!