

**Danger of Comparisons**  
**Lesson 6– Contentment and Thankfulness**  
**July 5, 2015**

**A. Introduction**

*Definition of Contentment:*

- Mental or emotional state of satisfaction drawn from being at ease in one's situation, body and mind
- Also is a form of happiness
- Sufficiency
- Pursuit of contentment is a central thread through many philosophical or religious schools across diverse cultures, times and geographies.

Notable non scriptural quotes:

- "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."

Comparisons lead to discontentment

**B. Scriptures for Lesson:**

**2 Corinthians 9:6-9**

*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. 9 As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.*

- 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 4:4-14,19**

*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..... 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*

- Look at the key things mentioned to be satisfied:
  - Rejoice in the Lord
  - Gentleness be evident
  - Do not be anxious
  - Prayer
  - Thanksgiving
  - Guard your hearts
  - Think about purity
  - Share in each others 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
- Money causes more problems than they solve most of the time
- 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

### **C. Questions for Small Group Discussion:**

1. Why does giving and focusing on others drive away selfish gain and ambition?
2. What does Paul mean when he says contentment is “required” to get you spiritually in the right place?
3. Discuss each of the things mentioned in Philippians that are required to be “satisfied or content”? Are these things that we are spiritually driving as an active part of being content? Discuss where you are falling short?
4. What is Timothy talking about with:
  - a. Do you believe and agree with the comment “the rich fall into temptation and a trap”?
  - b. How do we guard ourselves to not become a victim of “love of money or possessions”?
  - c. Why do many possessions and money become the downfall of so many? And so much grief?
5. According to James:
  - a. , discuss the type of “humility” described. Why can only God provide or direct this this type of behavior in us?
  - b. What is meant by selfish ambition?
  - c. Discuss why envy and selfish ambition are the exact opposite of contentment?