

Danger of Comparisons
Lesson 7– Contentment and Thankfulness
July 12, 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.

B. Scriptures for Lesson:

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? There are things we need want, things we desire and things we need
- 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 to compare ourselves with others:

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 as lies. 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.

3. **To be content, we must rid ourselves of Damaging Comparisons**

Contentment is attainable, but first we must rid ourselves of these dangerous comparisons. And they will die as long as we keep our eyes focused on the King of Kings, the only one worth looking at.

Let's finish today's lesson with a probing poem about comparisons:

The stick I made for measuring
I used most every day.
It helped me to compare myself
with others on my way.
I watched all those behind me,
or further down the road,
and I would readjust my pace
or lighten up my load.
The only real drawback
with how I ran my race
was watching everything around,
except my Savior's face.

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

1. With respect to Mathew Chapter 6, answer the following questions:
 - a. Why do you think Mathew makes a strong plea about not worrying?
 - b. Why do we find it so hard to put total trust in God to provide all? Yet we seem to try and find happiness and contentment so readily in so many other things in life (your sport, family, possessions, jobs)?
 - c. Discuss the relationship between worry and your contentment? Discuss how God is providing a plan to free our life of clutter and worry so that we can find peace and contentment.
 - d. Do you believe a lack of contentment causes us stress and pain? Then why do we continue to torture ourselves?
2. With respect to Hebrews Chapter 13, consider the following questions:
 - a. Discuss the "love of money" and how this essentially is the replacement of God or at the very least replacing contentment with things as opposed to God?
 - b. Do you believe debt and love of material items will control and suffocate your spiritual life?
 - c. What does debt and drive for possessions have to do with your contentment?
 - d. To be "*satisfied or content*", how does this scripture tell us to achieve that spiritual place?
3. Do you believe that in today's world, that it is constantly pointing out things that should be ours? Trying to control and lead us to a sense of entitlement and discontentment?
4. Discuss Paul's comment on being content in all circumstances, but not thankful for our circumstances?
5. Does our circumstances and feelings affect our praise for God? Should they?