

WEEK 7: ROOTED IN SIMPLICITY – CHOOSING CONTENTMENT OVER CONSUMPTION

Scripture References: Luke 12:22–34; Hebrews 13:5–6; Proverbs 30:8–9; Philippians 4:11–13

Focus: In a world chasing more, Jesus invites us to a life of contentment. This session challenges participants to trust God as provider and embrace simplicity and gratitude.

Opening Prayer: "Lord, teach us the beauty of contentment. Free us from comparison, worry, and materialism. Help us find our sufficiency in You. Amen."

Icebreaker: "What's one possession you could easily give up? What possession would be hard to let go of, even though it demands a lot of you?"

Read: Luke 12:22–34

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

²⁷ "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Teaching Summary: Contentment is found not in having more, but in needing less. Trust in God replaces anxiety and our desires will shift. When we seek His Kingdom first, everything else falls into place.

Jesus tells His disciples not to worry about food or clothing, because the Father knows their needs. Anxiety often stems from misplaced priorities. When we seek God's Kingdom first, He takes care of the rest.

Illustrations:

- Birds don't store up in barns, yet they're fed. Worry doesn't add to your life—it subtracts peace.
- The Minimalist movement shows a hunger for peace through less clutter. God offers something deeper: contentment in Him. The reality is that the more we have, the more we must take care of (time, attention, resources, etc...) which naturally limits your availability to Kingdom priorities.

Recent Statistic: Americans average 300,000 items in homes (LA Times).

Discussion Questions:

- What do you tend to worry about most when it comes to “having enough”?
- How does this passage challenge our view of what is essential?
- What does it look like to “seek first the Kingdom” in practical terms?

Read: Hebrews 13:5-6

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

The writer of Hebrews links contentment to God's promise: “I will never leave you.” True security is not in wealth but in the presence of God.

Illustration:

Imagine two people in a storm—one in a secure shelter, the other in a mansion with no foundation. Contentment isn't about how much you have, but what (or Who) you trust.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is God's presence the foundation for our contentment?
- How do we fight the cultural pressure to always want more?
- What's one way to build habits of gratitude?

Read: Proverbs 30:8-9

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. ⁹ Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal and so dishonor the name of my God.

Agur prays for neither riches nor poverty—just daily provision. This prayer shows a desire to remain dependent on God. Both extremes can pull us away from the Lord.

Illustration:

A thermostat keeps a home from overheating or freezing. Simplicity in life works the same way—it helps maintain spiritual balance.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is this prayer a rare one in our culture today?
- What temptations come with both too much and too little?
- How do we practice dependence without falling into complacency?

Read: Philippians 4:11-13

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.

Paul says he's learned to be content in every situation. The secret? Christ's strength. Contentment is cultivated, not automatic. It grows as we trust Christ more deeply.

Illustration:

Like a tree that can thrive in drought or rain, contentment isn't tied to circumstances, but to roots that go deep.

Discussion Question:

- How does contentment challenge today's culture?
- How does comparison fuel materialism?
- What does it look like to learn contentment in your current season?

Potential Additional Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to live simply and trust God?
- How does our relationship with God impact our contentment?
- What causes you the most financial anxiety?

- Do your finances reflect or determine your values? Explain
- How can we avoid the trap of comparison?
- What does Proverbs 30:8–9 teach about balance?
- When have you experienced being content with less?
- How can generosity help grow contentment?
- What's one area where God might be asking you to simplify?
- How can we encourage each other in this area?
- What does it mean to seek the Kingdom first?
- Does simple/frugal living mean we should live as cheap as possible? Explain.
 - No. Frugal spending decreases debt and moves us toward financial margin. Frugality with our time means learning to say no to some things so we can say yes to others. Until we can create margin, generosity will be impossible.

Luke 12:22-34 Commentary

12:22–26 Jesus explained to His disciples that it's foolish to be anxious about food and clothing because life consists of more than these things (12:22–23). The disciples were more valuable than unclean birds that God feeds and cares for. How much more will He take care of His own children who trust Him? (12:24). Worrying is foolish because it cannot bring about change to your situation. Think of it as a rocking chair: it will get you moving, but it can't take you anywhere. You can't add a single second to your lifespan by worrying (12:25). If you can't accomplish something so minuscule, why worry about the big stuff (12:26)?

12:27–32 Like the birds of the air (12:24), wildflowers don't worry. Yet God cares for this simple aspect of His creation. And He is much more inclined to care for you (12:27–28). Another reason that worrying is foolish is because the Gentiles are anxious about the things of life. It's one thing for unbelievers to worry, but believers who trust in a heavenly Father should not be filled with anxiety (12:29–30). Instead, Christ's disciples have access to the spiritual realm when they prioritize the Kingdom of God (12:31), with its promises and provisions, because the Kingdom is the divine rule. As defenseless as His children are in the world, it would be the Father's joy to give them (the little flock) Kingdom covering (12:32).

12:33–34 The disciples were to divest themselves of anything that would prohibit the pursuit of the Kingdom and its priorities (12:33). They were to pursue spiritual treasures above physical ones. When we value Heaven more than earth, we build and protect true wealth that's unlike treasure accumulated here that is subject to decay and theft (12:33). The heart follows

treasures and not vice versa. Wherever you want your heart to be, put your treasure there; your heart will follow it (12:34).

Hebrews 13:5-6 Commentary

13:4–6 The next two subjects the author touches on are marriage and money. Most of the friction and frustration that people experience in life have to do with one or both issues. Therefore, believers should set themselves apart from the world through their marital unions and attitudes toward finances. For example, Christians are to respect and celebrate the institution of marriage between one man and one woman because it is God's creation order (see Matt 19:4–6). One way this is accomplished is through honoring the marriage bed—that is, through maintaining godly sexual morality and fidelity in marriage (13:4).

Furthermore, believers should seek to be free from the love of money (see 1 Timothy 6:10). It's not that money itself is bad or that earning is bad. Rather, the *love* of money leads to character corruption like greed, covetousness, and discontentment. Managing money is a theological issue. To be satisfied with what you have (13:5), you must trust in the Lord's promise that He will never leave you or abandon you. When you believe that, you can declare boldly, The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (13:6). A Christian who fears the Lord and not people is free and unstoppable.

Proverbs 30:7-9 Commentary

30:7–9 Here's a Kingdom-minded attitude that will spare you a lifetime of worry: Give me neither poverty nor wealth; feed me with the food I need. Otherwise, I might have too much and deny you, saying, "Who is the *LORD*?" or I might have nothing and steal, profaning the name of my God (30:8–9). Neither poverty nor wealth offer safety from sin. We need to keep material things in their proper perspective and ask God to meet our needs so we can keep our focus where it ought to be.

Philippians 4:11-13 Commentary

4:11–12 Paul had learned to be content in whatever circumstances he found himself (4:11). Whether he had much or little, he had learned the secret of being content (4:12). *Contentment* means being satisfied and at rest with where God has you, despite what's happening around you. It's not natural or automatic; it must be learned. God teaches us contentment through the ups and downs of changing circumstances. He wants us to learn to depend on Him and His divine enablement no matter what happens to us or around us. As we grow in our understanding and experience of His providence, we will also grow in our level of contentment.

4:13–14 Paul confesses, I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me (4:13). The secret of Paul's contentment, then, is the infusion of strength he gets when he can't go any further. Many times, it seems that God doesn't come through for us until we can't take one more step. Then He provides at just the right time—as He did for Paul through the generosity of the Philippians (4:14). The lesson of contentment is most effectively learned during times of suffering need.

Closing Challenge: Choose one area this week to simplify—your schedule, spending, or space—and pray over that decision.

Closing Prayer: "God, thank You that we lack nothing in You. Help us to release what we cling to and embrace the joy of contentment. Amen."