Contentment

Seek First | Week 3

Hayden | November 12th & 15th 2026 | Gabe Cleave

Big Idea: Contentment isn't about what you have. It's about who you have.

Definition of Christian Discontentment: a state of dissatisfaction, restlessness, or grumbling regarding one's life, circumstances, or provision that reflects a lack of trust in God's sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom.

Genesis 3:4–5 (ESV)
But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Where is discontentment creeping into your life right now?

Philippians 4:10–11 (ESV)
I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content.

Paul's Hardships:

- Was stoned at Lystra (Acts 14:19)
- Was beaten with rods and imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:22–24)
- Was forced to flee cities because of persecution (Acts 17:5–10, 13–14)
- Was beaten with rods three times (2 Corinthians 11:25)
- Received 39 lashes on five occasions (2 Corinthians 11:24)
- Was shipwrecked three times before his voyage to Rome (2 Corinthians 11:25)
- Spent a night and a day adrift at sea (2 Corinthians 11:25)
- Experienced hunger, thirst, and lack of food (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- Endured cold and exposure without adequate clothing (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- Faced danger from robbers, rivers, and hostile people (2 Corinthians 11:26)
- Experienced exhaustion and sleepless nights (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- Faced constant pressure and concern for the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28)
- Had a "thorn in the flesh" that God did not remove (2 Corinthians 12:7–10)
- Was arrested and imprisoned multiple times (Acts 24:27; 28:16)
- Endured a violent storm and shipwreck on his journey to Rome (Acts 27:13–44)

Philippians 4:12-13 (ESV)
I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Notes:

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Contentment isn't about what you have. It's about who you have.

"Christian contentment is the direct fruit of having no higher ambition than to belong to the Lord and to be entirely at His disposal." - Alistair Begg

3 "SHIFTS" To Pursue Contentment

SHIFT 1 – Shift Our FOCUS

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)
Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

SHIFT 2 – Shift Our PRIORITIES

1 Timothy 6:6–10 (ESV)
But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation… For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils…

1 Timothy 6:17–19 (ESV)
As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

SHIFT 3 – Shift Our DEPENDENCE

The word Paul uses for "content" in Phil 4:11 is:

- αὐτάρκης **autarkēs**
- To the Greek stoic philosophers of the day, **autarkēs** was the ultimate goal: absolute self-sufficiency. It meant being entirely independent of others, emotionally detached, and tough enough to look within you own human will to handle life's challenges.

Matthew 6:25–26 (ESV)
"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Matthew 6:31–33 (ESV)
Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

The goal of biblical contentment isn't to want nothing. It's to want God above everything.

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