

How do you feel when you need help and your friends don't respond? How does Paul respond to their overdue help?

Is there a connection between gratitude and contentment? How does that work?

How had Paul learned to be content? (v. 13) Review what you know about his life experiences. Do difficulties like Paul's usually make people so content?

What secrets of contentment have you learned? Can you say what Paul said in verses 12-13?

REFLECT

In verse 19 Paul states, "And my God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." How have you experienced God's readiness and ability to meet your needs? Have such experiences made you better able to be content when difficulties come now?

RESPOND

Write a thank you note to someone who has recently helped you out.

Fasting from things you are accustomed to can help you build trust in God's provision and your ability to do without. Try fasting from something you depend on this week. Share your experience with each other next meeting.



Luke 12 (page 713)

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed..."

Our theology (what we believe about God and how best to live for Him) is inseparable from how we handle our stuff.

Luke 3:8

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

John the Baptist:

- 1) Use your stuff to help others.
- 2) Don't let stuff bend your ethics.
- 3) People are more important than stuff.

Dr. Richard Halverson
All through Scripture there is an intimate correlation between the development of a man's character and how he handles his money.

¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

More and better stuff does not equal more and better life.



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¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'

Contentment is found in doing God's will, and stuff can seriously get in the way of that.

The Jesus life operates on a different balance sheet.

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹ "This is how it will be with those who store up things for themselves but are not rich toward God."

Martin Luther
I have held many things in my hands and have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

Matthew 6:19-20

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

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 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men 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.

What is our treasure? A.W. Tozer writes that we can discover the true answer to that important question by answering these four basic questions:

- What do we value most?
- What would we most hate to lose?
- What do our thoughts turn to most frequently when we are free to think of what we will?
- What affords us the greatest pleasure?

LIVING OUT A THEOLOGY OF CONTENTMENT

LIFE GROUP STUDY

RELATE

What is one thing you feel you could not be happy without?

How content do you currently feel? Mark where you are on the graph below.

Very Discontented Content Very Content

What principle, insight, idea or quote was meaningful to you from this week's sermon?

READ

Philippians 4:10-19

Which best summarizes what Paul says in verses 10-13?

Thanks for the gift—it's about time!

Thanks for the gift—I don't really need it.

Thanks for your concern—I am fine.

Thanks so much for your love and help—I am well, and up for anything in Christ!

What circumstances of Paul moved the Philippian church to assist him? (1:12-13)

How consistently had they helped Paul? Does it sound like their concern for Paul had lapsed for a while? (4:10, 15-16)