

1. This morning we are going to begin a new series of messages.
2. The subject of this series is the principle of contentment.
3. Let's begin by defining what contentment is.
4. **Contentment: the state of being content. To be content is to be satisfied. To have an ease of mind.**
5. But that definition still leaves me with a question. Satisfied with what? What exactly is it that gives me ease of mind?
6. One of the bible dictionaries I consulted said it this way. **Contentment: a state of mind in which one's desires are confined, or kept within, what we already have.**
7. So if I were to put contentment in my own words, I would say it this way. Contentment is to be satisfied with what I have.
8. The state of being content means I am at peace with what I have or where I am.
9. Now, before we go on, I want to be clear that we are not saying that having Godly dreams or Godly desires is a bad thing.
10. This is not a teaching about staying where we are spiritually and not growing or progressing in our walk with the Lord past where we are right now.
11. This is not a teaching about being stagnate or stale in our walk with the Lord.
12. I believe one of the things the Lord is working to accomplish in each and every one of our lives is he is continually trying to move us to a place of greater spiritual maturity.
13. **James 1:2-4** Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4** Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
14. As believers in Jesus Christ, the bible teaches us that we are on a spiritual journey. The Lord is working in our lives James says so that we may be mature, complete, and lacking nothing.
15. As it stands right now, none of us are 100% mature in our faith, and none of us are complete. We are a work in progress.
16. But on this journey toward spiritual maturity, one of the principles the Lord longs for us to possess is this gift of contentment.

17. **1 Timothy 6:6** But godliness with contentment is great gain.

18. In this context, I would define godliness as surrendering to the Lord's work in us to move us toward a place of spiritual maturity.

19. Godliness. That is a very excellent and praiseworthy thing. To be in a place of surrender to the Lord's work in our lives.

20. But Godliness alone is not enough. Paul tells a young Timothy that godliness with contentment is great gain.

21. Another translation of the bible uses the phrase great wealth. Godliness, along with contentment, is this wonderful, beautiful, extremely valuable gift that the Lord makes available to us.

22. I believe it is not a stretch to say that the reverse is also true. Godliness without contentment is great loss.

23. If I attempt to be Godly, to surrender to the Lord's work of making me a mature disciple, but I am not content with where the Lord has me in that process, I am going to lose something very valuable. I am going to lose the ease of mind or the peace that the Lord longs for us to have.

24. We know for sure that it is entirely possible to be pursuing godliness, and yet at the same time be lacking contentment, because in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon identifies himself as being in this exact place.

25. He was pursuing godliness, but he was not experiencing contentment.

TEXT: **Ecclesiastes 1:8** Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content. (NLT)

TITLE: **The Next Big Thing**

INTRO:

1. Solomon, considered the wisest man to ever live, tells us just a few verses below this one that he set out to explore wisdom, and to search for understanding.
2. We know this was a Godly pursuit because it was in fact God who had given him this supernatural wisdom.

3. This pursuit of knowledge and wisdom and understanding was a very Godly thing.
4. But after some period of time searching for meaning in life, Solomon comes to the conclusion that there is no meaning in life.
5. That everything is absolutely meaningless. **Ecclesiastes 1:2** "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!" (NLT)
6. When I read that I can't help but wonder. How can a supernaturally wise man, set out to understand the things of God, and end up at the place where the only thing he can think of to describe where he has wound up is the word meaningless.
7. The exact same way that each and every one of us can set out to know the Lord and surrender to his work in our lives, and yet there are times that each and every one of us ask the question. What's the point? Is there any meaning in all of this craziness?
8. I'm just going to be transparent. You may not ask those questions, but I am going to confess that sometimes I do?
9. And I believe that at least a part of the answer to that question can be found in **Ecclesiastes 1:8** Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content. (NLT)
10. A part of the problem is that we are not content. We are not satisfied with where we are or what we have. Our minds are not at ease. We don't experience a state of being content very often.
11. Now, before you go and beat yourself up about a lack of contentment in your life, you need to know that one of the reasons why contentment is so elusive, even when we are seeking for godliness, is because discontentment is a characteristic of our sinful nature.
12. Our sinful nature is that part of us that is at war with God and His work in our lives. **James 4:1** What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? (NLT)
13. If you have ever felt like there is this battle going on inside you, that's because there is a battle going on inside you.
14. God wants to reign and rule as Lord of your life, but all of us have this sinful nature that fights against the Lord's will for our lives.

15. And one of the characteristics of this sinful nature is that it is constantly influencing us in a negative way so that we do not experience contentment.
16. If we go back to Ecclesiastes chapter 1, Solomon describes part of the cause of our discontentment.
17. **Ecclesiastes 1:8** Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content. (NLT)
18. One bible commentary described this verse this way.
19. Both the eyes and the ears require new objects continually.
20. The pleasure of these senses are blunted by seeing and hearing the same things over and over, so we set out seeking new ones.
21. And when we find these new things to see and hear, when after craving them, we finally have them, after looking at and hearing them for a while we grow tired of them and eventually want something else.
22. Are you with me or do you want me to read that again?
23. So life becomes meaningless because no matter how much we have; no matter how good things look and how good things sound, we grow tired of them and seek something else to fill the void.
24. The only problem is when we do get those new things, they don't last either.
25. I call it the syndrome of **The Next Big Thing**. We live in a world that is constantly in search of the next big thing.
26. We live in a world that is almost never content. It is always in search of something, but never satisfied when it gets it.
27. A few months ago a new cell phone was revealed by a certain company. I had been seeing reports about this new device for several months. Talking about how great and new and wonderful it was going to be.
28. So on a certain date in September, the new product was revealed. Keep in mind that even though the product had been revealed, it would be two more weeks before the phones would be shipped to customers.

29. The very next morning. The very day after the product had been revealed, but yet before anyone had it in their hands, the headline the next day was talking about the next model that would probably come out in about a year. So for months they have been talking about this great new thing, and as of yet no one even has it, but the media has moved on to the next thing already.
30. Several months ago, a certain college team won the national championship in their sport. The very next morning, articles are released talking about the next season.
31. The team hasn't even had the trophy in their possession for 24 hours, and already they are in the rearview mirror and people are moving on to the next thing.
32. This is the type of culture that we live in. Never content with anything for any length of time. But we must be aware that the culture of our day leads to the same conclusion that Solomon came to and that is that when there is an absence of contentment, everything is meaningless.
33. But you and I have not been created in the image of God just so we could have a meaningless existence.
34. So we must reject the ways of our culture and we must reject the ways of our sinful nature and we must instead long for not only godliness, but godliness and contentment.
35. Because godliness with contentment is great gain, but godliness without contentment is great loss.
36. And hear is how godliness without contentment leads to great loss.
37. When we are not content with what we have or where we are. When we are not satisfied and thankful for what we have and where we are, what happens is we lose the joy of the present. We lose the joy and the gift that the Lord has given us in the here and now.
38. When I am not content with what I have or where I am, joy, happiness, fulfillment, fullness, wholeness, completeness is always out there somewhere.

39. And the problem with my joy, happiness, fulfillment, fullness, wholeness, and completeness always being out there somewhere is because we are not omni-present. Meaning we can't be two places at once.
40. We can only be in one place at a time. So if what we long for is always out there somewhere, then we are in essence living out there somewhere, and we not living in the here and now.
41. And when we are not living in the here and now, that makes the here and now meaningless.
42. So what is the solution? What will help us live in the here and now rather than living out there somewhere?
43. In the next few weeks we will be looking at several solutions. But for today I want to leave you with one solution from the Word of God.
44. It's found in **Psalm 118:24** This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (NLT)
45. I believe what we have here is a great recipe for contentment.
46. How can we reject the discontentment of our culture and our sinful nature? When we continually chose to not put off for tomorrow what we should be doing today.
47. The writer of Psalm 118 declares a truth, and then he declares the reaction of the people of god to that truth.
48. What is the truth? The truth is...this is the day the Lord has made.
49. This day. This 24-hour period is not meaningless. It has meaning. We know it has meaning because the Lord made it.
50. This day is not random, accidental, arbitrary, unintentional, or unplanned. This day has been created by God and it has been given to me.
51. This day has meaning to the Lord. If this day didn't have any meaning for me than the Lord wouldn't have given it to me.
52. If this day didn't have meaning for me then I would be dead and gone. But I am alive so therefore this day has meaning.
53. So, if this day has meaning, then what does the Lord want me to do with it? He wants me to rejoice and be glad in it.

54. Just to clarify. It doesn't say rejoice and be glad for this day, it says rejoice and be glad in this day.
55. Meaning, there will probably be several things that happen in any given day that I will not feel like rejoicing for or being glad for.
56. But in this day, no matter what happens either good or bad, I can rejoice in the Lord, and I can be glad in the Lord.
57. When we see each and every day as a gift from the Lord, and we purpose in our heart, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to rejoice and be glad in that day, then that means that our joy, happiness, fulfillment, fullness, wholeness, and completeness are not out there somewhere, they are right here where we are.

Conclusion:

1. Contentment is not something we possess; contentment is something we practice.
2. Contentment is not really something the Lord gives us. We can't just pray and ask God for contentment. Contentment is something that is a byproduct of our practicing obedience to the commands of the Lord to rejoice and be glad in the day we have been given.
3. Neither is contentment something we get one time and then we've got it. Contentment is something we must practice each and every day.
4. Every day we must choose to rejoice and be glad in the day the Lord has given us.
5. And rejoicing and being glad will not come naturally if we have spent a lifetime being discontent, so we will need the help of the Holy Spirit.
6. This morning as we close, I want to lead you into practicing contentment.
7. Prayer.
8. The first step to contentment is in recognizing we have a sinful nature that must be surrendered to Jesus, salvation.
9. Lord. I declare and I believe that this day is a gift from you. That this day has meaning for me.
10. And because you have given me this day, I chose to rejoice and be glad in this day.

11. Lord. I am not confessing that I am rejoicing and glad for all the things that are going on in my life today.
12. I chose to rejoice and be glad in this day, no matter what this day holds.
13. Tomorrow, and the next day, and the next, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will need to practice contentment.
14. Put on the mirror. Rejoice and be glad today.