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Leader Guide

Contentment

November 14, 2021

Main Passage: Philippians 4:10-14

Theological Theme

Sanctification is a lifelong process in which the child of God grows in Christlikeness. One aspect of that Christlikeness is contentedness in all circumstances of life.

Introduction

- 1. ? What has been the happiest time in your life? What made that time such a good period of your life?
- 2. ? How would you describe the difference between the happiness that the world advertises and the contentedness the Bible speaks of?

In this section of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, he sought to recognize and appreciate the Philippians' generosity toward and concern for him. Paul was in prison and had experienced many trials. The believers at Philippi desired to encourage and minister to him. Paul was grateful for it, but he also wanted to use the occasion to teach them an important lesson concerning the sanctification of those who are in Christ.

1. Contentment Killers (Philippians 4:10-11)

When Christians compare what they have to those around them, they often struggle with jealousy and discontentment. A good example of this is Jesus's parable in Matthew 20:11-15. Can you imagine Paul comparing his accommodations (a prison) to other Christians? Of course, these kinds of comparisons stem from a posture of selfishness and self-preservation.

2. A Key to Contentment (Philippians 4:12-14)

Paul explained to the Philippian church that he had learned the secret of contentment in all circumstances. He said he knew how to live a contented life both in times of abundance and scarcity. Here was the secret: he knew he would not be crushed, destroyed, or abandoned because it was Christ who would uphold him. Paul knew he didn't have to depend on his own strength. So, when he faced the direst of circumstances, he was aware of the reality that Christ would strengthen him. That knowledge made it possible for him (and Christians today) to cross the bridge from fear and anxiety to peace and contentment. The bridge between those two ways of living in this fallen world is gratitude.

3. Enough is Enough (Philippians 4:10-14)

Contentment isn't rooted in overabundance. The Bible teaches that contentment means not having too little or too much. Christians are neither relying solely on others (too little), nor ourselves (too much). It is akin to Jesus teaching His disciples to pray for their daily bread alone. It also reminds us of God's command to the Israelites to gather only enough manna for the day. Contentment is the confidence that God has supplied one's needs and will continue to do so. What Christians have is sufficient. It is enough.

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

- ❓ What does this passage say?
- ❓ What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about God?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about man?
- ❓ What does this passage demand of me?
- ❓ How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
- ❓ How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?