



practicing the way  
*simplicity*

## Contentment

### Overview

Every person, even those who have been following Jesus for decades, will at one time or another be confronted with reconciling the ache, need, and desire to feel fulfilled within—to feel satisfied and happy with what we have and who we are. The problem is, this fulfillment does not come naturally and how we pursue it is often contrary to how we can actually achieve it, leading many of us to consume in the hopes that “more” will somehow lead to that soul-level rest.

Jeremiah Burrough, a theological scholar, once said, “A soul that is capable of God can be filled with nothing else but God.” And it’s this filling of God that the Bible calls contentment. Contentment is the holy means to a worldly and restless end. It is, as we see throughout the Scriptures, the antidote to the greed and gluttony of our lives. It is the remedy to senseless striving and it is the birthplace of a life of simplicity.

Through the discipline and practice of contentment we extinguish the fire of “more” in our lives: the burning desire to look a certain way, to temporarily fulfill the ache of happiness, to get more, buy more, and own more. Extinguishing this fire will ultimately lead us to only own and consume what we need.

In order for us to practice Simplicity in our lives, we must first confront the soul ache within; to take notice of why we are driven to consume, and then to invite God to meet us there, allowing him to show us and teach us how to be satisfied in him.

In this week’s Practice, we’re going to take some time to notice and then reflect on where we need to grow in this discipline of contentment.

### Practice

The Practice this week is to spend time before the Lord discovering and reflecting on where you are content and where you struggle with ongoing discontentment.

Read slowly through Philippians 4:10–13. As you read the passage, reflect on or journal through the words Paul pens from prison. He writes that he has learned “the secret of being content in any and every situation,” regardless of whether he has much or little.

### Questions

1. Ask Yourself: Where in my life am I able to practice contentment, regardless of circumstance, situation, or what I have?

2. Ask Yourself: In which areas do I consistently feel discontented, regardless of circumstance, situation, or stuff? Or is there an area of two that you find especially difficult to limit or simplify? (Consider the areas of simplicity we've explored: stuff, apparel, speech, and pleasure.)

3. Ask the Spirit: Spend some time asking the Holy Spirit to show you "the secret" that Paul references – that he can do all things, or feel contented in all situations, because the Lord has strengthened him.

Based on what you've discovered, make up a list of 5 or so core values you want to be living into. Some may be currently supported by your lifestyle, and some may be "in progress." That's okay! Our goal is to get some clarity around what our "center" is, so we can keep coming back to it. As you review your list, spend some time in prayer before God, asking what He might add or subtract.

## **Closing Questions**

As you look over the list of values included above, are there any that resonate with you?

1. What stood out to you in this week's teaching on Contentment? Was there anything that was specifically helpful or challenging to you?
2. What are one or two ways you know a lack of Contentment is contributing to consumption in your life? What are those areas?
3. When you hear and reflect on Paul's line in Philippians 4 – "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" – what is one circumstance in your life that you feel you have learned to be content with? What did that process look like?

## **Close in prayer**