

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES: I'LL BE HAPPY WHEN ____" | PHILIPPIANS 4: 10-13 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- What was something you really wanted for Christmas as a kid?

"The Promise of When"

Many struggle with being discontented. Many are waiting for something more to finally have the joy that only Christ can give.

- Why does longing for something from tomorrow hurt the ability to see today as a gift?

"Gratitude Without Dependence and Contentment Must Be Learned" Philippians 4: 10-11

Paul receives financial support with joy, showing gratitude. This comes from learning to be content in every circumstance.

- How is it different to be thankful for blessings than to have our joy dependent on gifts?
- What are ways God teaches His people to be content?

"Scarcity and Abundance Both Test Us and The True Meaning of 'All Thing'" Philippians 4: 12-13

Both having little and having a lot can challenge our faith in God. The key is to look to Jesus for strength to remain faithful.

- What are ways to stay rooted in Jesus when times are tough? When times are easy?
- Why does Jesus strengthen His people?

"Receiving the Life We Have"

True contentment allows us to know life is not perfect, but Jesus is and with Him we have joy and thanksgiving.

- What are ways you are learning to be faithful in your current situation?

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

A false story many people believe is that they are not enough until when they get more or things change. They all live with constant dissatisfaction. Jesus came and died for all of us, giving us true joy and contentment. Life with Him is more than enough to satisfy.

- What are ways you have been struggling with discontentment?
- What are ways Jesus is teaching you to be content?
- Ask Jesus to renew your strength to be faithful in all things this week.

The Stories We Tell Ourselves

08-16-26

3. *I'll Be Happy When* _____.

I. **Announce:**

- A. Welcome to those **online** and in the *additional seating* area.
- B. **Slide1-8 AP:** Baptism. Men's. Divorce Care. MOMS. Volunteers. *Missions Prayer. At Risk. FHC.*
- C. **Slide9 Baby Dedication (10am):** Jaxon and Elijah Hogle
- D. **Slide10 Prayer:** Godliness with *contentment* is great gain. (contentment = satisfaction with one's circumstances)

II. **Intro:** *I'll Be Happy When* _____. Text: Philip.4:10-13.

- A. So far in our Series the *3 false stories* so far are:
 - 1. **I AM What I Achieve? NO!** my Identity is, **I AM What I Received!**
 - 2. **I Am What Others Think. NO!** We need to ask, *What has God already said about me in Christ?*
- B. **Slide11a 3. *I'll Be Happy When* _____** - breeds discontentment.
 - 1. **Listen to these stats:** Global statistics show that *if one has a roof over his head and a meal on his table, he is richer than 93% of the world's population.* If a person wears a pair of shoes, he is richer than 75% of the people in the world. In the U.S., **credit card debt averages** more than \$16,000 per household. **Why is that?** Because we never have enough, **and** we are always so **dissatisfied** (summed up by Freddie Mercury sang, *I want it all, I want it all, I want it all, and I want it now*). 1989 Brian May divorce.
- C. **Contentment** is learned through **Christ**, **not** delivered by *ideal circumstances*.
 - 1. **Also Contentment does not** require **pretending** that everything is fine. It's not **passivity**, **lack** of ambition, **denial** of pain, **or remaining** in an unsafe situation.
 - 2. **Slide11b** Big idea: **Contentment** is the freedom to receive **today** *without* requiring **tomorrow** to complete us.

D. **The False Story:** I will finally be happy when I have *more money, find the right relationship, reach the next milestone, solve this problem, or enter the next season.*

E. Dissatisfaction/**Discontent** is often our *default*.

1. **Slide11c Seneca**, the Roman 1st century philosopher said, quote, "*It is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more, that is poor.*"
2. **But** the problem is - **this false story** (*I will finally be happy when I have ____*) **postpones life**. The goalpost keeps moving, **so Today becomes a waiting room ... for Tomorrow.**

III. Slide12a **1. THE PROMISE OF "WHEN"** [an issue of timing]

A. I will finally be happy when _____. This story attaches **present joy** to a **future condition**. It tells us that **life has not really begun** because something important is still missing. (**When:** I graduate. get a boyfriend. married. Successful in. Accomplished)

1. **There is nothing wrong with** desiring change, setting goals, or hoping for something better. **The danger comes when a good desire becomes a requirement for joy.**
2. Or we begin asking a *person, possession, achievement, or circumstance to give us* what only **Christ** can provide.

B. **Slide12b** *What are you requiring from tomorrow, before you will receive today as a gift?

IV. Slide13a **2. GRATITUDE WITHOUT DEPENDENCE (Phil.4:10)**

A. 10 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.

B. **Paul rejoices** because the Philippians have *renewed their financial support* for him.

1. He does not pretend that their gift is unnecessary. **He receives it with genuine gratitude.**

C. Christian **contentment** does not mean *refusing help, denying needs, or acting as if circumstances do not affect us*. Paul can **appreciate the gift** without making *his joy dependent upon it*.

- D. **Slide13b** There is a difference between **enjoying** a gift **and needing** that gift to prove that *life is good*.
1. **Gratitude** receives blessings with open hands. **Dependence** closes its hands around them and says, *"I cannot be whole without this."*
- E. We can be **deeply grateful** for God's gifts **w/o asking** those gifts to become our *god*.

V. **Slide14a 3. CONTENTMENT MUST BE LEARNED (Phil.4:11)**

- A. 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be **content**.
- B. Paul *learned to be content*. That word matters. **Contentment** was not automatic, natural, or effortless for him. It was learned through **repeated experiences** of God's **faithfulness**. [*remember*, Paul found contentment ... while sitting in prison!]
- C. **Contentment** is **not** a personality trait reserved for *naturally calm people*. It is *spiritual discipline* **or a spiritual formation**. We learn it as **Christ** meets us in *disappointment, delay, uncertainty, provision, and loss*.
1. This means **our present season** may be more than something to **escape**.
 2. It may also be **a classroom** in which **Christ** is teaching us that **his presence** is sufficient.
- D. Let me give a **negative** example from Scripture, **then a positive**.
- E. **Negative**. From book of Numbers.
1. **Discontent is our human default**. Our human nature tends to complain about what we don't have **and** what we can't do **and** we envy what others have and what others can do.
 2. Maybe the best example of **dissatisfaction** and **complaining** of this was when the Hebrew children were left Egypt and were journeying to the promised land, and in the wilderness wanderings they just start **murmuring** and **complaining**.

3. They're were so **dissatisfied** and **discontent** despite the fact that **God** had provided for them every step along the way.
 - a) He freed them from slavery (after 400 years in Egypt). The Bible says, **their clothes and their shoes never wore out**. That God provided **water** from a rock, **and mana** and **quail** in the middle of the desert.
 - b) So God fed them, clothed them, gave them water, daily bread/mana, quail ... **and it still wasn't enough**. More grumbling, whining, and complaining.
4. **You know what Moses does?** (Numb.11:15) he says to God, **"God, kill me now."** :) (I can't lead these people anymore).
5. **Then** one of the sad downfalls of Moses's ministry was in Numb.20, when God had said to Moses, **"Speak to the rock and water will come forth."**
 - a) **Why did God say it that way?** Because he wanted the people to see that it was **God** miraculously bringing it forth **rather than** just being **some natural occurrence** **or** something that Moses manufactured.
6. **Earlier** (Ex.17:6 strike the rock/**water** came out). **But then** in Numb.20 he was told to **Speak to the rock**. But he took his staff and beat the rock twice. So frustrated, so mad. **And** in vs.10, he says, **Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water from this rock?** (Who's the "we" Mo?)
7. The water did come forth, **but** immediately after God had a sit-down w/Mo & Aaron. **The problem:** now the people don't know that **God** brought it about. **They think** Moses just beat the rock until it gushed forth water. **Result,** **God would not allow Moses to go into the promised land.**
 - a) Don't feel too sorry for Moses, because the fact is there was a bigger picture at play. See, **Moses** represented **the law**. - **Who would be the one to take the people into the promised land?** It was Moses's protege, **Joshua** (Yahashua, abbreviated Yeshua/**Jesus**/the Lord is salvation).
 - b) Only those with the given Hebrew name, **The Lord is Salvation**, that **can** ultimately take you into the promised land. It was all a picture **how the law is insufficient to take you into eternal life.** **You have to go through Jesus.**

8. The point is that Moses was so frustrated. **Why?** Because of all their **complaining** and **discontent**. [Contentment must be learned!]

F. Slide14b Positive. **Read** Ps.131 (like a weaned Child. 2 x's).

1. I think 1 picture of contentment is a baby full from its mothers milk. We've all seen a baby with its eyes at 1/2 mast. Basking in a milk coma (lil drool) Not a care in the world.
2. But here, I think what David's imagery is getting at is - a weaned child that has moved past the neediness of infancy, and can now sit contentedly with its mother without demanding to nurse.
 - a) David's soul has achieved that settled peace with God. No longer demanding and striving that comes with spiritual immaturity.
3. So this is not the satisfaction of being fed, but the tranquility of having matured beyond the need for constant provision. A soul resting in God's presence rather than anxiously seeking from Him.

G. What might Christ be teaching you here that you could not learn somewhere else?

VI. Slide15a 4. SCARCITY AND ABUNDANCE BOTH TEST US (Phil.4:12)

- A. 12 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.
- B. Paul has known *hunger and plenty/need and abundance*. He has learned the secret of living faithfully in both.
- C. Slide15b Scarcity tells us, *You cannot be happy until you have more*. Abundance tells us, *You have enough now, so you no longer need God*.
 1. One tempts us toward **anxiety**. The other tempts us toward **self sufficiency**.

- D. **Contentment** is not merely **learning** *to survive hard times*. It is **learning** *to remain rooted in Christ during every season*. We need Christ when the cupboard is **empty**, **and** we need him when it is **full**.
- E. Circumstances change, **but** neither scarcity nor abundance can become the foundation of a secure life.

VII.Slide16a 5. THE TRUE MEANING OF “ALL THINGS” (Phil.4:13)

- A. 13 I can do **all things** through him who strengthens me.
- B. **This scripture** is often treated as a promise of unlimited achievement. In context, Paul is saying *something deeper*. Christ gives him strength to **remain faithful** whether he is hungry or well fed, living with little or enjoying plenty.
1. The promise is **not that Christ** will help us accomplish everything we desire
The promise is that **Christ** will sustain us through everything we face.
- C. Paul's confidence is **not** confidence in **himself** (he does not say *I am strong enough*)
He says, Christ supplies the strength he does not possess on his own.
- D. Slide16b Christ **may** change our circumstances **but** he'll **always meet** us w/in them.

VIII.Slide17a 6. RECEIVING THE LIFE WE HAVE

- A. **Contentment** does not mean that we stop *praying, dreaming, planning, or pursuing* healthy change. It means we stop placing *our lives on hold* until change arrives.
1. We can **grieve** what is **missing** while remaining **grateful** for what is present.
 2. We can want **tomorrow** to be different **without** refusing the life God has given us **today**.
- B. **Contentment** allows us to say, *This is not everything I hoped for - but Christ is here. This season is difficult - but it is not empty. My circumstances are unfinished - but my life still has meaning.*
- C. Slide17b **Contentment** is not having everything you want, it's knowing that **Christ** is enough while you wait. The secret of **contentment** is not a trouble free life. It is the sustaining presence of **Christ**.

D. Wrap Up:

E. Replace the question, *How can I get out of here?* with, *How can I be faithful here?*

F. Receive one ordinary gift each day without immediately reaching for the next thing.

G. Imagine spending an entire journey asking, *Are we there yet?* The question is understandable, but constant fixation on the destination makes us *miss everything along the way*.

1. Many people live this way **spiritually**. We are so focused on arriving at the next season that we fail to notice the **presence** of **Christ** in this one.

H. Perhaps the deepest problem with “*I’ll be happy when*” is **not** simply that **the goalpost keeps moving**. It’s that the story directs **our hope** toward **a future circumstance - rather than a present Savior**.

1. Paul’s **contentment** **did not come from** *finally arranging life exactly as he wanted it*. It came from discovering that **Christ** was sufficient in every condition.

I. Slide 17c *Do not miss the life God is giving you **today** because you are waiting for the life you hope He will give you **tomorrow**.

1. So wherever your dissatisfaction came from, or whatever you say to **yourself, or the world has told you like**: you don't have enough, you are not enough. You don't make enough. You're not smart enough. You're not good-looking enough. You're not capable enough. **Friends, listen ... Christ is enough!**

J. Pray:

K. **Reminder:** Don't forget the **Foster/Adopt Info Mtg** during 3rd Service. (1st & 2nd only)

1. **@Risk Mtg:** Charlotte, ICA, update on current refugee situations. And current programs & placements. Chris/Kelsey Lick, **Destiny Rescue**, where he's heading to next & his A-HT assignment.

L. Keywords: Contentment. Presence.