

Good Morning Arising Church,

Last week we had our first Singles Class and it was a great success. We encourage everyone in the room who is not married to please attend these classes. It will be 6 weeks of instruction we received from our brothers at LCM on how you can HIT THE TARGET as a single person.

Today we hope to again bless the Singles with some instruction from the Word—but this is not for them alone! We promise that everyone will be able to walk away impacted regardless of calling, age, situation or background.

Today's message is titled:

THE SECRET

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- **Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)**

²⁹ **The secret things belong to the Lord our God**, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Moses lays out two categories of things in this verse.

- **Secret things** that belong to God
- **Revealed things** that belong to us and our children, so we may follow the Law.

When you hear the word *secret*, what comes to your mind?

- *Sod*
- Unknown
- Hard to find

There are secret things that have not been revealed to us yet that we must search out! This is just like what we have been studying in Daniel.

- **Daniel 12:4 (ESV)**

4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Daniel 12 promises that as we "run to and fro"—reading back and forth like a person scanning the lines of a scroll again and again, eventually knowledge will increase. As you spend more and more time in the Word, you will increase in knowledge. Not just head-knowledge, but a knowing of the heart of God.

This is how more of the secret things of God will be revealed to us.

- **Proverbs 25:2 (NIV)**

² It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;
to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

You have heard this verse MANY times in this body. But isn't it fascinating that it says there are certain things God intentionally conceals? God isn't trying to hide anything because he doesn't want you to know something. He

conceals a matter *so that* you would go on a journey to search it out, discover it and believe in Him more.

How have you responded when put in situations that require you to search? For me it can often feel burdensome maybe it **only** feels like a burden to you and so you avoid the searching when it is actually meant for your glory. Crazy when you actually think through this. God reserved something for us to do that is to our glory or honor! (Genesis 12) When Abram was prompted by God to go to the place he "would" show him, Abram did not sit and do nothing, he went, in ways he searched. And we know what happens from there... he was literally a blessing to all of the earth... now that sounds like some honor to me.

Let's go back to this word—secret.

Some people think *the secret* is manifesting exactly what you want....we're going to talk about an actual secret today. We're going to talk about an *actual* secret from heaven.

So do you want to hear something secret today? There is something deep in the writings of Paul that he pulls out as a *sod* or *secret* of sorts. It's going to be the topic of the message today. Let's read it together and see if we can search to and fro on the lines of our Bible's to find its meaning.

- **Philippians 4:10–12 (NIV)**

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in

need, for **I have learned to be content whatever the**

circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation,** whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Any situation.... Really..?? How about that thing you have been praying about but have not got any where on or don't see the Lord has given you an answer for specifically. YES OF COURSE EVEN THEN.

You went from feeling an abundance one week and the next you are hungering not just physically but inwardly for the Lord to speak again, and between him speaking the next thing... you will be content with what he has already given you.

Paul says that there is a *secret* of being content. We love this passage, there is so much packed into it. Have you ever considered that it says in these verses twice: *I have learned*—in regards to contentment?

What does that mean? Well, it seems like being content is NOT SOMETHING you naturally possess.

- Caleb—did you just wake up one day and you knew how to properly work with ceramic coating? ***You had to learn right?***
- Nico—you grew up speaking Korean, did you just one day know how to speak English? ***You had to learn it right?***
- Natalie—one of the BEST cooks ever. Did you always know or ***did you have to LEARN?***

All of those skills had to be learned! These singles are really good at these skills but did you notice, none of them were secret. The training required to learn these things was readily available — and even with the training readily available, the effort required to learn these things is immense! **HOW MUCH MORE, learning something that is a secret?**

Being content is something that *must be learned* and pursued with diligence.

Listen to the way a scholar frames it.



Learning the Secret

*'I have learned' (ἐμαθον): contentment, like all other virtues, is not a growth of nature, but a plant of grace's planting and nurture. Seneca said 'Nature does not give virtue; to become good is an art.' **Contentment is a lesson learnt in the school of experience at the feet of a Divine teacher.** St. Paul has learned to reduce his desires to his means, [What God has given you] 'in whatever state I am (ἐν ᾧ εἰμι), be it high or low, rich or poor, base or honourable, easy or painful, prosperous or troublous; all that God sends is welcome.' 'To be content'—αὐτάρκης, 'sufficient in oneself,' 'independent'; αὐτάρκεια, 'sufficiency in oneself,' 1 Ti 6:6; see Lk 3:14, 2 Co 12:9, He 13:5, 'I have learned the secret'*

J. S. Banks, "Contentment," in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (2 Vols.), ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916–1918), 245.

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Being content is not something that comes natural to us mortals. It is a natural sinful desire to always want more/something different.

We talked about this at Singles, and how Singleness is a gift! The truth is, every single person, every child, every adult, husband, wife and even the vintage in the room—every single one of us has a natural bend to NOT be content.

- If I had more money I could....
- I wish I had more free time so I could...
- I just want to be married I wish I was right now so I could...
- I wish I was poured into more and people paid attention to me more than I would be...
- If I didn't have this trial right now I'd have so much more time for...
- I'm just so tired of being single I need someone so I can...
- If I just knew enough then I could pour into others...

Let's be honest—contentment is usually understood like this:



WHAT CONTENTMENT IS NOT

False Contentment



Being “*happy*” in my current situation — *until I get what I want.*



Waiting this season out without complaining — *until I get to where I **REALLY** want to be.*

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False—Contentment

- Being happy in my current situation **until I get what I want.**
- Waiting this season out without complaining until I get to where I **REALLY** want to be.

Do you see how this in essence is simply "patiently" being discontent?

Paul challenges us again in his letter to Timothy on what we **REALLY** need in order to be content.

- **1 Timothy 6:8–9 (NIV)**

⁸ But if we have food and clothing, **we will be content with that.**

⁹ Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and **a trap** and into many **foolish** and **harmful desires** that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

Food and clothing... That is all we need to be content! Where do you think Paul got this list? I mean doesn't it seem like he could have made up a list?

- **Exodus 21:10–11 (NIV)**

¹⁰ If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. ¹¹ If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

We are the bride of Christ. His law is eternal and perfect. Paul did not make up a contentment list based on his own life—he used the Law. Food, clothing and intimacy—those are the things that God says He will provide for His bride to be content.

Is it enough for you?

Going back to 1 Timothy 6—See how Paul's charge to be content is contrasted with a trap of foolish and harmful **DESIRES for gaining something they do not have**. This is not a call to poverty, it is addressing the desires of the heart in contrast with contentment—that your desires would be in accordance with your means, what God has given you.

Discontentment is probably a word you don't think about much or rarely actually think is your problem. Let's look at a few examples of what discontentment produces.



WHAT DISCONTENTMENT LEADS TO

Voices of Discontent

Jonah

Discontent with *his assignment* → running from God

Esau

Discontent with *the blessing* → murderous rage

Israel

Discontent with *what God provided* → judgment in the desert

Korah

Discontent with *those in authority* → insurrection

Haman

Discontent with *how he was treated* → hatred & ruin

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Jonah is discontent with his assignment. God tells him plainly, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it" — and instead of obeying, "Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish" (Jonah 1:1–3). He didn't like who God was sending him to, so he ran. And running from the call didn't get him out of it — it got him into the belly of a fish (Jonah 1:17). Discontentment with our calling/location doesn't excuse us from it. It just makes the road longer.

Esau is discontent over the blessing. He'd already sold his birthright for a bowl of stew (Genesis 25:29–34), but when Jacob walks away with their father's blessing too, Esau's response isn't grief — it's murder. "Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him... 'I will kill my brother Jacob'" (Genesis 27:41). Discontent over what someone else received turned into a plot against his own family.

Those delivered from Egypt in the wilderness are discontent with what God actually provided. They'd been miraculously fed with manna every single day — and still, "the rabble with them began to crave other

food... 'We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost... but now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!'" (Numbers 11:4–6). God gave them exactly what they needed, and it wasn't enough for them. The place they camped afterward was literally named Kibroth Hattaavah — "the graves of craving" (Numbers 11:34).

Korah is discontent with those God placed in authority over him. He gathers a following and confronts Moses and Aaron directly: "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them... Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" (Numbers 16:3). It wasn't really about holiness — it was about wanting the position himself. And Scripture doesn't soften the outcome: the ground opened up and swallowed Korah's household whole (Numbers 16:31–33).

Haman is discontent with how one man treats him. He has the king's favor, wealth, status — everything — but it means nothing to him because "Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor" (Esther 3:5). By chapter 5 he says it outright: "All this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate" (Esther 5:13). One unmet expectation curdles into a plan to destroy an entire people — and it's Haman himself who ends up on the gallows he built (Esther 7:10).

All of these situations started with wanting something they were not given.

- A different calling/location/assignment
- Esau wanted THE FATHER and a BROTHER to treat him differently
- In the wilderness, they wanted more than what God had provided
- Korah—didn't like the way the leaders were behaving
- Haman, wanted more attention/honor than he was getting.....

*elaborate

Do you want to hear a radical example of this kind of contentment and dependence? Someone who had exactly what God provided for him.

- **1 Kings 17:2–6 (NIV)**

² Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ³ “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴ You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.”

⁵ So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Do you hear what is happening here? Elijah is being told to drink from the brook and furthermore his means of obtaining food would be through God sending ravens to bring him bread and meat.

Hey Garrett looks like your skipping the grocery store this week, I am going to send birds to bring you food....

Compared to most and compared to all the other stories we read— how little did Elijah have?

And yet Elijah went and did according to the word of the Lord. This would not be the only time, eventually this brook dries up and the word of the Lord comes again directing him to the widow, and then what's next—Mount Carmel. Elijah had food, clothes, and the Lord — and it was enough. And He was still on mission. That brings us to another passage from Paul.



2 Corinthians 9:6–10

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound

⁹ As it is written:

*"They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever."*

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest

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What an incredible passage. This is the kind of faith Paul is inviting us to join. Think about the story of Elijah in regards to this verse. "God is able to bless you ABUNDANTLY" so that at all times you have ALL YOU NEED! It even says he supplies seed to the sower and bread for food and has the ability to increase your harvest!

When we read verses like this it should be encouraging. When we feel the lack—we can have hope that HE IS ABLE to provide ALL THAT WE NEED!

But wait—we actually missed part of those verses.



2 Corinthians 9:6–10

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound **in every good work**.

⁹ As it is written:

*"They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever."*

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest **of your righteousness**.

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Paul does something very interesting in these verses. He seems to be talking about money and needs—physical things. But then he several times blurs the lines into something clearly spiritual.

"God can give you ALL YOU NEED! *So you can abound in good work*"

- Wait I thought we were talking about the things I need/want.

He will supply and increase your store and enlarge the HARVEST *of your righteousness*"

- Wait what about my harvest, where did that go??

Just when you think he is talking about an abundance of provision he switches it to righteousness and good deeds. We are not actually promised we'll get what we want— we are however promised an abundance of opportunity for good works.

Paul blurs these lines of abundance of needs and good works and righteousness. Why? Does he know some secret I don't? Let's go back to that passage.

- **Philippians 4:11b–12 (NIV)**

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation**, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Have you ever asked yourself—what's the secret? What is it?



Philippians 4:11-13 (NIV)

¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content** in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ ***I can do all this through him who gives me strength.***

Paul comes right out and tells us the secret to being content, its not a certain dollar amount, it's not a certain status achieved, its not a milestone reached in your life, its actually not anything about a situation circumstance or ANYTHING like that.

The secret to contentment is a revelation from heaven—faith that through the power of Christ we are not restricted by our circumstances, we are simply being taught in them. Remember the quote from earlier:

"Contentment is a lesson learnt in the school of experience at the feet of a Divine teacher."

"I can do all things through Him who gives me strength" Is usually sort of a blank check for accomplishing BIG things that seem hard right? Landing a job, a personal goal. That's not really the point Paul is making.

Contentment is regardless of being rich or poor, whether married or single, whether no kids or tons of kids, whether healthy or sick, whether old or young, whether knowing the next step the Lord has or not—The Lord is your strength in it all and he can accomplish His work in you—regardless of the circumstance.

It's a change of desire—your life is not a constant more more more. Your life is not a constant waiting for the next thing, or wishing things were different.

In all of those differing circumstances God has something set aside for you to do, he has a harvest of righteousness and good works for you to accomplish. NOTHING about your circumstances can change or alter that. Whatever your current state is—that is where you must be content and know you are not restricted in any way.

The SECRET to contentment involves ACTION not INACTION. Contentment is NOT synonymous with complacent. You are not actually content if you become happy in your state of sin and do nothing to improve yourself or the people around you.

Singles—the secret to being content for you is not

- I'll just try and be happy until I'm married

- The secret is being strengthened by God to accomplish the work he has for you while you're single. Do not just think about what you can do to get something out of it, start moving, get disciplined, walk out your mezuzah (if you don't have one find it!)

Waiting on Kids—the secret to being content is not

- Simply being faith-filled you will one day have kids (that's a good thing)
- Contentment would be seizing the opportunity to pour into other people's children with the care and intentionality you would for your own, and believe you are perfectly positioned to serve the Lord in this way!

Ministry/walking out purpose—the secret to being content is not

- Pouring yourself out only when you feel like you have something or planned it.
- Contentment would be to give everything you have regardless of how you feel all of the time, trusting his spirit will empower you.

Families—the secret to being content is not

- Complaining less about lack of sleep or freedoms or funds.
- Contentment is believing you have all you need to be faithful to Him right now in building up your own family and the families around you.

The secret is obedience regardless of what you do or do not have.
Because Christ is the one who strengthens you to do it.

- **Psalm 23:1 (NIV)**

¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

David knew the secret....we're going to show you how Jesus knew the secret and he lived it out every day.

- **Matthew 14:13–21 (NIV)**

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Jesus wanted to be alone, but his situation did not allow it. He did not get frustrated, complain or wish he was somewhere else. He instead was filled with compassion and began to identify what was needed in front of him.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied, “**They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.**”

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

You know the story....the crowd here is 5000 plus women and children. The disciples were thinking in terms of supply and demand (*we need this much and we don't have it so we cant do it.*)

*we situation—its not what Jesus had its what they had together...

The facts are, there are thousands of people who need to eat. The bad report is—we don't have enough. But wait—there is a secret Jesus knows....let's see what he does.

¹⁸ “**Bring them here to me,**” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two

fish and looking up to heaven, **he gave thanks and broke the loaves**. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus knew the secret to contentment and it's on full display. It actually didn't matter how much food they had. What they had is what they had. The secret was—they were not restricted by their situation at all....they could do all things through Him who gives them strength.....

*elaborate

Jesus does something incredible *before* the miracle.

He gives thanks.

- **Matthew 14:19 (NIV)**

¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

What was he giving thanks for? They were in a tough spot with clearly not enough and everyone is looking to him for answers.

He gives thanks for what He does have, and somehow it became enough.

Church, there is a simple truth from the example of Christ for every single one of you. If you're struggling with contentment, if you want to be in a different season, if you don't like what is around you, if you don't think you

have enough—**take on the attitude of Christ and give thanks for what you do have—and maybe he will make that enough.**

When you can give thanks for what He has given you, and trust Him—God can make your "not enough" to be "more than enough".

You likely give thanks when the Lord comes through with what you asked of Him. That's great, you should. Jesus just doesn't do that—He gives thanks before. He thanks the Lord *before* the miracle and doesn't demand more from the Lord but instead trusts that whatever he has been given is enough for the task ahead. This is not a one off...

- **John 11:41–44 (NIV)**

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said,

“Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “**Lazarus,**

come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Here is a plain takeaway from the message: Give thanks before the miracle.

- **Colossians 4:2–3 (NIV)**

² **Devote yourselves** to prayer, being watchful and **thankful.** ³

And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Paul calls for DEVOTION to thankfulness

- **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV)**

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Thankfulness and contentment is not a passive mindset, it's an active choice to trust that whatever God has given you is enough for the work He has given you. This is the attitude of Daniel we have been reading about.

- **Daniel 6:10 (NIV)**

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and **prayed, giving thanks** to his God, just as he had done before.

He gave thanks before he was delivered. Do you?

You are never at a lack in Christ. Let's think back on the feeding of the 5000 in light of Philippians 4, whether in lack or plenty — the answer is the same. You give them something to eat.

In the lack of the disciples own power to feed the people, they were given supernatural provision!

In the plenty of Jesus' power to heal the sick, there was supernatural provision!

The answer is the same, whether in lack or in plenty—you can **DO** all things through Christ who strengthens you. This is the secret to contentment.

When you feel lack — His strength is enough to provide for whatever good work!

When you experience plenty — His strength is enough for you to give freely in whatever good work without fear of lack!

Let's bring this home on these two fronts:

Paul lays out two different people who need to learn the secret of being content: those with plenty and those in lack. You probably think you are the one who is in lack—and maybe you are in some way. But also, a lot of you need to learn contentment in the plenty.

You have plenty:

- You've been given responsibility over a family, kids, disciples, or training in the word etc...
 - Are you freely giving what has been given to you?
 - The weapons of old
 - The way of life that was given to you

Or do you despise the responsibility to pour into others and simply wish that you would be given more attention, training, time, etc... You find yourself in a place of discontentment while you have plenty.

You have lack:

- You are not where you thought you'd be
- You are not as knowledgeable in the word
- You have not been discipled by a pastor as much as you want
- You are crying out for the Lord to speak on a health issue
 - Are you trusting that the strength of Christ in you will supply any lack?

Or do you find yourself saying, that you aren't the one who really should be saying what needs to be said according to the scripture, because of your apparent lack.

Are you refusing to change the culture of the friends you have around you because of a perceived lack of discipleship — this is usually stated as "I

wasn't sure what to do, so I figured I would just ask one of the pastors after the moment." in reality, you knew exactly what to do, you simply believed the lie that The Lord wouldn't move through you.

- **Hebrews 12:28–29 (NIV)**

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.”

- **Isaiah 58:6–8 (NIV)**

⁶ “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.