

Good Morning Ladies,

-Open with prayer

-Introduction of myself

For those who don't know me, my name is Laura Hawk and my husband Darren and I have been in NC since Oct of 2001. We have been at Berean the whole time and have served in many areas over the years, from choir, nursery, AWANA, a preschool teacher for the school for many years. We have 2 adult children and 7 grandchildren.

If you pose a question to Pam like I did one morning before a ladies Bible study, "do you need to be joyful and content" you may be asked if you would lead a morning chat, so here we are. Speaking to an adult group is not in my comfort zone. 😊

But let's dive in! As we enjoy coffee and just see how we can chat about what jumped out to me/you and hopefully it is a jumping off point as we go into this retreat weekend.

Let's start with Phil. 4:4-9,11

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content."

Philippians 4:4-9, 11 ESV

<https://bible.com/bible/59/phil.4.4-11.ESV>

LEARNED?

As we go forward I've pulled and pasted from several resources for I'm not great at putting thoughts into sufficient words.

One resource is the book I found called "Learning Contentment" by Nancy Wilson. She pulled from the well respected Jeremiah Burroughs but made it more down to earth and practical for our day and age. I will be sprinkling several portions from her book as well as some of the questions she posed as some of our discussion leads along with my own observations.

Who you like to share what how you would describe the meaning of JOY?

And now CONTENTMENT?

Now let's look at a couple of verses from the Fruit of the spirit.

Galatian 5:22 -But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, PEACE, patience, kindness, goodness and faithfulness.

Can we think of "peace" in this verse as contentment?

? Ladies, let's talk about the definitions of JOY and CONTENTMENT.

How does the world perceive joy

*We often think contentment is something that happens to us, rather than something that we take pains to learn. (by Nancy Wilson from Learning Contentment)

Joy

If a person is joyful, then he or she is happy. There's no such thing as glum joy. We cannot drain joy of emotion and still call it "joy."

When God's Spirit gives us joy, then we are happy people. Christians should be joyful; happiness should characterize our everyday lives.

How do we gain Joy?

James 1:2 says, "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials." Christians can be happy, even in the midst of difficulties, because we know "the testing of our faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (verses 3-4). As we persevere through trials, with God's help, our faith strengthens and matures. By God's grace we can be happy despite our circumstances.

Joy is often presented as "true" contentment based on faith.

Happiness, in contrast, is often thought of as "false" or "superficial" emotion dependent on circumstances. But this is a false dichotomy. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests we divorce joy from happiness. The two are equal.

Of course, there are different types of joy and happiness.

There is a joy that comes from the world, such as "the fleeting pleasures of sin" spoken of in Hebrews 11:25. There is a joy that is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). There is a temporary happiness and an eternal happiness, but we can call both "happiness." We don't need to split hairs between the meaning of *joy* and *happiness*. We just need to decide where our joy comes from. Are we happy in the Lord, or are we content with the happiness the world affords?

The joy of the world is hollow, but the joy of the Lord is rich and abundant.

The world's happiness will fade with time, but God's people will be happy forever.

JOY (chara)

righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:32-33). From Jesus' words, we can deduce that lack of contentment is sin and it puts us in the same category as those who do not know God.

The apostle Paul was a man who suffered and went without the comforts of life more than most people could ever imagine (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). Yet he knew the secret of contentment: "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. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:12-13). The writer to the Hebrews adds, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Our discontent is often wrapped up in not being satisfied with what we do have and wanting what we don't have.

Questions

Are there areas in your life where you lack courage to be content? Are you afraid of what might happen if you choose to be content?

2 . What hard things are you dealing with that can be helped by remembering that you can do all things through Christ?

Discontent is ingratitude. Complaining, grumbling and murmuring are discontent. (Phil. 2:14)

Since the beginning in the garden there has been the ugly head of discontent. Eve had the perfect garden. Yet she was tempted with discontent.

Do you think our mind set, rather a purposeful outlook plays a role in our contentment?

All our secret sins are seen by God, including discontent. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). If we are planting a crop of discontent, other foul weeds will soon be growing alongside. Even if the sin is not brought to light immediately, it will eventually yield a bitter crop. We may not be able to identify the little seedlings pushing up out of the ground, but God knows exactly what we are planting, and soon it will be obvious to all. The more we hear ourselves grumble and complain, the more we take it to heart and believe our own words.

Discontent is ugly and it uglifies. It never makes you feel better, it never makes the situation better, and it never edifies the hearers. It refuses to be thankful, it picks at faults, and worst of all, it is a grievous sin against a holy God. Plus, it leads to other sins, big and small, and it is a waste of precious time.

Questions to ask yourself....

Am I content in my relationships?

Financially? Health? Appearance? Home? How about when others prosper?

Does contentment mean we can't try to improve situations?

1. a. Intense and especially ecstatic or exultant happiness.
- b. The expression or manifestation of such feeling.
2. A source or an object of pleasure or satisfaction: *their child was their pride and joy*

This definition falls short of the original meaning of "**rejoice, be glad**". A more accurate translation of this would be "gladness".

glad

1. a. Experiencing or exhibiting joy and pleasure.
- b. Appreciative

We can see that there is definitely a component of happiness here, but there's also a sense of appreciation.

If we compare this to the Greek root "rejoice", we can clearly see that a better translation would not be "joy" as in happiness, but "joy" as in appreciation, thanksgiving, and rejoicing (or more accurately, a combination of those words). "Rejoicefulness", if that were a word, would be the best translation.

In context

The "joy" that God will give us is not entirely based on happiness, but it is based on rejoicing. And to dig further into the definition of "rejoicing".

Chaira is the Greek here in Phil. 4

- a. Gladness - experiencing or exhibiting joy & pleasure.
- b. Appreciative????

Once again our joy/ rejoicing is not always "oh everything is pleasing and happy. But rather " a spirit of thanksgiving, that will develop into a joyful reflection in the future?

Now how would we define contentment?

CONTENTMENT (comfortable, fulfilled, happy, gratified, pleased, willing, serenity, peace, at ease)

One dictionary defines *contentment* as "the state of being mentally or emotionally satisfied with things as they are."

Today it is rare that we find anyone who is truly content with his or her condition in life.

The Bible has a great deal to say about contentment—being satisfied with what we have, who we are, and where we're going. Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" (Matthew 6:25).

In essence, Jesus is telling us to be content with what we have. Moreover, He has given us a direct command not to worry about the things of this world. Then He adds, "For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his

"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:5-7).

Contentment is purposeful. Discontentment creeps into our mind, so we need to take captive our thoughts and cultivate it with the promises of God.

What are some ways we allow the weeds of discontent in our hearts and minds?

Comparison, anxiety, jealousy, grumbling

How can we mindfully cultivate the roots of contentment?

"take heed"

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:5-6. Contentment is being "spiritually minded.")

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. (Phil. 4:8)

If you want to change your thought patterns, you must practice thinking about things that are "praiseworthy" and root out the things that are not.

Contentment is comforting. Discontent is uneasy. Contentment is peaceful. Discontent is disturbed. Contentment looks out for others. Discontent looks only to gratify itself. Contentment is grateful. Discontent refuses to say thanks. Contentment counts its blessings. Discontent counts its grievances. Contentment is cheerful. Discontent pouts. Contentment takes the hit. Discontent points the finger. Contentment is generous. Discontent won't share. Contentment is settled. Discontent is restless.