

#GetOverYourSelfie: Contentment Over Greed

How do I get over myself and experience God's best?

1. Focus on Jesus.
2. Get rid of the old.
3. Put on the new (God's righteousness).

Icebreaker

What possession did you long for as a kid or teen? When I was a teen I really wanted an ATV (All Terrain Vehicle). I had posters of ATVs in my bedroom and I dreamed of bouncing along trails in the woods. I never did get my ATV, but I did have a moped for a little while. How about you? Was there something you longed for and dreamed about having as a kid or teen? Did you get it? Did the experience match your expectations?

Video

Watch this week's video – Contentment Over Greed

<https://www.lifegroupleaders.ca/studies/getoveryourselfie/>

Study

How do I get over a natural bent toward greed and embrace contentment?

Contentment seems to be an elusive state of being

Here are some ways that we might experience discontentment. Have you experienced any of these recently?

- We are constantly bombarded with advertisements telling us we need more stuff, better stuff, and above all, newer stuff! Without *all the things* we will be unimpressive. We may feel that more and better things in our lives will impress the people around us.
- Our world tells us we need to aggressively go after fulfillment. You're not happy? Why not? Read all the books and attend all the workshops. Run hard and never stop!
- Discontentment breeds impatience. We can become impatient with ourselves and others when we are discontent.
- We can find ourselves using the credit card now rather than saving. We want things now so we pay by credit rather than waiting and saving up money.
- We live in a microwave age when we must get everything fast. I want it today! Or at the very latest, tomorrow. Amazon Prime for the win!
- We tend to compare ourselves with others. Instagram or Facebook, anyone?

Why do you think contentment is so elusive for us? Is it because we define contentment wrong, or maybe because our culture defines it wrong and we buy in?

The problem with greed

God designed us to live in a society where we enjoy people and use things, but often we enjoy things and use people. How might you know that you are enjoying things and using people? What are some of the warning signs?

Greed for more *stuff* undermines our contentment. In their book, *Our Money Problem*, Brad Hewitt and James Moline wrote, “Our culture makes it nearly impossible for any of us to be content. There is always a new iPhone or iPad or iSomething coming out. When everyone else is sprinting full-out in a race for more, it’s tough to stand on the sidelines.”

Then he [Jesus] said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ Luke 12:15 NIV

How have you seen greed infiltrate our society or your own life?

Pursuing contentment rather than greed

Contentment is the state of being mentally or emotionally satisfied with things as they are.

What do you think of this definition? Is there anything you would add or remove from this statement?

Read the following verses out loud as a group:

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing we will be content with that.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 NIV

The Apostle Paul writes that “godliness with contentment is great gain” (or great wealth, NLT). In these verses, Paul is contrasting true godliness to false teachers of his day who pretended to be godly for their own benefit or personal gain (v 5). It is good to be godly, Paul says, but to truly be godly we must pursue contentment over greed.

- What does it look like to be content with what we have? Do we ignore advertising, drive past the store, or cut up our credit cards? Some of these may be practical steps that could help fuel contentment, but they are not the heart of the issue. What do you think is at the heart of being content?

- For some of us to be content, we may need to give away some of our possessions or money. When do you think this would be appropriate? How would you know if this is helping you become content?

Embracing the sufficiency of Christ

Contentment is not just a philosophical outlook, but a real dependence on the sufficiency of Christ. As a group, read the following Scriptures about how all we need is in Jesus.

Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:8 NLT

And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 2 Corinthians 9:8 NLT

My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT

... I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Philippians 4:11-13

Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.' Hebrews 13:5

Which of these verses speak to you in your own journey of moving from greed to contentment?

Three ways to move toward contentment

1. Trust God completely

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?' Hebrews 13:5-6 NIV

There is a powerful link between experiencing God's presence when we give up greed and pursuing contentment in Him alone.

- Why do you think contentment and trust are so closely intertwined?

- What might it look like for a single mom who is struggling financially to live out these verses? What might it look like for a middle/upper income family to live this out?

2. **Remember this life is temporary**

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21 NIV

- How does giving to others remind us that life is temporary?
- When we give it away, the focus of our heart changes. In what ways have you experienced this or seen this in others?

3. **Be thankful for what you have**

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 NIV

- Gratitude is one key to living above the continual striving for more. Gratitude affects your attitude. How have you experienced this in your life?
- A practical exercise this week could be to spend some time walking around your home and thanking God for everything you have. How might this help you pursue contentment?
- Another practical exercise is to be generous with what you have, to give something away. What might it look like for you to try this?

Pray

Have your group get into groups of two or three. Ask each other for one takeaway from this study. Pray for each other, that God would give you power and intentionality to throw off greed and put on godly contentment.