

TALKING POINTS

JOY - CONTENTMENT

LEANING IN

In Philippians, the apostle Paul makes continual reference to Joy and having a satisfied life – even though his life was filled with difficult circumstances.

Yet, our world is filled with unhappy, unsatisfied people. If you were to believe what our culture says about contentment, you'll think contentment is something you roll on, inhale, eat or drive.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul tells them (and us) he has found the secret to living a contented life. This was a powerful statement, given the kinds of trials he was *still experiencing* in his life at the time he said this.

The word "contentment" itself means independent from circumstances – so, what did Paul learn? What was the secret to contentment? Paul understood and lived out a fundamental truth - nothing besides God will ever bring you lasting satisfaction in your life. You can try it all, but you'll never find satisfaction anywhere else.

Read Philippians 4:11-12

Why is the contentment our culture promises destined to get away from us?

LIVING IT OUT

Contentment isn't a prize to be won, it's a result of learning to make the right choices. Here are four practices we can employ to have real contentment in our lives regardless of life's difficulties:

Don't Be Obsessed With What You Possess - in truth, all of our possessions are *temporary* and *on loan*. Everything we have is a gift from God, and we lose contentment when we *compare with others*. Don't look around, look up.

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8

How do we loosen our grip on our "stuff"?

Learn To Adjust To Change - one constant we can count on in life is *change*. We can't control life's circumstances, but we can control *our attitudes* in the midst of circumstances by focusing more on God and developing a sense of humor.

Read Philippians 4:12

What can we do to embrace change better - especially since most of us don't like it?

Learn To Draw Upon The Power Of God - fatigue happens when you live in your own strength, but God can give you power to live in the midst of your weakness *if you lean on Him*.

Read Philippians 4:13

Are you dealing with fatigue right now? What can you do to release this burden to God?

Learn To Trust God To Meet Your Needs - we have a God in heaven who cares *for* and *about us*. We need to trust God to care for us in times of difficulty. When we become more concerned with God's kingdom than our own, we find *real* contentment takes place.

Read Philippians 4:19

Can you share a time when God supernaturally met a need of yours and you knew it had to be Him?