

Week 3: Cultivating Contentment

Participant Handout

[Jesus] said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” (Luke 12:15)

Key Insights

1. Although Jesus tells us that our lives consist of more than the abundance of possessions, the culture shouts it’s not true. The result is a wrestling in our hearts.
2. We suffer from Restless Heart Syndrome (RHS)—we are never satisfied with anything but are perennially discontent. If left unchecked, RHS can destroy us.
3. God wired our hearts so that they would be content with certain things and discontent with others, causing us to seek the only One who can fully satisfy us. The problem is that we tend to be discontent with the wrong things.
4. Like the apostle Paul, we can learn to be content in whatever circumstances we may find ourselves. Four keys to contentment can help us to do this:
 1. Remember that it could be worse.
 2. Ask yourself, “How long will this make me happy?”
 3. Develop a grateful heart.
 4. Ask yourself, “Where does my soul find true satisfaction?”
5. Gratitude is essential if we are to be content. Expressing gratitude to God changes our hearts.
6. Contrary to what the world would have us believe, the longings of our souls are satisfied only in God.
7. Contentment and simplicity go hand in hand. When we simplify, we are content; and when we are content, we simplify.
8. Five steps can help us to simplify our lives:
 1. Reduce your consumption and live below your means.

2. Before making a purchase, ask yourself why you need it and want it.
 3. Use something up before buying something new.
 4. Plan low-cost entertainment that enriches.
 5. Consider major changes that would allow you to simplify your life.
9. Simplifying our lives requires self-control. Self-control protects us from temptation and from sins that can destroy us. Self-control is choosing delayed gratification for a higher cause rather than satisfying an impulse for instant gratification.
10. Choosing contentment does not mean that we must stop buying things; it means we look to God as our Source and reclaim the joy of generosity and simplicity.

Taking It to Heart This Week

- Review the four keys to cultivating contentment (pp. 59–65 in *Enough*). Make a point to practice each of these in the coming week.
- Consider the five steps for simplifying your life (pp. 65–70 in *Enough*). How can you apply each of these in your life *now*?