The Secret of Contentment November 18, 2018

*Philippians 4:10-13 Series: Inextinguishable Joy*

If you take the life lie from an average man, you take away his happiness as well. – Henrik Ibsen

Intro: Henrik Ibsen, “The Wild Duck,” and the “life lies” we tell ourselves.

1. Learn to be content with little.
2. More won’t solve the problem.

v. 11 *I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content*

1. Learn to be content without much affirmation or resources.

v. 12 *I know how to be brought low*

1 Corinthians 4:11, 13 *To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless … We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.*

v. 12 *I have learned the secret of facing … hunger …and need*

2 Corinthians 8:1–2 *in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.*

1. Our contentment is central to God’s will for us.

Exodus 20:17 *“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”*

* What are some of the “life lies” that we’re tempted to believe?
* What can we do to be content when we’re in “need?”
* What can we do to be content when we’re treated like “scum?”
* Why is our contentment so important to God?

1. Learn to be content with much.
2. Less won’t make it any easier.

v. 11 *I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content*

1. Learn to be content when you’re treated like a star.

v. 12 *I know how to abound.*

1. Learn to be content when all your needs are met.

v. 12 *I have learned the secret of facing plenty and … abundance*

Hebrews 13:5 *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

* What are some of the unique temptations that come when you “abound” in resources?
* What are some of the temptations that might come when a person is lavished with affirmation and honour?
* In Hebrews 13:5, how does God’s presence and promise help us to live free from the love of money?
* What are some things that might be important to remember when you “abound?”

1. Learn contentment through Christ’s enabling.
2. Ignoring desire doesn’t work.

v. 11 *I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.*

1. Jesus is enough in little or much.

v. 12 *I have learned the secret*

Romans 7:8 *But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness.*

Acts 16:25 *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them …*

1. God doesn’t promise that you can do quantum physics.

v. 13 *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*

* How is being content in Jesus different than being content through self-denial?
* What’s wrong with trying to be content through self-denial?
* In v. 13, what are the “all things” that Paul claims he can do through Christ’s strengthening?
* Where do you most need God’s help in practicing contentment?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Philippians 4:14-20.

Notes