

# How to be Content with a Lot

The Peace of God Part 9  
Philippians 4:10-12 6/3/2017

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Summary: Contentment is the opposite of coveting (seeking joy from earthly things). It is when you have the peace of God, especially regarding money and possessions, that is independent of circumstances. Discontent fights providence. Learn contentment in times of blessing by enjoying God's love behind the blessing.

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**Philippians 4:10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.**

**11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 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. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**

**14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.**

**17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.**

**18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**

## Introduction

What is that thing in your life that keeps stealing your joy? That thing in your life that just gives you a nagging unhappiness every time you think about it. Maybe it's the way you look. Maybe it's something about your finances, your job, your marriage, your health, education. If you're like most people you have at least one thing that, every time it comes to mind, it just throws a bucket of cold water on the fires of your happiness. You just wish in that area your lot in life were different. And you don't just wish that, but you wish it with a kind of wishing that hurts – like an ache in your soul. What is it for you? Some people can't answer that question. They feel the ache – *something* isn't right. Something is making them unhappy, but they can't really put their finger on what it is. They just feel kind of empty, unfulfilled, blah.

Whether you're someone who can easily point to one thing and say, "That's what is hindering my joy,..." or you're a person who is just kind of stuck in a generalized, undefined joylessness, today's passage is going to show you the way out of that.

Every human being wants more joy. Even the happiest person in the world would love to have even more happiness than he already has. We all want joy, and God wants us to have greater joy. Paul really wanted the Philippians to have more joy because that was necessary for church unity. And so throughout this book he's been commanding them to rejoice in the Lord, giving them examples of how he has joy in the Lord, and giving instruction on how to do it. Now we come to the last paragraph of the book, and Paul begins it by saying, **I rejoice greatly in the Lord...** One last time Paul is going to teach us, by his own example, how to have joy in the Lord.

### **Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or ... seen in me—put it into practice. ...10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord...**

So when he says we are to put into practice whatever we learn from him, the very next thing out of his mouth is about his joy in the Lord. It was just 6 verses ago that Paul repeated his command: **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice!** (4:4) And now Paul says, "Follow my example - I rejoice greatly in the Lord." So if we haven't learned how to increase our joy by this point, we have one last chance before the book is over.

Just to dust off a few cobwebs, since it's been a few weeks since we met last - Paul has been teaching about how to replace anxiety with the peace of God. He wants unity in the church, and that will come when we have the right attitude in three directions: toward God, toward one another, and toward circumstances. Toward God - we need joy. Rejoice in the Lord always (v.4). Toward one another - reasonableness (v.5). And toward circumstances, the peace of God instead of anxiety. And that third one is the one Paul really wants to talk about, so that goes from v.6 to v.9.

## **Rejoicing in Blessings**

And that brings us to where we left off - v.10, which begins the final section of the book where, once again, he teaches us by his example how to rejoice in the Lord. So he ends the book the way he started it - sort of. In ch.1 he taught us by his example how to rejoice in the Lord when you're in horrible circumstances. But now, at the end of the book, he's going to teach us how to rejoice in the Lord in *favorable* circumstances. He got this big financial gift from the Philippians, he has more than he needs now, and he's going to teach us how to rejoice in the Lord in a situation like that. That's why I titled the message "How to be Content with a Lot."

That may sound like a strange title at first, but in some ways, it's actually harder to be content with a lot than it is to be content with a little. You and I enjoy more luxuries and comforts and wealth than 99% of all people who have ever lived, and yet we still struggle with discontent, don't we? Rejoicing in the Lord doesn't come naturally in any circumstances. In hard circumstances, it's the *rejoicing* part that's hard. But in favorable circumstances, it's the *in the Lord* part that's hard. When things are really comfortable and pleasurable, it's easy to rejoice, but tricky to make sure that your rejoicing is in the Lord, and not just in the happy circumstances.

You get a big bonus check at work, and you're happy. But atheists are happy with bonus checks. How can you tell if your happiness is really joy in the Lord, or joy in money? That's not easy, but it's crucial that we understand how to answer that question, because one of the most dangerous and damaging and deadly things that can ever happen to your spiritual life is to start getting your happiness from stuff or circumstances. But if you can learn to rejoice in the Lord, that will enable you to enjoy your stuff far more than ever before, and also to still have happiness even when you lose your stuff. You'll be able to enjoy that bonus check or your wonderful spouse or nice car even more - much more, and you'll still be happy even if you lose all those things.

One thing you'll notice when you read the psalms is how much time and energy the psalmists spent processing the blessings in their lives. That's why they were constantly praising God. You hear people

talk all the time about processing hardships. Something really hard happens – some big disaster, and they say, “I just need some time to process this.” So they take some long walks in the woods, and time alone wrestling in prayer, meditation, going to Scripture – trying to make sense out of what happened. That’s great. The psalmists did that too. But what don’t we do it when we receive blessings? You interview for a job you really want, they offer you the job, and you say, “I need to get alone and take some time to process this. I need to work through this, and make sure I understand what God is doing. I need to learn how to have contentment in this new, wonderful situation. I need to learn how to have joy in the Lord rather than joy in this blessing.”

That’s what we’re going to learn how to do in this passage. The closing section of Philippians is such a treasure, because Paul is going to teach us some new material (about giving and contentment) , but he’s going to do it in a way that takes all the major themes of the book and puts them all together like a chef taking a bunch of ingredients and combining them in a way that makes some amazing meal. As we go through this final paragraph of the book, you’ll see all the pieces of the whole puzzle of Philippians fall into place.

You probably remember the background – Paul just received this huge financial gift from the Philippians.

**18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.**

So Paul now has more money than he needed. And he’s thrilled. This is the only place in the whole NT where the word **greatly** is used with rejoicing like this.<sup>1</sup> It’s a strong word. Paul is saying, “When I got your financial gift, I was *soooo* happy.”

Now most people are happy when they get a bunch of money, but Paul wants us to understand – he’s really happy, but not about the money. His rejoicing is in the Lord, not the money. How did he do that? It had to do with contentment.

## Contentment

**Philippians 4:10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. ... 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.**

Then he goes on all the way through v.13 talking about contentment. So, when you get some blessing from God, the key to rejoicing in the Lord and not in the physical blessing itself starts with *contentment*. Contentment is so important for your joy. You need it, obviously, to have joy in times of trouble. But you also need it to have joy in times of blessing, because if you don’t have contentment, then you will seek your joy from the blessings themselves. And when you seek your joy from the blessings themselves, that will kill your joy. You’ll have some happiness, but not nearly enough to satisfy the cravings of your soul.

## Covetousness

When you get your happiness in life from stuff, or fun, or circumstances, that’s like feeding the bears at a state park. The reason they don’t want you feeding the bears is because if you give a bear your baloney sandwich , he doesn’t just take it and go skipping off into the woods saying, “Oh, I’m so thankful for this blessing.” He eats it, and then comes back and the next tourist he sees, he fully expects another sandwich, and if you don’t give him one, he’ll kill you. Feeding the bears makes life dangerous for people in the park, because the more you feed them, the less satisfied they are.

Our souls are like that. Trying to satisfy your soul’s cravings with money or possessions or pleasant temporal circumstances is like feeding the bears. All it will do is make your soul crave more and more.

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<sup>1</sup> NIGNTC 516.

Proverbs 30:15 “The leech has two daughters. ‘Give! Give!’ they cry. Your soul will become a leech that goes through life like a little kid saying, “gimmy gimmy gimmy!” And if you pay attention to a kid when he’s using that word – he’s not a happy kid. No matter how much he gets, he won’t be satisfied.

**15 ... “There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, ‘Enough!’: 16 the grave, the barren womb, land, which is never satisfied with water, and fire, which never says, ‘Enough!’”**

Have you ever walked up to your camp fire with another log, and heard the fire say, “Oh no, I couldn’t possibly. I’m just so full – I couldn’t consume another twig.” You can literally put an entire forest on it and it will consume it all and still want more. And the coveting soul is like that. The more you feed it, the hotter it burns. Nothing will ever be enough.

The Bible has a name for that fire. It’s called greed (or covetousness – those two words are synonyms). And you can never put that fire out by throwing more sticks on it. You can’t satisfy covetousness by going on more vacations or winning the lottery or any amount of earthly pleasure. You hear about a pro athlete who is going to uproot his family, move to another city, pass up an opportunity to play with a championship team – why? Because another team offered him \$20 million/yr, and this team can only pay him \$15 million. You and I take 30 years to pay off a \$300,000 mortgage, he gets that much every single week, but it’s not enough. His soul is saying, “More, more!”

## Definition

So that’s coveting. Contentment is simply the opposite of coveting. But here’s where it gets tricky, because it’s not wrong to desire things. It’s not even wrong to strongly desire things. I’ve heard some people define it as just not wanting anything more than you have. Is that what contentment is? You’re never allowed to desire money or possessions? You should never do anything to increase your income? Never look for a better paying job? Never invest in anything that might increase in value? When you have a lazy 18-year-old son who sits on the couch all day and won’t go out and get a job, do you say, “I’m so proud of you – you’re being content!”? No. I think we can all agree it’s ok to desire more money, and to desire it enough to work hard to get it. So at what point does the desire for money or possessions or anything else cross the line into sinful discontent?

## Contentment: The Peace of God

If we want to define what Paul means here by contentment, how about we look at the context? What has Paul been talking about? He’s been talking about replacing anxiety with the peace of God that transcends understanding. It seems to me that Paul is using the word *contentment* here as just another way of describing that peace. Contentment is when you have the peace of God instead of anxiety – especially in relation to money and possessions. Contentment isn’t lack of desire. It’s when you have the peace of God in your heart right there alongside your desire. I really, really want that thing, but I’m fine without it. I desire that situation in life, but I’m perfectly at peace without it. I treasure this thing that I have that’s so precious to me, but if it were taken away from me, it wouldn’t disturb my peace. So how do you know when you’ve crossed the line from legitimate desire to discontent? It’s when you have anxiety about it. If financial pressures come up, and your thoughts start racing out of control, keeping you up at night when you should be resting – that’s discontent. I heard a good analogy for describing anxious thoughts. This guy says it’s when your thoughts are like the people at the riot in Ephesus in Acts 19.

**Acts 19:32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there.**

That scene – mass confusion and chaos, people running around shouting and demonstrating, and most of them don’t even know why they are there. That’s what your brain is like when you have anxiety – all these rioting thoughts scurrying around, accomplishing nothing, and most of them don’t even know why they are there. Anyway, that’s one way you can know that your desires have crossed the line to

discontent – rioting thoughts. Another way is if you find yourself complaining. No content person complains. Another way to know you are discontented if you have self-pity instead of gratitude. Or if you have anger over not having something, or when you lose what you do have.<sup>2</sup>

## Peace that is Unrelated to Circumstances

So contentment is when the peace of God fills your soul and you have joy and gratitude no matter what your circumstances are, because it's independent from circumstances. That's what the Greek word translated content here literally means – to be independent. Your happiness and peace are not dependent on what you have or don't have.

**11 ... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 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.**

My circumstances have no impact at all on my contentment. I wonder if Paul had been reading Habakkuk when he wrote this, because this is so similar to Habakkuk's attitude. God reveals to Habakkuk the devastation he is going to bring on Israel for their sin, and it rattles Habakkuk to the core. (If you want a trick for remembering what that book is about – Habakkuk was the Prophet who was *taken aback* when he heard what God was going to do). The doesn't even talk to the people – the whole book is just a dialogue between him and God about this coming disaster.

**Habakkuk 3:16 I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled.**

So he knows his life is going to become an absolute nightmare. But look at his response.

**17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.**

Does v.18 sound familiar? Basically he's saying, "I will rejoice in the Lord always. I'll say it again, I will rejoice. I'll be joyful in God my Savior – even if absolutely everything is taken from me and my whole world falls apart around me – it won't affect my joy because I rejoice in the Lord. I think Paul should be convicted of plagiarism, because half of the material of the book of Philippians is stolen right out of the ancient Prophet Habakkuk. Joy in the Lord apart from circumstances.

I love Jeremiah Burroughs' definition of contentment: *Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.* That word *disposal*, back in the 1600's, meant *arrangement* – the way God arranges

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<sup>2</sup> I think it's important to really understand the inner peace, and the emotional aspect of contentment, because that's not how the world defines it. People in the world realize that contentment is a good thing. What isn't clear, though, is the definition of contentment. I read about a study by researchers at Princeton University about contentment which found that the threshold for contentment seems to be about \$75,000/yr. People who make less than that report being discontent, and the farther they are from that \$75,000 mark, the more unhappy they report being. On the other hand, people who make that amount of more, all report about the same level of happiness. It doesn't matter how much more – once it gets over \$75,000, they all have about the same level of happiness. At first, that would seem to go against what I've been saying about money not producing real happiness. All the various articles that reported on that study had the same basic idea – that money does indeed buy happiness, but only up to about \$75,000. But then I read a little deeper into the study and found out that they studied two different kinds of happiness. One was your day to day emotions and mood, and the other was just how you feel in general about your career and financial wellbeing. And it's that second kind that was connected to the \$75,000 figure. People who make that or more feel like they are doing pretty well, but people who make less than that feel like they aren't doing so well career-wise. But on the emotional level – whether people feel happy during the day, and what kind of mood they have – none of that was affected at all. The study found that the income level, whether it was way below \$75,000, way above, or anywhere else, had no impact on people's moods or feelings of happiness. So can money give you contentment? Sure, if you redefine contentment to have nothing to do with how you actually feel emotionally. But if we see it the way Paul does, as being the opposite of anxiety, even the Princeton researchers admit that there is no correlation between income and contentment.

circumstances. Contentment is when your spirit is calm because you submit to and delight in God's wise and fatherly arrangement of circumstances. In other words, you love providence.

Some financial hardship comes your way – it doesn't disturb the peace or joy in your heart. You still have that sweet, inward, quiet frame of spirit – why? Because you know that this hard circumstance is from God, and so you are freely submitting to and delighting in what God has done. That definition comes from the book titled *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*<sup>3</sup> that Jeremiah Burroughs wrote back in the 1600's. A very easily little book to read, but very helpful. I can't imagine anyone still being discontent after reading that little book. And I don't know if anyone has improved on his definition in 400 years. And the underlying idea is, whatever God does, you embrace it.

## Fighting Providence

So discontent – getting worked up because you don't have something or you lost something, or getting all spun up because you wish you had different circumstances – that is a rejection of God's providence. Discontent is when your soul refuses to accept divine providence, which is like a mosquito declaring war on a tank. That's frustrating for the mosquito. God, in his providence, sends a particular circumstance into your life, and your soul resists it. "No, I don't like this situation – it's the wrong situation for me right now. This is the wrong size paycheck for what I want. I don't like this job situation. I don't like this marriage or singleness situation. I don't like the situation with my body. I don't like my kitchen/car/cell phone/retirement plan/weather/personality type/spiritual gifts..." And every day your soul just bangs up against that thing in your life it doesn't like, refusing to accept God's wisdom in arrainging things that way. And so your mosquito soul just keeps ramming as hard as it can against the tank of divine providence, which does nothing but give you a mosquito headache.

The next time you find your soul resisting God's providence – you're just restless and unhappy because of the circumstances God has sent your way, go to Job 38. When Job lost everything, at first he responded well, but over time he started questioning providence. He started acting like what God allowed to happen to him wasn't right, and he wanted God to give him an explanation. God's response to that starts in ch.38. And he doesn't give Job an explanation. There was a perfectly good explanation, and we get to see that right at the beginning of the book, but Job never gets to see it. Instead of giving Job an explanation, God gives him a lesson on who is more qualified to run the universe – God or Job. The next time you're discontented, and you find your soul ramming up against the tank of God's sovereign providence, sit down and start reading in Job 38 where God gives his credentials for being qualified to make decisions about how things go, and see how far you have to read before you respond like Job and put your hand over your mouth and say, "Forgive me – I didn't know what I was talking about. I know nothing about what is best. God, I trust you to orchestrate circumstances in the best possible way. And I will be like Paul, and Habakkuk. Even if I lose everything in this world, or gain everything in this world – I will rejoice in you alone."

So what's the principle we learn here about rejoicing in the Lord when you get a blessing? When God gives you a gift, how do you make sure your happiness is in the Giver rather than in the gift? Contentment. The only way to keep your joy in the Lord when you get blessings is by having contentment. So how do you get contentment?

## Contentment Isn't Easy

It's not easy, because discontent is built in to us. John D Rockefeller was the richest man in the world in his time, and someone asked him, "How much money is enough?" His answer: "Just a little bit more." We roll our eyes at the athlete who thinks \$15 million/yr isn't enough, but are we any different? You and I have luxuries and comforts that the greatest kings and monarchs in history never even dreamed

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<sup>3</sup> I highly recommend this book. It's only 142 pages, you can download it free online, or listen to the audio book for free on Youtube. Another very helpful book on Contentment is Thomas Watson's book *The Art of Divine Contentment*.

of. And yet we're not satisfied. Kant: Give a man everything he wants and at that moment he will feel like everything is not everything. That's true, but most people never learn that because they never get all the stuff they want. The preacher in Ecclesiastes indulged every earthly desire to the extreme and discovered that none of it was enough to satisfy,<sup>4</sup> but most of us don't have enough money to try that experiment, so we just keep thinking that one next thing, that one missing piece would finally make us happy.

I have an aunt who is a wonderful lady. She really, really liked nice things. Her husband made good money, built her her dream home up in the mountains, and she kind of lived like a queen. And heaven help you if you ever tracked dirt onto her carpet.

I got word one day, a while after he had retired, that they didn't live in that mountain home anymore. I asked, "Where are they now?" and I was told, they are living in a little shack at a Bible camp, volunteering in the office – full time, year-round. I couldn't believe my ears. I had worked at that camp, and I knew what it was like. It wasn't like a Young Life camp, where everything is nice. Living at this camp was roughing it – even just for a summer. To live there year-round, for someone as delicate as her – I was amazed.

The next time I saw her she was the happiest I had ever seen her. She came to our church one time, and that morning there happened to be a family in our church that was having a rough time. They had just gotten back from a vacation where a lot of things went wrong, and to top everything off, the wife lost her wedding ring. My aunt heard that and just went to that lady after church, took her own wedding ring off her finger, and gave it to this woman that she had never met and would probably never see again. And she couldn't have been happier to do it.

I talked with her afterward, and she told me, "Darrell, I wish I could just tell these young women not to chase after happiness in the things in this world like I did. I almost wasted my whole life doing that. And when I had everything I ever dreamed of, I finally realized it wasn't satisfying." Most of us never learn that, because discontent is hard wired into us.

And not only is it naturally occurring inside of us, but it comes at us from the culture. Billions of dollars are spent every year for the sole purpose of making you even more discontent than you already are. That's the whole purpose of advertising. People are going to school and getting master's degrees on how to make someone like you feel discontented with what you have. And those people are incredibly good at what they do. So we've got forces from the inside and forces from the outside feeding the fires of discontent and covetousness and greed inside us. How can we possibly learn contentment?

## Learn Contentment Through Enjoying God's Love

Do you want to hear some great news? If you play your cards right, you can learn contentment through getting gifts from God.

**Philippians 4:10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me.**

You might read that and think – *Wait a minute. If Paul's happiness is unrelated to temporal circumstances, why is he so happy right when he gets this financial gift? If he's just as content with or without money, why would he be so happy after getting the money? That sounds kind of fishy – he gets a bunch of money and suddenly has joy in the Lord?* If receiving this gift was the occasion for especially great joy, how does that square with contentment?

## Enjoy the Love behind the Gift

Look again at v.10, and notice what it is he says he was rejoicing over. He doesn't say, "I rejoice greatly in the Lord that I received your gift." Look what he says.

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<sup>4</sup> He had enough money and power – he could take indulgent living to the absolute extremes. Money, recreation, work, projects, sex, power – he took it all to the extreme and learned from experience that those things, by themselves, don't satisfy. But most of us never learn that from experience, and so we spend our whole life chasing that little bit more that we think will finally make us happy.

## **10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me.**

The money was an expression of their **concern**, and it was that concern that was such an encouragement to him. So far that's no surprise. Everyone likes to be remembered and cared for. We all enjoy hearing that someone loves us and is concerned about us. That's normal. What's not normal is seeing that concern as ultimately coming from God. This is the key to the whole thing.

## **10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern**

He sees their concern and love for him as coming from God. When people showed love to him, he saw that as a gift from God. Like he said back in ch.2 – it's God who works in us to will, right? If the Philippians decide to show their love to Paul, it was God who worked in their will to move them to do that. So Paul sees the money, and instead of thinking, "Oh, now I can pay my rent!" Or, "Now I can get some food after not eating for the last 2 days" – instead of that, it was, "Oh look, God is saying, 'I love you' to me again! And this time he's doing it through the Philippians."

He saw their concern as coming from the Lord. It was the Lord's doing. It was the Lord who moved the Philippians to renew their concern for Paul. And it was the Lord who moved them to express that love and concern in the form of a financial gift to support Paul in the progress of the gospel, which was the only thing Paul cared about in life. We saw the same thing back in ch.1.

## **Philippians 1:3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now**

He's referring to their financial support. He starts the book rejoicing over that, and he ends the book doing the same thing. And notice v.3 – instead of thanking them, he thanks God. No doubt he was thankful to the Philippians, but he was primarily thankful to God, because he was the primary factor in making it happen.

When someone shows you love, when someone is concerned about you, when someone supports you – any time any of that happens, it's from God. So how can a person learn to be content with a lot? How can we get to the point that when we get a bonus at work or a gift or some other blessing, we are happy in the Lord and not that blessing? By keeping your focus on the source of the blessings, and what they mean. What is the source? God. And what do they mean? They are gestures of God's special, personalized love for you in this moment. They are expressions of God's affection for you. We talked about this in v.6 when we talked about gratitude. The more times per day that you stop and enjoy the various gesture of God's love for you that he is giving, and then respond back to God in a positive way, the happier you will be. And that happiness will be a rejoicing in the Lord, rather than a rejoicing in the gift.

## **Conclusion**

But we miss that so often, because we are focused on what God hasn't given us instead of on what he has given us. And if your focus is on what God hasn't given you, you'll always be miserable no matter how much he does give you. At the beginning I asked you to think of that thing or circumstance in your life that steals your joy because it isn't what you want it to be. Whatever that thing is, ask yourself, "Am I coveting that? Am I discontent about God's providential arrangement in that area of my life? Am I focusing on what God hasn't given me instead of on what he has given me?" Imagine a woman whose husband brings her 2 dozen roses, and she gets angry because all she can think about is all those millions of other roses he didn't bring her. As ridiculous as that sounds, that's exactly what we're like when we lack contentment.

So what is that one area in your life where your soul is just banging up against divine providence? How about if we spent this week, as often as we can remember, to repent of covetousness and ingratitude, and turn all our energy toward the two dozen roses God has given you rather than that one that he hasn't given you yet? Let's close by taking a moment to pray silently. Pinpoint those 1 or 2 things in your life where there is discontent, and once and for all submit to God's perfect wisdom, trust him, and be thankful for what he has done.



## **Small Group Discussion**

- 1) Tell the group about a recent gesture of God's love to you.
- 2) Tell the group 2 or 3 of the kinds of gestures of God's love to you that you want to learn to become more alert to.