

Joy

THE BOOK OF
PHILIPPIANS

Joy: The Contentment Paradox

July 31st & August 1st

Speaker: Pastor Joel Schmidgall

Scripture: Philippians 4:10-13

[The Progress Paradox](#) by Greg Easterbrook - we have more of everything in the 21st century – more wealth, better medical care, prosperity, opportunity...and yet, the percentage of happiness has not gone up in 70 years.

According to the World Health Organization, Americans are far and away the most anxious people on the planet, with nearly a third of the people in this country likely to suffer from an anxiety disorder in their lifetime.

We currently have more of everything yet our happiness quotient doesn't change or even goes down.

Paul makes a *lean in* statement: "I have found the secret of contentment"

[Philippians 4:10-13](#)

Five Observations of Contentment:

1. Contentment is a byproduct of proper identity ([v10](#))

"I rejoice in the Lord greatly..." - Paul found his joy in Christ.

Identity Temptations

[Life of the Beloved](#) - Henri Nouwan

1. I am what I do
2. I am what I have
3. I am what other people say or think about me

There is a problem with finding our identity in this way - all these things can be easily taken from us.

God pours out blessing so that we can enjoy His blessing and to be a blessing to those around us.

We can be trapped into a discontented life by adopting the **worldly goals of more, bigger, and best!**

Bible identifies these as indulgence, greed, and pride.

We need to identify the untruth and replace them with God's perfect truth

- Instead of I am what I have replace it with **I am a child of God** - Belonging [John 1:12](#)
- Instead of I am what I have replace it with **I do what I do because I am what I am** - Uniqueness [Genesis 1:27](#)
- Instead of I am what other people say or think about me replace it with **I am who God called me to be** - Purpose [Ephesians 2:10](#)

2. Contentment is bolstered by Community (v10)

What group of people would send you a care package, who would be there for you when you are at your darkest hour?

Application Point: Who do you need to reach out to? Who do you need to care for?

3. Contentment is not based on circumstances, it's based on calling (v11-12)

Contentment is not a spiritual gift, and it's not a fruit of the Spirit. **Contentment is a learned ability.**

We need to work on this one. Paul says, "I have **learned** to be content"

"I hope your stay is a blessed one," said the monk who showed him to his simple cell. "If you need anything, let us know... and we'll teach you how to live without it." - Philip Yancey

God teaches us that in the greed or the need He gives us contentment in all things.

Their contentment came in the assurance of their calling, of their pursuing the vision that God had put within them.

[autarkes](#) (ow-tar'-kace) – sufficient, satisfied, enough, contained.

Stoicism is marked by indifference; Christian contentment is marked by joy. Stoicism is fatalistic; Christian contentment trusts in a wise and loving God. The Stoic seeks to be independent and self-sufficient; the Christian seeks to be dependent on God.

What change in your circumstances over the last year has made you buckle?

Are you pursuing comfortability, or are you pursuing contentment in Christ?

4. Contentment ≠ complacency (v12)

Complacency is the enemy of success. Contentment leads us to action. There is action when we are pursuing contentment in Christ. Contentment should energize and drive us just like it did for Paul.

Contentment - an ability to be thankful regardless of your circumstances. The joy to pursue God's calling and the peace to trust God's sovereignty in the midst of it all.

God give me a sense of contentment in the vision that I know You have, that is different than the current reality.

5. Contentment is only found in Christ (v4:13)

The secret to contentment is not self sufficiency, it is in Christ sufficiency

It's in my weakness that God is made strong, and I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.

We can accomplish all things that are part of God's will through the strength of God.

A PRAYER to PRAY: Our Father in Heaven thank you for giving us the free will to find contentment in this life. Thank you for showing us that the world's ways are not the ways for those who follow Christ. Thank you for showing us the truth of what is good and perfect, and secure, and can only be found in You. Thank you for surrounding us with community so that we can learn this together, and be stronger together. Thank you for giving us the ability to change and to grow each day as we learn what contentment truly means once we are content in Christ. Our weakness is not failure, our weakness gives You the ability to step in and be the strength that we need to find true contentment. We pray this all in Jesus' name amen.

For more info about following Jesus, go to ncc.re/followJesus

---ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sign up for a Group: ncc.re/groups

Upper Zoom (Tu, We, Th at 7:14am): ncc.re/upperzoom

Connect Live (Aug. 8 at 10:15 EST): ncc.re/ConnectLive

---To dig deeper:

Sermon Discussion Guide: ncc.re/discuss

NCC Daily: national.cc/daily