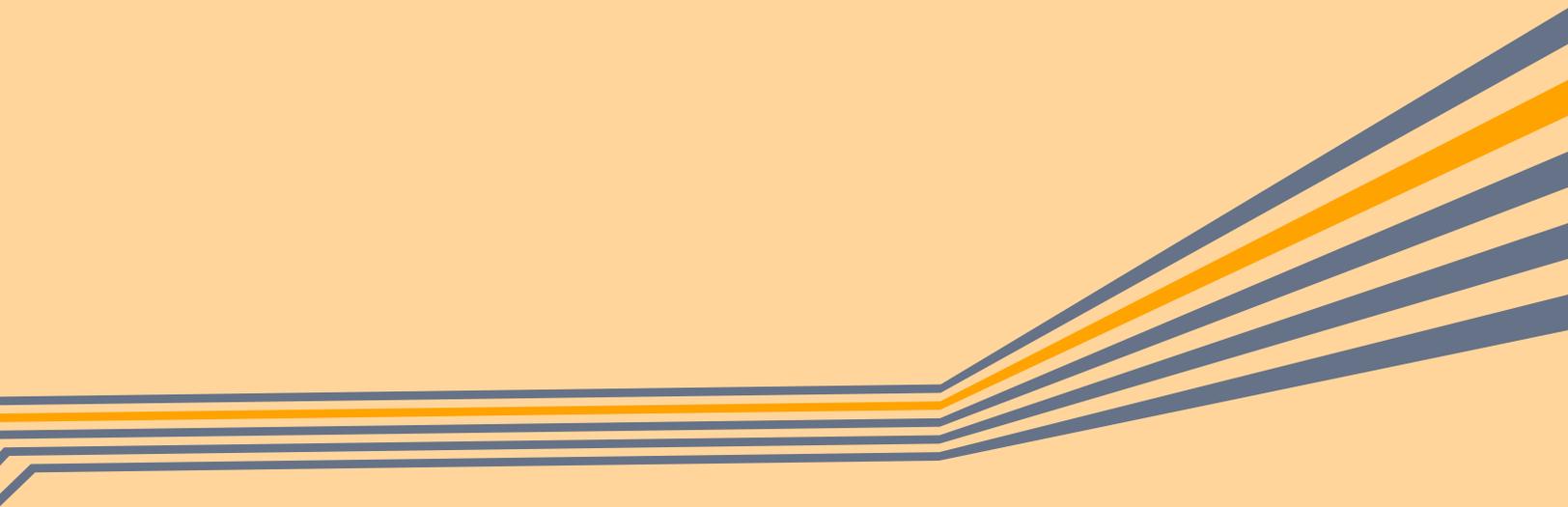
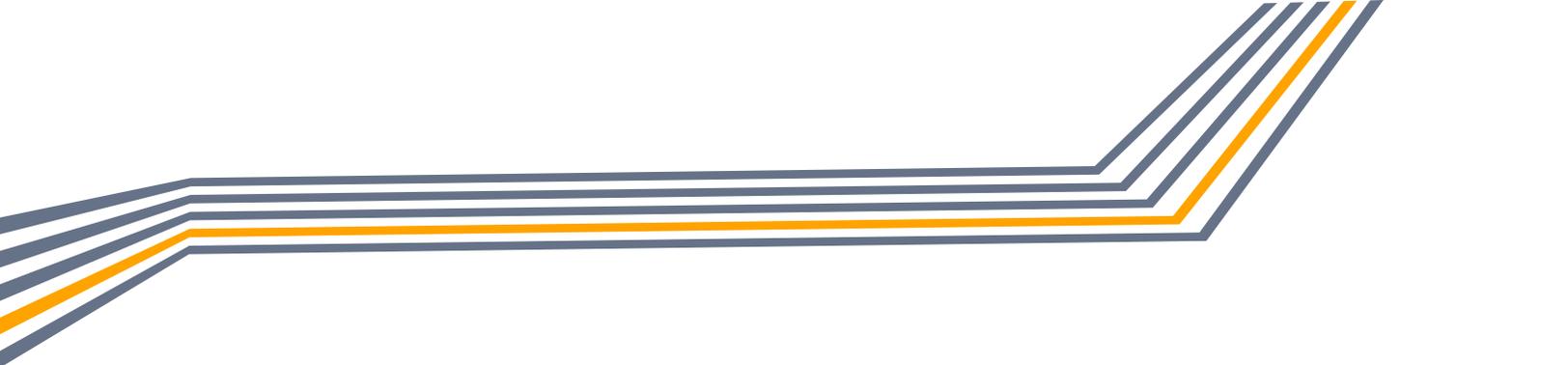


# SESSION SIX





## A CONTENT LIFE **Session 6**

In a world that constantly pushes for more, have you ever wondered what it means to be truly satisfied?

This week, we're diving into the heart of contentment. It's about a perspective shift, seeing our lives through a lens of gratitude for what we have, rather than an absence of something we want.

Together, we'll uncover the subtle enemies of contentment, like unchecked worries and the trap of comparison. Paul's letter to the Philippians will help us understand that contentment isn't about having everything, but experiencing joy in the midst of any situation.

Because our real work isn't just getting more; it's embracing the joy that comes from trusting in God's plan and gratitude for what we have.



# SESSION 6

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL



# DAY 36:

## ENEMIES OF CONTENTMENT

*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

**PHILIPPIANS 3:8**

**Does the phrase “If only...” often preface your wishes and desires?**

*If only I were younger...*

*If only I had a different job...*

*If only I had that special someone...*

*If only I had a bigger house...*

*If only I had gone to college...*

The false promise of “if only” thinking is: “If I only had that thing, I’d be happy.” It’s a mindset many of us know all too well, one that blocks the way to true contentment. We can define contentment this way—to be independent of external circumstances, content with one’s lot, with one’s means. God tells us that’s a really good thing (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

This truth resonated with Paul so deeply that it transformed how he saw everything. The “if only’s” of life became loss rather than gain. Rather than being driven by supreme willpower or stoic strength, Paul was drawn to the contentment we can all find in Christ.

There are two common enemies that constantly attack godly contentment:

### **Enemy #1: Cares of the World**

Anxiety undermines trust in God’s provision and wisdom. Jesus warns in Mark 4:19 that “cares of this world” can choke God’s Word and promises in our lives, rendering them unfruitful.

### **Enemy #2: Comparison**

This ever-present enemy is a thief of joy. As Paul notes in 2 Corinthians 10:12, comparing ourselves to others is unwise. There will always be someone with something “better,” keeping us in a never-ending cycle of discontentment.

This week, whenever the thought, “If only...” enters your mind, replace it with gratitude. Make a daily gratitude list or share with someone just one thing you are thankful for, no matter how small. An attitude of gratitude is a powerful weapon against the enemies of our contentment!

# REFLECT

## Memory Verse

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

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What are the "If only..." statements you frequently catch yourself thinking?

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Are your cares based on things within your control? How can you surrender them to God?

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In what areas of your life do you most frequently find yourself making comparisons?

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How can remembering God's provision in the past help you become more content in the present?

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# DAY 37:

## LEARNING CONTENTMENT

*...for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

**You don't need to enroll in an elite university to study one of life's most valuable subjects—contentment.** Unlike built-in car features, contentment isn't something you "have or don't have." It's a lesson to be learned; one that Paul himself learned. I've found it helpful to break it down into four parts.

### **One: Contentment is a "Now" Thing**

First, let's steer clear of equating contentment with "having" or "getting" enough things. Anything we put between us and godly contentment misses the point.

### **Two: Contentment is About Abundant Life**

However, contentment isn't a blissful enlightenment where we disconnect from the world. Jesus doesn't lead us to a state of cosmic emptiness, but a life full of joy and peace beyond understanding. He puts it like this in John 10:10b: *"...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* He fills us up rather than emptying us out.

### **Three: Contentment Isn't Complacent**

Contentment is not about being complacent; it's about savoring today to its fullest while stewarding what God has given us. Think of contentment as the art of enjoying every last drop of your hot fudge sundae. It's about maximum joy and satisfaction from what God has given you today and positioning you for tomorrow.

### **Four: Contentment Sets You Free**

Contentment doesn't hold you back... it sets you free. When we learn to find our contentment in God, we're not sidelined; we're set up for promotion in God's Kingdom. You're ready for tomorrow when you learn to be content today. Being content today doesn't mean we cease to grow or aim for better; it means we do so without the chains of discontentment weighing us down.

# REFLECT

## Memory Verse

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

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What does the word "contentment" mean to you? How does your definition align or differ with Paul's teachings in Philippians 4:11?

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What is currently the biggest obstacle to your contentment? Is it external circumstances or internal discontent?

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Do you find yourself frequently comparing your life to others? How does this impact your sense of contentment or dissatisfaction?

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# DAY 38:

## RADICAL GRATITUDE

*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.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:12 NIV**

**Imagine two children at Christmas.** One eagerly rips open a present and exclaims, "Thank you, this is awesome!" The other mutters, "Is that all?"

Same celebration, two very different attitudes. The difference? Gratitude. The same holds true away from the Christmas tree. Ever noticed how some people seem to glow with an inner peace, regardless of life's ups and downs? Like the Apostle Paul, they've discovered a secret, and it starts in the heart.

Paul didn't say life was easy. He said he "learned" how to be content in any circumstance. Gratitude is about perspective. Paul tells us that whether he was up or down, well-fed or hungry, he found a way to be grateful. As the saying goes, the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

Gratefulness is a choice, and it doesn't depend on the abundance or lack of material things. Things change. Things break. Things are fleeting. But a grateful heart? That's eternal.

Jesus described what this kind of life looks like in Matthew 6:19-21:

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Biblical gratitude is radical when you understand that everything on Earth has an expiration date. The surest things, highest-quality possessions, and even good health won't last. But our heavenly riches cannot be taken away.

Like those two kids at Christmas, our lives reflect our hearts. Where is your treasure?

# REFLECT

## Memory Verse

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

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How does your level of contentment compare to the Apostle Paul's, who was content in any circumstance?

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What is preventing you from having a grateful heart today?

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How might clinging to material things obstruct your spiritual growth?

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What's one actionable step you can take today to cultivate a more grateful heart?

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# DAY 39:

## THE DISCIPLINE OF GRATITUDE

*give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 NIV

**If you've ever found yourself pondering God's will for your life, the answer begins with a heart filled with gratitude.**

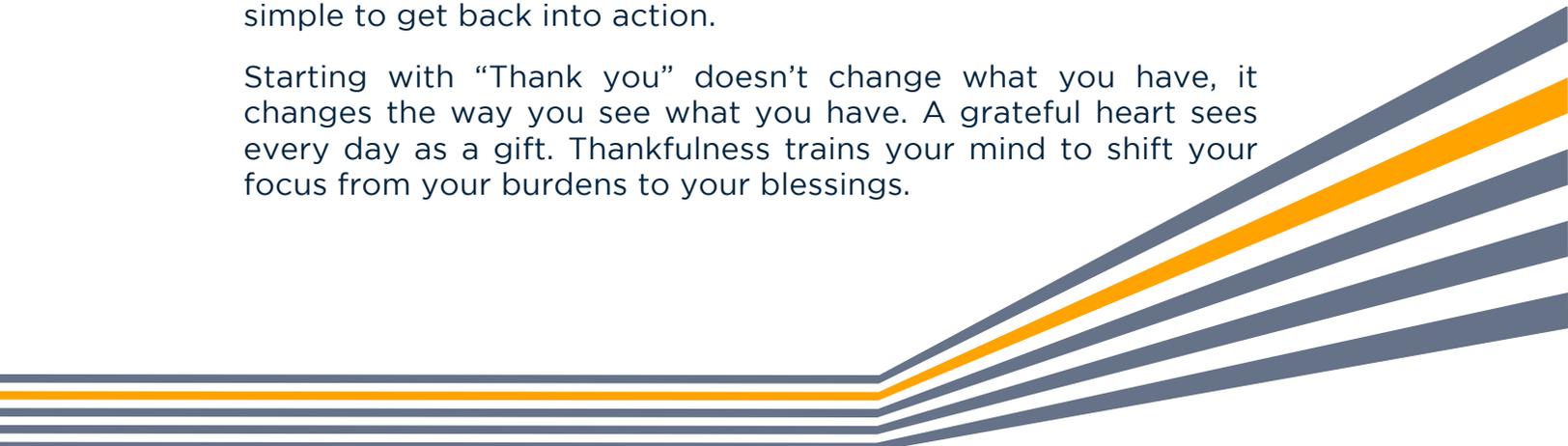
Ever felt like your life was missing something? Like you're running on a treadmill, always seeking but never finding? It might surprise you, but the first step off of that treadmill starts with two simple words: "Thank you."

Paul meant it when he said, "*give thanks in all circumstances.*" We learned he had his share of hardships—imprisonments, beatings, and shipwrecks—just to name a few. Yet he knew that gratitude wasn't just a self-help tip for a better day, it was God's will.

So take a moment. Reflect on the blessings you overlook. Did you graduate from high school, college, or even grad school? Do you have a job you're passionate about? Is your health more of a blessing than a burden? Do you have a good friend? A spouse? A loving family?

If you're nodding to even a few of these, you're richer than you think. You're in the world's top ten percent! Let's not squander these gifts by dreaming about everything we don't have. Instead, let's cultivate a grateful heart. Gratitude is a discipline—a use-it-or-lose-it muscle we train every day. However, even if you feel like your gratitude muscle hasn't been worked out in a while, it's so simple to get back into action.

Starting with "Thank you" doesn't change what you have, it changes the way you see what you have. A grateful heart sees every day as a gift. Thankfulness trains your mind to shift your focus from your burdens to your blessings.



# REFLECT

## Memory Verse

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

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What are the top three things you're most grateful for right now?

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When you feel discontent, how do you typically respond? Could integrating a moment of gratitude change your perspective?

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Have you ever kept a gratitude journal? If so, how did it affect your daily life and emotional well-being?

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How can you share the power of gratitude with others? Are there specific ways you can express thankfulness in your interactions?

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# DAY 40:

## WHEN LESS IS MORE

*I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NIV**

**About 900 years ago, a boy named Francis was born into a tremendously wealthy family.** He grew up with all the trappings of success, comfort, and affluence. Then, something profound happened—he met Jesus. This led him on a journey of leaving everything to pursue the greater things of God. You may be familiar with this boy, he grew up to be called St. Francis of Assisi.

While being a disciple of Jesus isn't about how much, or how little, money is in your bank account, it is about our affections. In Matthew 19:16–22, a rich and virtuous young man asked Jesus how to find eternal life. In verse 21, Jesus said, *“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”* However, unlike Francis, the young man “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

The truth is, the young ruler didn't own possessions as much as they owned him. Whether you look more like Francis or the young man, Paul shared the secret to *contentment* in today's verse—the strength of Christ working in us!

We often associate Philippians 4:13 with overcoming obstacles, but its biblical context is Paul's message of contentment. God gives us the strength to be content because we are wholly incapable of finding it ourselves. But true contentment in a culture of *more, more, more* is a hallmark of God's people!

Contentment makes us beacons of joy like cities set on a hill that can't be hidden. In either crisis or comfort, contentment is a powerful witness to God's strength working within you. It can be one of the most powerful ways you share your faith with the people in your life who desperately need the hope of Jesus!

# REFLECT

## Memory Verse

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

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Which life is more appealing to you—Francis' or the young man's? Why?

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Do your possessions own you more than you own them? How does that show up in your life?

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Is there anything in your life God is calling you to leave behind so you can experience true contentment?

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# DAY 41:

## CURING DESTINATION DISEASE

*Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:6

**Have you ever heard the saying, “Wherever you are, be there”?** It’s about being present in every place and with every person. Instead of being troubled by the past or anxious about the future, you’re fully engaged right where you are. Research shows that being fully present actually predicts greater positive emotional states in the long run. We sacrifice future wellbeing when we don’t savor the present.

That’s a powerful thought—especially for someone like me who has suffered from what I call “Destination Disease!” It’s that feeling when you’re walking along a beautiful beach on vacation and you wonder, “Where can we go to next?!”

The truth is, contentment doesn’t depend on your zip code. A geographical cure is a mirage. Whether you’re in the Rockies dreaming about ocean waves or on the beach envisioning snowy peaks, moving locations won’t bring peace to your soul. It’s an illusion, not a cure for the discontented spirit.

We often suffer from “Destination Disease,” thinking life will be perfect once we arrive at a certain point—financially, relationally, or geographically. But contentment isn’t about arriving; it’s about thriving where you are. God strengthens us in the process, not just at the destination.

So, my friend, wherever you are today, be there!

# REFLECT

## Memory Verse

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

**Philippians 4:11 NIV**

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

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What are some "geographical cures" you've thought about or even tried? Did they work?

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Do you find yourself waiting for the next big thing to happen before you can be content? How can you break this cycle?

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How can you cultivate contentment in your current situation, instead of looking elsewhere for happiness?

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# WEEKLY REFLECTION

What are the top three realizations you had this session?

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What is the main thing you believe God wants you to apply?

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