

**Imagine...Finding True Contentment**  
**October 22, 2017**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

"I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles." (Philippians 4:10-14 NIV)

Contentment is living in a satisfied state with an ease of mind and in need of nothing more than what you already have. When we think of this word, oftentimes we relate it to a physical or emotional state of being. What a greater joy it would be if we could apply this term to the condition of our spirit! What if we allowed a desire for Christ alone to occupy the gaps in our minds that are now filled with ideas of work, wealth and consumerism? In the verses above from Paul's letter to the Philippians, He is clear to credit his peaceful nature to the discovery of his identity in Christ and points out that his circumstances have no effect on his demeanor. This week, let's imagine what it might look like for us to find contentment using Paul's "secret" for success.

**Digging Deeper**

**We find true contentment when ....**

**We THANK God continually.**

- How do you build an attitude of gratitude? One thank you at a time. It might start with a simple blessing said before each meal. Then maybe you narrowly escape a bad situation and find yourself letting out a "thank you Jesus!" Before you know it, your natural inclination leads you to see your Father's handiwork in every up and down you face. Do you see everything as a gift from God? Do you tend to compare yourself to others and if so, to what extent does that destroy your sense of peace about who you are and what you have? How can thinking of (and helping) those less fortunate increase your awareness of all the goodness God gave you that you might be taking for granted?

**We TRUST God completely.**

- There's a God-shaped hole in all of us. And while we may try to fill it with all kinds of stuff, only God truly satisfies and fills the void. Do you find it hard to trust God in all circumstances? Do you find that worries and doubts overshadow your devotion? How can complete trust lead to deep contentment? If we are seeking Him in all we do with a thankful heart, shouldn't our fully invested trust be one of our first offerings?

**We GIVE generously.**

- Have you ever found that giving, even when it pinches a little, always feels sweeter when it comes from a place of personal sacrifice? Perhaps giving from a place of struggle hits us a little deeper because it becomes a mechanism for displaying our trust in the One we are thankful for, and who we recognize as having given it all to us in the first place. Most would agree that

contented people view giving as a privilege; as an act of worship. Can you share an experience where you were able to help someone in need (with either your time or finances) and later discovered the blessing was yours the whole time? Did it have any impact on the way you give today?

### **We LIVE simply**

- We sure love our stuff don't we? There's even a television show dedicated to helping people overcome their need to hoard crazy things like trash or plain old cardboard boxes. When we let things take God's rightful place in our hearts, we leave a door open for the devil to drive a wedge in the relationship God longs to have with us. And the sad truth for many of us is that when more is more, He becomes less. Talk about the ways in which living a simple life could draw you closer to God. How could your life be simplified in order to strengthen your connection to Him?

### **Conclusion**

Have you discovered the secret of finding contentment in any circumstance? Imagine finding true contentment that comes, not through what you have, but because of Who has you! With thankful hearts let us form a habit of trusting Him to guide us in making the most of our time, talents and gifts so that we can rest together in the simplicity of a life without entanglements that distract us from our relationship with Him and others. Remember Paul's words that remind us that we "can do this through [Christ] who gives [us] strength."