

### A. IDENTIFYING ROOTS OF DISCONTENT

- Paul learned to be content. No matter what his circumstances, he learned that he could be satisfied and at peace because he knew Jesus and His love so deeply.
- Contentment enables us to trust and yield to God vs. leaning on our own understanding and following our fleshly desires: Gal 6:7-10 MSG-- Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life. So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.
- Contentment will grow as we let the Spirit to do His sanctifying work. This requires identifying weeds of discontent and sowing new patterns of thinking and behaving.
- Insights:

### B. ENTITLEMENT

- Discontent can be rooted in an entitlement mindset.
- Entitlement, defined-- the unjustified assumption that one has a right to certain advantages, preferential treatment, etc. (Dictionary.com)
- Paul encountered entitlement at Corinth: 1 Cor 4:7 AMP-- For who regards you as superior or what sets you apart as special? What do you have that you did not receive [from another]? And if in fact you received it [from God or someone else], why do you boast as if you had not received it [but had gained it by yourself]?
- The Corinthians exhibited pride, entitlement, and indulgence of the old nature. They were not content with the apostle or with God Himself.
- Paul's letter attempts "to get people to conform their lives to the gospel when they think too highly of themselves. This is tough work to do in a heart, and only a great work by the Spirit can accomplish it!" (Guzik)
- Let's ask the Spirit to uncover these attitudes that indicate roots of entitlement:
  - Superiority
  - "You owe me"
  - Self focus
  - "I deserve it"
  - Lack of gratitude
  - "My needs come first"
  - Defensive when challenged
  - "The rules don't apply to me"
  - Overvaluing self and undervaluing others
  - Difficulty giving, serving or taking responsibility
  - Trouble distinguishing between needs and wants
  - Feeling cheated or angry when our expectations are unmet

- The entitlement mindset can be pervasive, affecting many areas of life, or it may be limited to pockets where lies and injury allowed its entry.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*Holy Spirit, I do not want to harbor an entitlement mindset. Please reveal to me, now and in the days to come, any entitlement that has led to discontent in my life:*

- Sometimes entitlement serves to protect us in areas where we feel insecure. Let's let the Lord illumine these places so that we may learn to lean on Him instead.
- Insights:

### C. OFFENSE

- Jesus taught His disciples about a big obstacle to contentment: offense:
  - Mt 17:1--"It is impossible that no offenses should come" and urged them not to be offended with Him.
  - Mt 11:6—"Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."
- Whenever God or a person differs from us (which is often!), it presents us with the choice of either taking offense or learning to acknowledge and accept the difference.
- Paul teaches that offense and discontentment can also come in when life doesn't go the way we expected or wanted. That was normal before we knew Jesus: Col 1:20-23 MSG-- At one time you all had your backs turned to God, thinking rebellious thoughts of him, giving him trouble every chance you got. But now, by giving himself completely at the Cross, actually *dying* for you, Christ brought you over to God's side and put your lives together, whole and holy in his presence. You don't walk away from a gift like that! You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted.
- Offense, defined—trap, snare, any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall, (a stumbling block, occasion of stumbling) (Strong's G4625)
- If we knowingly or unknowingly allow offenses into our hearts, it creates distance between us and the offending party: Pr 18:1 TV-- Whoever pulls away *from others* to focus *solely* on his own desires disregards any sense of sound judgment
- Prayerfully use this list to examine your heart for anywhere offense may be hiding:
  - It's hard for me to accept viewpoints that differ from mine.
  - I believe I'm right.
  - Someone is "off" if they don't see it my way. They have a fault or are at fault.
  - I want to change their thinking to come in line with my beliefs.
  - I really don't want to listen to the perspective of the other person.
  - I'm infrequently curious, compassionate or willing to compromise about differences.
  - When conflict comes I find myself complaining and criticizing.
  - I have assigned motives to the actions of others.
  - The thought of overlooking or forgiving an offense is hard to accept.
  - I am still remembering past offenses.

- I've passively allowed distance to come between us or have actively moved away.
- My focus is on the offense and it hasn't occurred to me to look for wrong within myself.
- It's rare when offense and contentment coexist in a relationship. If you're discontent with someone, it is highly likely that offense and unforgiveness are there, too.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*Lord, You said that offenses are inevitable. Please reveal to me the relationships where offense is present (including God and other people):*

- Insights:

#### D. DEFENSE

- Defensiveness, criticism, and blaming are common when we're discontent and offended. We're even tempted to get payback: Rom 12:19-21 NLT-- Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good
- Our best defense is Learning to Lean. This means choosing to forgive as an act of faith, trusting that God will bring our feelings into line over time: Eph 4:31-32-- Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- Accomplishing forgiveness is the work of God's Spirit. He gives us power to live in ways that conform to His word and will. (1 John 5:14-15)
- Whenever we release forgiveness, God's love has a pathway to flow more freely to us and through us to the people in our lives: Pr 17:9 NLT-- Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.
- Use the handout "Tools & Techniques: Choosing to Forgive" to help you work through the roots of discontent in your relationships.
- Gal 6:4-5, 14 AMP--But each one must carefully scrutinize his own work [examining his actions, attitudes, and behavior], and then he can have the personal satisfaction and inner joy of doing something commendable without comparing himself to another. <sup>5</sup> For every person will have to bear [with patience] his own burden [of faults and shortcomings for which he alone is responsible]... But far be it from me to boast [in anything or anyone], except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
- Insights:

**I. PERSONAL APPLICATION****A. ONE THING**

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

**B. PONDER THE TRUTH**

- Which of the scriptures in this lesson spoke to you? Write them out below and review often to take this truth to a deeper place.
  
- Practice listening to God as you spend time meditating on your Scripture and your One Thing. Continue being still and expectant in His presence. Record your thoughts and insights for future reference.

**C. PRAY IT IN**

Take your One Thing and the verse you have chosen to the Lord in prayer:

*"Is there a particular attitude or issue that you want to bring into the light of this truth?"* Write down anything that comes to mind to keep for further exploration:

*"Lord, what would it look like for me to apply this truth?"*

**D. SING IT**

- Listen to the master Learning to Lean playlist or the one for this week's lesson. (See the DDD YouTube channel.) Record anything that you received from your personal worship time:



