

# Contentment

## Lesson #4 Teaching Your Child to be Content

### I. Illustration

### II. Introduction

#### A. What does it mean to be content?

1. It is the idea of being satisfied, seeing that our necessities have been met. "We have enough!"

Matt 6:31-33 "So do not worry saying what shall we drink or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them, but seek His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well."

2. It is the opposite of coveting

Deut. 5:21 Do not covet someone else's wife, house, land, servants, animals, anything that belongs to someone else.

3. It is not indifference or lack of ambition
4. It is learning to enjoy the things you already have

Paul said in Phil. 4:11-12 "I have learned in whatsoever circumstances I am in, therein to be content."

Learning:

- a. By following the example of Christ
- b. Through experiences of having and doing without
- c. Through some suffering
- d. By watching those around me

#### B. Why do we struggle with contentment?

1. In earlier generations, people felt good about themselves because of the things they produced. Today, we rarely produce or own things.

2. Too often we are encouraged to be somebody on the basis of what we own, not on the basis of character or even personality.
3. We are bombarded by the media...we are told what to wear, where to eat, what to own
4. We forget that our real purpose in life is to serve God
5. If there is a "hole of some kind" (physically, emotionally, relationally) in our lives, we tend to fill that need with stuff.

The parable of the rich man in Luke 12,"...a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger barns and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat drink and be merry.'"

### **III. How to help young people see that "I am what I own" is not a valid basis for a contented life**

- A. The key is the parent's attitude regarding our standard of living

How do you assess your own status? USA median income is \$49,777

Top 1% = \$350,000  
 Top 5% = \$167,000  
 Top 20% = \$92,000  
 Top 25% = \$77,500  
 Top 50% = \$55,000  
 Lower 50% = \$35,000

Aliso Viejo = \$83,000  
 Laguna Hills = \$103,000  
 Laguna Niguel - \$112,241  
 Mission Viejo = \$84,934  
 Stanton = \$31,213  
 All of Orange County = \$61,899

50% of the world lives on less than \$2.50 a day or \$912 a year  
 80% of the world lives on less than \$10 a day or \$3650 a year

We are all in the top 20% of the world...by far! Our response should be one of gratitude!

- B. We need to help our kids distinguish from their Fantasy World and the REAL World Fantasy World is full of affluence, glamour and excitement. The role models are the exception in life.

The real world is full of hard work and limitations. The role models deeply affect our children. See Luke 6:40 "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." Consider the impact your child's teacher, coach, scout leader is having on your child.

- C. We need to help our children develop a balanced view of possessions and money. God owns it all, we are the stewards. We need to teach our children to give, save and wait for things.
- D. We need to help our children see the value of service.
- E. We need to model gratitude in all our relationships
  1. Watch how you pray
  2. Be generous with your gratitude to others
  3. Teach your children to make and send thank you cards

#### **IV. Some practical suggestions**

- A. Make a list of things you and your husband are DIS-satisfied with. One by one acknowledge them and reject them. Let your kids see you doing so. Remember: our children know discontentment from us!
- B. Begin a Thankfulness Book  
Let the kids make one, decorate it (glue pictures of things they are grateful for) and once a week have a family time when you note the things you are grateful for that week.
- C. Keep advertisements out of your home. Turn off the TV...at least during commercials. Those ads feed your child's level of discontentment.
- D. Don't allow comparisons in your home. No one gets to say, "sure wish we had....like..."

- E. Focus your family on some giving and service opportunities
  - 1. Recycle clothes, toys, books and give them away to the needy.
  - 2. Clean out closets and the garage. Give it away. Or do a garage sale and give the proceeds away.
  - 3. Get involved in a senior citizen home.
  - 4. Serve in a kitchen or food pantry.
  - 5. Work on being hospitable. Have folks stay with you that have much less. Listen to their stories and watch the attitudes of your children begin to change.
  - 6. Sponsor an orphan. Communicate with them.
  - 7. Do practical things for another family. Babysit for them. Clean the yard. Paint something.
  - 8. Have the whole family chose a struggling family and cook for them. Kids can do the cookies, drinks, make the table mats. Do it on a regular basis.

**V. Change your perspective on things and your children's attitudes will follow yours!**

It is much easier to do without when you are in poverty. Everything is black and white. There are lots of "have nots" and it is easier to ignore what you have never had.

In affluence, the deception is much more stable and there are more anxieties to deal with. Sometimes it comes down to a lack of faith.

Phil. 4:11-13

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I 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 THINGS THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH.

Practice saying it is enough with your children.

1 Tim. 6:6-8 "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."